

1 Basic Information

Instructor David M. Kaplan

Online Course Access Canvas, <https://courses.missouri.edu>

Discussion Board For questions about class material, exams, logistics, or anything else not specific to your personal life, please post to our course website's discussion board. I try to respond within 72 hours (usually sooner), and you may respond to each other, too; as they say, the best way to learn something is to try to explain it to somebody else.

Email If you actually have a question that's totally unrelated to any other student (e.g., an econometric problem at your work, house burned down, etc.), then you may send me a message through the course website (which goes to my email).

Virtual Office Hours Every Wednesday 10:00am–12:00pm Missouri time (excluding Spring Break, but including final exams week), I'll be online and focus only on replying to your discussion board posts. (I'll also reply to personal messages but give priority to the discussion board since other students may read and benefit from it.)

Date/Time Conventions Dates are written in the U.S. format of month/day or month/day/year, such as 8/7 for August 7, or 1/8/20 for January 8, 2020. Times refer to the local time in Columbia, Missouri. You can Google “Missouri time” to check the current time.

Course Prerequisites For ECONOM 4371, the course catalog lists prerequisites “ECONOM 3251 or ECONOM 4351, and STAT 2500, or equivalent.” For ECONOM 7371 students not enrolled in the economics MA program (or joint MA programs), the prerequisites listed are “ECONOM 3251 or ECONOM 4351 and STAT 2500 and MATH 1320 or instructor's consent.” In particular, *STAT 2500 (or equivalent) is critical* since ECON 7371 builds on ideas of probability distributions, sampling distributions, estimation, confidence intervals, and other fundamental ideas from introductory statistics and probability. ECON 3251 and 4351 are intermediate microeconomics; ECON 7371 uses some economic ideas and theory to assess statistical models. MATH 1320 is Calculus 1; understanding limits and partial derivatives may deepen understanding of some results.

2 Textbook, Other Resources, and Software

Textbook I developed a textbook specifically for this course. You may freely view, download, and print the PDF version of *Introductory Econometrics: Description, Prediction, and Causality* at <https://faculty.missouri.edu/~kaplandm/teach.html>. If you'd like a printed copy with perfect binding, please let me know; the Mizzou Store can print and bind copies on-demand that are sold essentially at cost.

Other Resources I put links to related educational resources at the beginning of each chapter of the textbook, including other (free) textbooks and videos. However, these are all purely optional; assessments (exercises and exams) are only based on the class textbook.

Software You will use statistical software. R is recommended; Stata is also allowed. (If you have a job that requires you to use something else, please check with me as soon as possible, otherwise you may not receive credit for empirical exercises.) See also Chapter 1 in the textbook.

Software Accessibility and Privacy With R, you can use the BrailleR package for blind users: <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/BrailleR/vignettes/GettingStarted.html>. But, certain accessibility standards may not be met by R and/or RStudio. If you encounter difficulties, then you may work with our Disability Services team (see the “Students with Disabilities” link in the “Support & Policies” tab within the course website). Stata’s accessibility statement is at <https://www.stata.com/features/section-508-compliance-15/>. The Privacy Policy for RStudio is at <https://www.rstudio.com/about/privacy-policy/> and that for Stata is at <https://www.stata.com/privacy-policy/>

Textbook Accessibility and Privacy No data of yours is collected when you view the textbook (it’s just a PDF file). If you have accessibility issues (e.g., I know some of the math may be difficult for screen readers), please let me know, and I will work with you to find a solution.

3 Course Description and Goals (Learning Objectives)

This class introduces fundamental concepts and methods in econometrics, for description, prediction, and causality. The goal is practical ability to understand, critique, and conduct empirical econometric analysis. Mathematical models aid deeper, more precise understanding of practical issues. Specific methods include many variations on regression, as well as forecasting and quantifying uncertainty; the empirical exercises offer practice writing code for such methods.

The learning objectives for this class are listed as the Textbook Learning Objectives (TLOs) in the textbook. By the end of the semester, you will be able to do everything listed in the TLOs.

4 Schedule, Assessments, Graduate Credit

Schedule and Deadlines For each week of the semester (1 to 15; 16 is final exams week), there is a corresponding Module on the course website, describing the learning materials and assessments for that week. Each week has either an exam, or an exercise set (ES) and empirical exercise, or occasionally just ES (not empirical). To make it simple, the textbook chapter numbers match the semester week numbers, too, so the book’s Table of Contents shows the topic for each week. (Two “chapters” just note that there is a midterm exam that week.) For up-to-date submission deadlines for assessments, please consult the course website.

