

# LABOR ECONOMICS (ILRLE)

## ILRLE 1411 - Foundations of Microeconomics (2 Credits)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Summer 2021, Summer 2020  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 2400 - Economics of Wages and Employment (3 Credits)

Applies the theory and elementary tools of economics to the characteristics and problems of the labor market. Considers both the demand (employer) and supply (employee) sides of the market to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of various government programs and private decisions targeted at the labor market. Topics include employment demand, basic compensation determination, education and training, benefits and the structure of compensation, labor-force participation and its relation to household production, occupational choice, migration, labor-market discrimination, and the effects of unions.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 1110 and ECON 1120.

**Enrollment Information:** Priority given to: ILR sophomores.

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 2475 - Visualizing Economics: Introducing Basic Economic Concepts with Visual Arts (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with ECON 2475

This course proposes a new and innovative approach to learning about economics. If you want to learn in a different manner, if you are attracted to visualizations in general, this course is for you. This course will challenge preconceptions about what economics is. The goal is to use visual arts to illustrate basic economic concepts that are general, and demonstrate how these tools can be used to analyze and understand a variety of human and social phenomena. The idea of using arts to teach a non-arts related topic stems from recent research in neurology suggesting that creative arts aid learning and memorizing. The course focuses on the core concepts and ideas in economics and is meant to be widely accessible.

**Forbidden Overlaps:** ECON 2475, ECON 3475, ILRLE 2475, ILRLE 3475

**Enrollment Information:** Open to: undergraduate students.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 3440 - Development of Economic Thought and Institutions (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with ECON 3300

Examines the causes and consequences of sustained economic growth, and the development of economics as a discipline, from pre-industrial mercantilist thought through the economics of John Maynard Keynes. Stresses the relationship between the consequences of 19th-century economic growth and the evolution of economic thought.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 1110 and ECON 1120.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment preference given to: ILRLE 3440: ILR juniors and seniors. ECON 3300: undergraduate sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (HA-AG, SBA-AG), (HST-AS, SSC-AS), (ICE-IL, LH-IL, QP-IL)

**Exploratory Studies:** (EUAREA)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 3445 - Inequality in U.S. Higher Education (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with ECON 3770, AMST 3445

Is the U.S. college system a great equalizer or a cause of growing inequality? Improved access to higher education has brought millions of Americans into the middle class, and yet rising selectivity has meant that a disproportionate share of the economic elite come from a few top colleges. This course will explore the three big parts of the college experience — (1) admissions and the college-going decision; (2) education while in college; and (3) college completion and labor market entry — and ask how each part contributes to inequality in economic outcomes. Lectures and readings will focus on simple economic theories of higher education as well as the empirical methods used to test these theories.

**Prerequisites:** ILRLE 2400 or ECON 3030.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment preference given to: ILRLE 3445: ILR juniors and seniors. ECON 3770: undergraduate sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (D-AG, SBA-AG), (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SCD-AS, SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2020

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 3450 - Race and the American Labor Market in Historical Perspective (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with ECON 3480, HIST 3480, AMST 3449

This class investigates race and class in the American labor market from Colonial America to the present day. We investigate the circumstances and labor institutions that brought labor to the U.S. and how laborers of various classes were received. A primary goal of the class is to understand the degree to which social mobility was historically possible in different time periods in American history. Social mobility is intimately tied to labor market institutions and the ability for workers to get ahead within those institutions. Some of the institutions we study are Indentured Servitude, Slavery, tenant farming, the Great Migration and labor organization in the industrial north. Ultimately we hope to build an understanding of the historical roots of the role of race and class today.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 3030 or ILRLE 2400.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: ILRLE 3450: ILR juniors and seniors. All other offerings: undergraduate sophomores, juniors and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, LH-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2020

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

## ILRLE 3460 - Economics of the Labor Market in the 21st Century (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with ECON 3485

This course examines economic approaches to how new technologies impact the labor market. We will study how new technologies affect the nature of jobs and tasks, the nature and flexibility of work contracts, as well as how firms and workers search and find each other. We will discuss the emergence of flexible work arrangements (gig economy, teleworking). The goal is to learn how economists approach and analyze these phenomena, both theoretically and empirically.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 1110 and ECON 1120; or ILRLE 2400

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment preference given to: ILRLE 3460: ILR juniors and seniors. ECON 3485: undergraduate sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG), (SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 3465 - Bridging the Divide: Labor Market Reforms and Place-Based Policies (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3465

Should policy interventions target inequality between workers or disparities between places? Inequality has risen in most developed countries in recent decades. While top incomes have grown significantly, incomes at the bottom of the distribution have increased much less. In light of these trends, this course examines the role of labor market and place-based policies in reducing inequality, and discusses the trade-offs that arise between reducing inequality and promoting economic activity.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 1110, ECON 1120, and either ILRLE 2400 or ECON 3030.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG), (SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2024

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 3475 - Visualizing Economics: Introducing Basic Economic Concepts with Visual Arts (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3475

This course proposes a new and innovative approach to learning about economics. If you want to learn in a different manner, if you are attracted to visualizations in general, this course is for you. This course will challenge preconceptions about what economics is. The goal is to use visual arts to illustrate basic economic concepts that are general, and demonstrate how these tools can be used to analyze and understand a variety of human and social phenomena. The idea of using arts to teach a non-arts related topic stems from recent research in neurology suggesting that creative arts aid learning and memorizing. The course focuses on the core concepts and ideas in economics and is meant to be widely accessible.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 1110 and ECON 1120; or ILRLE 2400.

