

University of Minnesota
Economics 3951-001, Summer 2013
Major Project Seminar

All students in this course MUST read this syllabus thoroughly and abide by it. This cannot be over-emphasized. Students in the past who paid attention to this syllabus were more successful than those who did not.

General Information:

Instructor: Andrea L. Waddle

Lectures: **NO REGULAR LECTURE MEETINGS**

Office: 3-151 Hanson Hall

Office Hours: By appointment only

Office Phone: 612-625-0311

Email: waddl003@umn.edu

Homepage: <http://sites.google.com/site/andreawaddle/>

I will respond to emails within 24 hours.

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to give you an opportunity to:

1. Apply the analytical skills and intuition obtained in your economics courses in order to examine an economic issue in which you have a special interest.
2. Learn how to write a formal report.

For students who find their economics courses “too theoretical,” this is the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have accumulated to a real world problem or issue.

Course Format:

In order to obtain the two credits for the course, students must write a 10-15 page formal report, with additional graphs/charts, which involves an in-depth analysis of an economic issue. There is no class meeting for the course. However, students will have to submit information regarding the progress of their research to the instructor regularly during the course. Since there are no lectures scheduled for the course, the amount students can learn from this course will depend on their own initiative. On average, students should expect to spend 12-15 hours per week working on the project.

Prerequisites:

Students must have taken Economics 3101 or 3102 and a 4000-level economics course in the area of the student's report. All must successfully complete the above-mentioned courses before enrolling in Economics 3951.

Textbooks:

The following are the recommended texts for the course:

- Economical Writing by Deirdre N. McCloskey
- The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White
- The Craft of Research by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams
- A Guide to Writing in Economics by Paul Dudenhefer, available online from Duke University at <http://econ.duke.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-research/writing-support>

In addition, you might find A Manual for Writers by Kate L. Turabian useful as well.

Tentative Schedule:

Assignments should be submitted by midnight on the specified due date. Late assignments will forfeit 20 percentage points for the given assignment for each day that they are late. I will use both moodle and dropbox for the course. I will create a dropbox folder for each student and ask you to join the shared folder. It will be a private folder, shared between just the student and the instructor and will allow us to share assignments and feedback easily. I will ask you to submit the final copy of the paper to moodle in order for us to use the anti-plagiarism software.

- June 20: Submit assignment 1 (topic) to dropbox folder.
- June 24: Assignment 1 feedback returned to dropbox folder.
- July 3: Submit assignment 2 (outline) to dropbox folder.
- July 10: Assignment 2 feedback returned to dropbox folder.
- July 24: Submit assignment 3 (first draft) by email.
- July 31: Assignment 3 feedback returned to dropbox folder.
- August 9: Submit assignment 4 (final draft) in-person (hard copy) **AND** to dropbox folder last day of classes **AND** to moodle site.

Submission Format:

All your work must be submitted in electronic form. MS-Word (**please save files in 2002/2003 version and NOT Vista/2007 version**) and PDF are the preferred file formats. Generally, I will type my comments and suggestions and email them back to you; however, I might ask you to drop by during my office hours to pick up your assignments in order to give you more extensive feedback. The Department of Economics Main Office (Hanson Hall 4-101) cannot be used either for paper submission or collection.

Failure to hand in the final report on time will automatically result in an "Incomplete" (I) grade for the course (unless there is written proof of extenuating circumstances). This rule will be

strictly enforced. **Note that in order to satisfy the Major Project Seminar requirement for the BA degree, students have to earn at least a B- for their reports.**

Grading Criteria:

Each part of the assignment (Outline, First Draft, and Final Report) will receive an individual grade (Denoted by G1, G2, G3 respectively).

Your grade for the written part of the assignment is given by the formula:

$$G = (1/10) * [G1*2 + G2*3 + G3*5]$$

In other words, the Final Report counts for 50 %, the First draft for 30 % and the Outline for 20%.

Grading of all parts of the assignment - the Outline, First Draft, and Final Report - will be based on:

1. The level of analytical skill and intuition demonstrated in the report (e.g. whether you can analyze the issue critically, whether you can argue logically, originality of your ideas, etc.); - (75% of the grade) AND
2. The presentation of the report (e.g. how well you explain difficult concepts and arguments, the coherence and clarity of the presentation, the amount of spelling and grammatical errors, etc.) - (25% of the grade)

In particular, the following will be graded:

- Does the report ask a question about an economic mechanism or policy choice?
- Does it provide an answer based on economic theory or economic principles?
- Has enough data been provided?
- Is it written in a clear, concise, and grammatically correct style?
- Are spelling and word usage correct?
- What type of references and sources were used?

Only the reports that demonstrate outstanding qualities in all of the above will be awarded the grade "A." Reports that demonstrate satisfactory qualities will be awarded the grade "B." Any report in which two or more of the above points are unsatisfactory will be given an Incomplete (I) for the course, and the students will have to complete the course by improving the report in the next semester. Notice that this means that any report containing numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors could be given an "I" no matter how good the analysis is.

