

Fall 2026

National School of Development
Peking University

Instructor:

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Labor Economics: Theory and Empirical Analysis

9:00-12:00, Tuesdays

Location: Chengze Garden

Course Overview:

This advanced course in labor economics delves into the foundational concepts and topics within the discipline, with a particular emphasis on the Chinese labor market. Key areas of study include labor supply and demand, immigration, minimum wage implications, human capital, wage structures, evolving job roles, and the trajectory of future labor markets. Additionally, students will gain insight into empirical techniques used in microeconomic analysis.

Course Objectives:

1. Equip students with a comprehensive understanding of challenges, methodologies, and critical literature about labor economics, especially concerning current trends and policies in the Chinese labor market.

2. Train students in conducting empirical research within labor and development economics, utilizing microeconomic datasets. The skills acquired will have broad applications across various economic sectors.

Who Should Enroll:

This course is tailored for economics students with a solid microeconomic theory and econometrics foundation.

Course Requirements & Expectations:

- All participants must pre-select a specific topic, which they will delve into for presentations and discussions.

- Irrespective of the specific topic they are leading, each student must review all set papers before the discussion session and engage actively during discussions.

- A pivotal component of this course is submitting a research paper. This paper should:

- Utilize microeconomic data to tackle a specific, well-articulated issue within China's labor market and economic growth.

- Be crafted in English (20-30 double-spaced pages) or Chinese (15-25 pages), including tables and graphs.

- Be submitted by **31st January 2027**.

- Students will have scheduled presentation sessions to share their research paper's ongoing progress.

Grading Criteria:

1. Presentations: 30%
2. Active participation (including attendance and discussion contribution): 10%
3. Research paper: 60%

Course materials:

The class is based on papers instead of a textbook. A reading list will be provided. Working labor economists should have easy access to the following resources:

1. George J. Borjas (2013): *Labor Economics*, Irvin, McGraw Hill, 6th edition.
2. Ashenfelter, Orley and David Card (2010): *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Volumes 4A and 4B.
3. Angrist, Joshua and Jorn-Steffen Pischke (2009): *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*, Princeton University Press.
4. Cahuc, Pierre and Zylberberg, Andre (2004): *Labor Economics*, The MIT Press.
5. Christian Dustmann and Thomas Lemieux (2025): *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Volumes 6.

Course outline:

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer
1	8 Sep.	Introduction	D Zhang
2	15 Sep.	Chinese labor market	D Zhang
3	22 Sep.	Labor supply	D Zhang
4	29 Sep.	Literature: Labor supply	D Zhang
5	6 Oct.	<i>National Day Holiday</i>	
6	13 Oct.	Labor demand	Q Luo
7	20 Oct.	Minimum wage + Literature	Q Luo
8	27 Oct.	Immigration	Q Luo
9	3 Nov.	Literature	Q Luo
10	10 Nov.	Human capital and wage structure	Q Luo
11	17 Nov.	Literature	Q Luo
12	24 Nov.	*Student presentation*	D Zhang & Q Luo
13	1 Dec.	Flexible jobs and future labor market	D Zhang
14	8 Dec.	Literature	D Zhang
15	15 Dec.	AI and jobs+ Literature	D Zhang
16	22 Dec.	*Student presentation*	D Zhang & Q Luo
17	29 Dec.	*Student presentation*	D Zhang & Q Luo