**Forbidden Overlaps:** ECON 2475, ECON 3475, ILRLE 2475, ILRLE 3475

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 3550 - Economics of Education (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with PUBPOL 3550, ECON 3760

The economics of education is about understanding how and why people make decisions to invest in education, the effect of education on long-term social and economic outcomes, the behavior of those institutions that produce education, and how best to design and implement public policies affecting the level and distribution of education resources. The basic tools of economics provide a framework to evaluate education policies including K-12 school finance, student financial aid, and college admissions. Throughout the course, there will be an emphasis on examining empirical tests of the economic theory and measuring the effects of policy initiatives on educational outcomes.

**Prerequisites:** PUBPOL 2000 and PUBPOL 3100.

**Distribution Requirements:** (OCE-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG), (SBA-HE), (SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2024, Spring 2024, Spring 2018, Spring 2016

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Apply the tools of economic analysis to assess core education policies.
- Differentiate between human capital and signaling models.
- Interpret empirical results from research papers as they relate to policy.
- Describe endogeneity issues in empirical research papers.

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**ILRLE 4430 - Compensation, Incentives, and Productivity (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3430

Examines topics in labor economics of particular relevance to individual managers and firms. Representative topics include recruitment, screening, and hiring strategies; compensation (including retirement pensions and other benefits); training, turnover, and the theory of human capital; incentive schemes and promotions; layoffs, downsizing, and buyouts; teamwork; and internal labor markets. Focuses on labor-related business problems using the analytic tools of economic theory and should appeal to students with strong quantitative skills who are contemplating careers in general business, consulting, and human resource management as well as in economics.

**Prerequisites:** ILRLE 2400 or ECON 3030.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: juniors and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG), (SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 4440 - The Evolution of Social Policy in Britain and America (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3340

Surveys the history of social policy in Great Britain and the United States from 1800 to the adoption of the British welfare state after World War II. Topics include the role of poor relief in the early 19th century; the changing relationship between public relief and private charity; the adoption of social insurance programs and protective labor legislation for children and women; government intervention in the Great Depression; and the beginnings of the welfare state.

**Prerequisites:** ILRLE 2400 or ECON 3030.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, ICL-IL, LH-IL, QP-IL), (SBA-AG), (SSC-AS)

**Exploratory Studies:** (EUAREA)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2023, Spring 2020, Fall 2016, Spring 2015  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 4450 - Women in the Economy (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3440, FGSS 4460

Examines the changing economic roles of women and men in the labor market and in the family. Topics include a historical overview of changing gender roles, the determinants of the gender division of labor in the family, trends in female and male labor-force participation, gender differences in occupations and earnings, the consequences of women's employment for the family, and a consideration of women's status in other countries.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL), (SCD-AS, SSC-AS)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 4480 - Topics in Twentieth Century Economic History (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 3330

**Prerequisites:** ECON 3040 or ILRLE 2400.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment preference given to: ILRLE 4480: ILR juniors and seniors. ECON 3330: undergraduate juniors and seniors.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL, QP-IL)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2019, Spring 2016, Spring 2014, Fall 2012  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 4950 - Honors Program (3 Credits)**

Students are eligible for the ILR senior honors program if they: (1) earn a minimum 3.700 cumulative GPA at the end of junior year; (2) propose an honors project, entailing research leading to completion of a thesis, to an ILR faculty member who agrees to act as thesis supervisor; and (3) submit an honors project, endorsed by the proposed faculty sponsor, to the Academic Standards and Integrity Committee. Accepted students embark on a two-semester sequence. The first semester consists of determining a research design, familiarization with germane scholarly literature, and preliminary data collection. The second semester involves completion of the data collection and preparation of the honors thesis. At the end of the second semester, the candidate is examined orally on the completed thesis by a committee consisting of the thesis supervisor and a second faculty member.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 4970 - Field Research (4 Credits)**

All requests for permission to register for an internship must be approved by the faculty member who will supervise the project and the chairman of the faculty member's academic department before submission for approval by the director of off-campus credit programs. Upon approval of the internship, each student will be enrolled in ILRLE 4970, for 4 letter-graded credits for individual research, and in ILRLE 4980, for 8 S/U credits, for completion of a professionally-appropriate learning experience, which is graded by the faculty sponsor.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL)

**Exploratory Studies:** (CU-CEL, CU-UG)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024  
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**ILRLE 4980 - Internship (8 Credits)**