Students with Incomplete:

Students who have gotten an Incomplete from previous semesters **need not register for the course.** To finish the incompleteness, students only need to finish their previous paper with me, i.e. students do not need to start a new topic. I will clear the senior project for the student as soon as he/she meets the course requirements. It is not necessary to wait until the end of the semester.

Plagiarism:

This involves passing off anyone else's work as your own and includes copying a whole paper or parts of it and claiming it as your own work. The university has very strict rules concerning plagiarism. If you use any other person's work, words, or ideas, please cite and acknowledge the sources. Note that the university has purchased a program that allows professors to check if any student paper, essay, or research paper has been copied or paraphrased from the Internet. Please check the following web site for more details on plagiarism <http://cisw.cla.umn.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. I intend to use the above-mentioned anti-plagiarism program (called "TurnItIn") and ask you to cooperate by uploading the final version of your paper to this software via the moodle site.

Important Notes:

The Department of Economics does not allow students to turn in the same paper for two or more courses. You cannot submit a paper for the Senior Project if you (or anyone else) have submitted it earlier to receive credit for any other course at the university.

Assignments:

By the end of the semester, you will have submitted a 10 to 15-page report (10 to 15 pages of TEXT, not including graphs, title page, bibliography, etc), with additional graphs/charts, which involves a serious analysis of an economic issue. The bibliography is not included in these 10 to 15 pages. You will be asked to submit information regarding the progress of your research regularly as described below. Note that all assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and on Times or Times New Roman 12pt font, or they will NOT be graded.

Consider the target audience of your report to be your peers, i.e. economics majors. Before turning in your assignment, you are encouraged to have it reviewed by any of your peers. If you choose to do so, please write that person's name on your report and turn in, on a separate sheet, a brief assessment of the usefulness of that person's comments.

Assignment #1, Topic

For this assignment, submit a thesis paragraph clearly describing your topic (be clear about what your question is) and how you intend to analyze it.

Where to Find a Topic and References

1. Class notes and textbooks from economics courses.
2. Ask instructors who teach courses in the area of the report.
3. Academic journals like the American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Harvard Business Review, etc.
4. Non-academic periodicals like The Economist, Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Fortune, Financial Times, etc.
5. I will include a series of links to some of the most popular references on my website.

Please note that survey papers are not acceptable. You must use theoretical and empirical analysis with data and present your own views and findings.

Assignment #2, Outline

This assignment has two parts:

A. For this assignment, each student is required to read and cite at least one academic economic publication, examples of which can be found below. (This academic economic article **MUST** be used and cited in the final report as well). The objective of this reading is for the student to become more familiar with the way economists write. Each student must submit the complete reference of the article read. Failure to do so will result in 5 points taken off the grade of the final report. Examples of academic economic publications are: The American Economic Review, International Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Monetary Economics, Journal of Economic Dynamic and Control, Quarterly Journal of Economics, etc. (Publications such as the Economist or the Wall Street Journal do not qualify as academic publications but may be used as supplemental sources.)

B. You are required to submit a 2 to 3-page paper giving a clear outline of your project. It should contain:

1. The title of the report, your name, and ID number, as well as the date on which the report is turned in.
2. A clear introduction describing the topic you chose and the way you have decided to analyze it. The first sentence of your introduction should answer the question: what am I trying to show in this paper? Remember you are not writing a mystery novel, so try to be clear. The introduction sets the tone of the paper, and an effective introduction tells the reader what is going to happen in the paper.
3. A summary of the main points of your argument is needed. Try to limit yourself to 3 main points. Separate each point by having different sections. Feel free to make subsections whenever needed.
4. The data set that you would like to use as empirical evidence for your paper.
5. A conclusion in which you restate the question you are analyzing, summarize the main points you have developed, and present the results you have drawn from that analysis.
6. A reference or bibliography section where you list the references you used to develop your arguments.
7. You may add an appendix if you have graphs or data or some mathematical derivation.

As before, be as clear and concise as possible. Present your main points as sharply as you can. Think carefully about the structure of your paper. Make sure your arguments are coherent.

Assignment #3, First Draft

You should submit a 10 to 12-page version of your paper containing all the main points that you are going to develop. If your first draft is good, you will only have to make minor revisions for

your final report and will not need to include new material.

The first draft should contain all the elements in the outline report developed with the depth of analysis. Your paper should be coherent, and your logic should be as transparent as possible. Particular emphasis should be put on the structure of the paper. This draft provides an opportunity for you to get as much feedback as possible since you will not have another chance to improve your final draft.

Assignment #4, Final Draft

You should submit what you consider a polished version of your paper, taking into account the remarks and comments made on the previous assignments. The paper should be 10-12 pages, with additional graphs/charts.

