

Use of outside text book (other books than the text in class) and Aplia

The story about our text, at least the way we will be using it in class—and this is for the Mankiw text—is that is the primary source of text reference for us. In addition, you can use Aplia and other books, e.g. the ones suggested by the bookstore (Schaum Easy Outline Edition and Barchart's one).

I will not be using any of these books in my class, as far as direct readings, tests, homeworks, assignments, classworks, etc., are concerned. As an extra tool, you are of course, free to buy whatever extra material you chose to acquire if that helps with your learning process and if that is the particular type of learner you are. Some students like to have several books to make “notes” out of and compare and contrast different books, as well as upgrade their vision to help understand the material better, or to even move beyond the class. That is not a requirement for my class, but you are completely at your discretion if you should like to follow that route.

Let me explain, also, in this context, the relevance of Aplia.

It is essentially meant to help you as an additional resource for the class. Most of our work, I will have on blackboard (some of them are up already, but most will be up towards next weekend). That is, the materials for classwork, homework, midterms, study-guides for the exams, the finals, assignments, etc., is, in general, independent of Aplia. However, where Aplia can contribute, is in the following way:

- i) it provides additional questions and answers to practice. Sometimes, questions in the exams are similar to the ones in Aplia, so one gets a sense of a bigger domain of questions. So there can be areas of Aplia, where I can draw from, for testing purposes.
- ii) there are visual tools in Aplia that help with the lectures. For example, you can see visually - through the help of interactive demand and supply diagrams - what happens when there is a surplus, or a change in income, i.e. how do the curves jump around and cause the price and quantity to change. This ability to see things actually shifting, can, in turn, cause the learning process to be embedded in more longer-term memory, than the short-term one, which can help you during exams. That being said, however, the responsibility for looking at that material is really yours and there will be no "points" or grades for that. I guess one way to look at this is to say it is really an extra tool, which, if you have the resources, time and money, can be a helpful additional supplement to have.
- iii) it does give you the online version of the book also. Since preferences are subjective, it is hard to say for me whether you should absolutely have a printed version of the book also. Some like the printed version because of the ease of turning pages and getting to where one wants to, convenience of carrying it around (rather than having to rely on a PC with internet connection), and that the book can be sold back later. However, the online one is nice, in that you don't have to carry around a bulky book and can easily see and read pages from the screen. So truly it depends on your learning style.