All requests for permission to register for an internship must be approved by the faculty member who will supervise the project and the chairman of the faculty member's academic department before submission for approval by the director of off-campus credit programs. Upon approval of the internship, each student will be enrolled in ILRLE 4980, for 4 letter-graded credits for individual research, and in ILRLE 4970 for individual research, and in 4980, for 8 S/U credits, for completion of a professionally-appropriate learning experience, which is graded by the faculty sponsor.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL)

**Exploratory Studies:** (CU-UG)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024  
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**ILRLE 4990 - Directed Studies (1-4 Credits)**

For individual or group research projects conducted under the direction of a member of the ILR faculty, in a special area not covered by regular course offerings. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors with a preceding semester GPA average of 3.0 are eligible to submit projects for approval by the Academic Standards and Integrity Committee. Students should consult with an advisor in the Office of Student Services at the time of course enrollment to arrange for formal submission of their directed study.

**Distribution Requirements:** (ICE-IL)

**Exploratory Studies:** (CU-UG)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024  
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**ILRLE 5400 - Labor Economics (3 Credits)**

This is a course in labor market economics for prospective managers in the corporate, union, not-for-profit, and public sectors. The course begins with demand and supply in labor markets, presenting the tools of decision analysis for workers and firms. It then goes on to consider various topics in workplace management including deciding on the optimal mix of capital and labor to employ, attracting and retaining talent, pay and productivity, hiring and training investments, and using strategic budget constraints. The final section of the course covers other important labor market issues including analysis of public policies, unemployment, discrimination, poverty and inequality, and pensions and Social Security.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: MILR students.

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022  
Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 7450 - Seminar in Labor Economics I (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7420

Includes reading and discussion of selected topics in labor economics. Stresses applications of economic theory and econometrics to the labor market and human resource areas.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: Ph.D. students in Economics and Labor Economics, or by permission of instructor.

**Exploratory Studies:** (EUAREA)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2019

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 7455 - Local Labor Markets: Disparities and Remedies (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7455

Since the 1980s, American cities have exhibited increasingly divergent trends. This Great Divergence has had profound effects on local employment, income, political preferences, health outcomes, and intergenerational mobility. As more detailed data become available, recent research seeks to uncover the causes of this divergence and evaluate how policy interventions might mitigate its negative effects. Building on this research, this course explores recent advancements at the crossroads of labor and spatial economics. It begins by examining the growing disparities between cities and regions in terms of productivity, labor market opportunities, and amenities, in several countries. It then investigates the rationale behind place-based policies and their potential to stimulate local development. Finally, the course will provide students with essential tools and theories to study the sorting of workers and firms over space and to understand its implications for economic growth and inequality.

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025

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**ILRLE 7460 - Seminar in Labor Economics II (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7430

Includes reading and discussion of selected topics in labor economics. Stresses applications of economic theory and econometrics to the labor market and human resource areas. The combination of ILRLE 7450 and ILRLE 7460 constitute Ph.D.-level sequence in labor economics.

**Enrollment Information:** Recommended prerequisite: ILRLE 7450.

**Exploratory Studies:** (EUAREA)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2022, Spring 2019

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 7465 - Advances in Labor Economics (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7465

This course aims to provide an in-depth perspective on three important themes in modern labor economics: (1) Job search, (2) Technological change and new forms of work, (3) Sorting of workers and firms. Both micro and macro perspectives will be considered.

**Prerequisites:** ECON 6130, ECON 6140, ECON 6190, ECON 6200, or permission of instructor.

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 7490 - Economics of Development (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7720

Analytical approaches to the economics of developing nations and development processes. Topics include: introduction to development economics; distribution analysis: theory and evidence; modeling employment, unemployment, wages, and labor markets; and policy analysis for economic development.

**Prerequisites:** first-year graduate economic theory and econometrics.

**Exploratory Studies:** (EAAREA)

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2015, Spring 2013

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 7980 - Internship (1-3 Credits)**

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 9400 - Workshop in Labor Economics (1.5 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7845

Research workshop featuring guests lecturers. Presentations of completed papers and work in progress by faculty members, advanced graduate students, and speakers from other universities. Focuses on the formulation, design, and execution of dissertations.

**Last Four Terms Offered:** Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)

**ILRLE 9450 - Model Building for Applied (Labor) Economists (3 Credits)**

Crosslisted with ECON 7450

The aim of the course "Model Building for Applied (Labor) Economists" is to equip applied researchers with the tools to formalize their theories in terms of mathematical economic models. In contrast to a classical economic theory course that is built mostly around solving models, this course spends more time on the art of building simple models – ideally in a way that captures the key ideas but remains simple enough to allow relatively easy insights. We will review the basic setup of models including some discussion of ways in which to keep models tractable; and we will read papers that successfully put some of these principles into action. Participants will present some of these papers, and they have to build models and derive insights from them.

**Enrollment Information:** Enrollment limited to: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students.

Schedule of Classes (<https://classes.cornell.edu/>)