Turn in all assignments (1 through 4), and staple them with the final report on top. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 10% of the grade. Keep copies of everything for your records. Please also submit an electronic copy of your final draft via e-mail. I need the electronic copy in order to submit your final grades. Students who fail to submit the electronic copies will receive an Incomplete. Please make sure that you receive my e-mail confirming that I have received the electronic copy of your paper.

Checklist for Final Draft

I strongly suggest you use this checklist as a guide for the final draft. Although the points I stress here may not be sufficient for a good grade, I think they are helpful.

1. Think about what is original in your work, what is your contribution. You should not just repeat what others have said. On the other hand, if you want to make a point, make sure you have enough evidence to defend it objectively.
2. Think about your audience. Any economics classmate of yours should be able to read and make sense of your paper. If you find your own paper boring or uninteresting, chances are other people will too!
3. Does your paper consist of 10-12 pages with additional graphs/charts?
4. Have you labeled sources of data under the graphs/charts?
5. Make sure ALL your claims are backed by data and economic analysis.
6. Make sure you do not use any terms you have not defined.
7. Remove unnecessary value judgments.
8. Do you have AT LEAST three academic journal references?
9. Make sure all your sentences have a subject and a verb. Read them out loud to make sure they make sense! Are the tense and person of all the verbs correct?
10. Have you referenced all the data and citations? (Use footnotes!)
11. Do your references follow the Chicago Style? (Yes, there is a format for internet documents!)
12. Include page numbers (remember the paper must be 10-12 pages long!).
13. Run the spell checker!!
14. Are you submitting a polished version of your paper, taking into account the remarks and comments made on the previous assignments?
15. Have you made a copy of everything you are submitting for your own records?

16. Turn in all assignments (1 through 4), and staple them with the final report on top. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 10% of the grade.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS -- PROCEDURES AND POLICIES 2012-2013
4-101 Hanson Hall (612-625-6353)

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Written answers to homework assignments must be typed; Graphs and numerical work need not be typed, but should be legible.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

Students are expected to have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to taking an Economics course.

DISABLED STUDENTS:

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for all students with documented disabilities (by the OSD). Contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to work out details. This information will be kept confidential.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. Information about confidential mental health services available on campus: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>.

DROPPING A CLASS:

Termination of attendance alone is not sufficient to drop a class. You must notify the Registrar's office. Please contact your academic (college) adviser for details on this process and pay attention to University deadlines for add/drop.

INCOMPLETE GRADE:

Low class standing is not a valid reason for an Incomplete grade. An I is given only in exceptional circumstances like family emergencies or hospitalization; arrangements must be worked out between the student and instructor before the final exam. We require written proof of emergencies. Details about I grades and how to make it up -in the Economics Undergraduate Handbook.

MAKE-UP EXAMS:

Make up exams are possible for the final exam only if the student has another exam scheduled at the same time, or has three exams within a 16 hour period. This should be pre-arranged with the instructor at least three weeks before the final exam. Make up final exams may also be possible for documented medical emergencies.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

"The College of Liberal Arts defines scholastic dishonesty broadly as any act by a student that misrepresents the student's own academic work or that compromises the academic work of another. Examples include cheating on assignments or exams, plagiarizing (misrepresenting as one's own anything done by another), unauthorized collaboration on assignments or exams, or sabotaging another student's work".

The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as "Submission of false records of academic achievement; cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; taking, acquiring, or using text materials without faculty permission; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement."

Penalties for scholastic dishonesty of any kind in any course will entail an "F" for the particular assignment/exam or the course.

Please check this website for information on Student Academic Misconduct -- <http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html>

STUDENT CONDUCT AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

Students are expected to contribute to a calm, productive, and learning environment. Information on student classroom behavior issues is at: http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html .Check the Student Conduct Code to find out what is expected of you.

STUDY ABROAD IN ECONOMICS:

The Department encourages you to undertake Study Abroad. There are many courses in foreign countries that can satisfy some economics major, minor, or Liberal Education requirements. For more information, please contact our Undergraduate Advisor, Ms. Madhu Bhat, or the University's Learning Abroad Center at <http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/>

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISER:

Contact the Undergraduate Adviser if you wish to sign up for an Economics major or minor or to get information about institutions of higher study. Your APAS form will list your progress toward an Economics degree.

Adviser: Ms. Madhu Bhat (econadv@umn.edu)

Office: 4-100 Hanson Hall (office hours are posted on the door) Phone number: 612-625-5893

UNDERGRADUATE HANDBOOK:

Available on the Internet at: <http://www.econ.umn.edu/> Click on Undergraduate Programs.
Registration policies are listed in the University Course Schedules and College Bulletins.

COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS ABOUT COURSES:

All course grades are subject to department review.

Please contact your instructor or TA if you have any complaints/concerns about the course. If your concerns are not resolved after talking with your instructor, you can contact: Professor Simran Sahi, Director of Undergraduate Studies
(Phone): 612-625-6353 and E-mail: ssahi@umn.edu.