Assessment Types Each *exercise set (ES)* is a set of multiple choice questions you complete in Canvas; you may submit each ES only once, and soon after the submission deadline you’ll see your responses along with whether they were correct or not, so late submissions receive zero credit. Note: you will not automatically see the correct response if yours was incorrect, but you’re welcome to ask on the discussion board about ES questions you can’t figure out on your own. Each *empirical*

exercise consists of writing R (or Stata) code; these are also submitted through Canvas, where there are further details and scoring rubrics. Since most students are new to statistical software, empirical exercises are scored primarily on effort. Each *exam* is in Canvas and multiple choice, very similar to an ES, but with more questions and more restricted time (see Canvas for details). The exams will all be open-book/note/Wikipedia/etc. The instructions say, “You may use any materials you want: eBook, textbook, Wikipedia, notes, etc. But, you may not consult with any other person (whether in person, by text, email, etc.). There is no penalty for guessing.” Each (non-exam) chapter also has *textbook discussion questions (DQs)*. In the course website, you respond to one of them (your choice), and you can then reply to other students’ responses. Your score is entirely based on participation, i.e., did you submit a response or not? You can skip up to 3, i.e., you’re expected to participate in 10 over the semester. Other than exams, you are welcome to discuss the ESs, DQs, and empirical exercises with fellow students, but you must submit your own.

Assignment Credit: ECONOM 4371 Not every assignment is mandatory. If you are enrolled in ECONOM 4371 (not 7371), then you may choose to submit any 10 exercise sets and any 5 empirical exercises. More specifically, your lowest ES and empirical scores will be dropped (or replaced by scores of 100%) so that only your best 10 ES and best 5 empirical exercise scores count. Of course, to get the most out of this course, you may still wish to do and submit all the ESs and empirical exercises. Note: the FOR CLERICAL USE ONLY assignments in the course website are to help replace your lowest scores with 100% scores.

Assignment Credit: ECONOM 7371 If you’re in ECONOM 7371, then instead you must submit (at least) 10 empirical exercises, but everything else is the same. Note: the FOR CLERICAL USE ONLY assignments in the course website are to account for the difference between how many empirical exercises can be dropped for 4371 vs. 7371 students.

5 Expectations

What Your Peers and I Expect from You You should access the course site regularly (multiple times per week) to read announcements, access and submit exercises, interact on the discussion board, etc. On the discussion board, you are expected to participate while showing respect for others, and helping or receiving help as appropriate. Please consider that sarcasm and related joking is easily misunderstood online. Together we can build a polite, respectful community with the shared goal of learning econometrics.

What You May Expect from Me You may expect me to do the following.

- Monitor, facilitate, and/or reply to discussion board posts and private messages within 72 hours.
- Provide timely feedback on assignments.
- Help build a learning community.
- Welcome your feedback on the class and consider it seriously (even if I ultimately disagree). Past students’ feedback has helped me understand students better and improve this class; you are now benefiting from their comments.

- Provide you with ample opportunity to practice your new skills and understanding, which is critical to learning. Imagine training for a marathon by listening to lectures on running form and reading books about optimal training routines without ever actually running or exercising. It is just as foolish to have training in econometrics without any exercise sets.
- Be patient when you are struggling with a new concept; this is how learning occurs, actively and not passively.
- Treat you with respect, as fellow adults who want to learn more about my favorite subject: econometrics!

6 Course Success

To succeed in this class, you should do the following.

- Try hard on all assignments.
- Ask questions when you need help.
- Start the assignments as early as possible in order to realize what you don't understand in time to ask questions.
- Ask questions of your classmates through the discussion board.
- Deepen your understanding by attempting to answer your classmates' questions.
- Respect your classmates: listen first, think second, talk/type third.

Regarding the debated existence of “dumb questions”: I personally find some questions to be smarter than others (having asked my own share of “dumb” questions over the years), but you can expect me to treat you with the same level of respect regardless of your question's intelligence. I equally highly value all honest questions.

7 Late Work Policy

For exercise sets and exams, since feedback is provided (approximately) at the submission deadline, late submissions receive a score of zero.

In case of an emergency such as serious illness, family emergency, or a legitimate conflict with recognized University activities, you must contact me immediately (i.e., *before* the exam or deadline) to request a makeup assessment and provide documentation of the emergency. If you miss (and don't make up) both midterms or the final, then you will likely get an F as a semester grade. “Incomplete” is only given in very special circumstances; see <https://registrar.missouri.edu/policies-procedures/grades-incomplete-grades.php>

8 Grading Criteria

Table 1 shows the relative weighting of assignments that comprise the total semester score.

Table 1: Relative weighting of assignments (percent of total).

Assignment	Percent
ES	20
Empirical	20
DQ participation	10
Midterm exam #1	12
Midterm exam #2	18
Final exam (cumulative)	20
Total	100

Letter grades will be mapped in the following way: A range is 90–100% (with 98% the threshold for A+ and 93% the threshold between A- and A), B range 80–89.99% (thresholds 87% and 83%), C 70–79.99% (thresholds 77% and 73%), D 60–69.99% (thresholds 67% and 63%), F below that. Any “curve,” if it seems appropriate, will *not* enforce predetermined grade *proportions* but rather move everyone up together; you are not competing with other students for a fixed number of A grades.

9 Technical Requirements and Help

For technical help (phone, chat, email, or in-person), contact the Mizzou IT Help Desk; see <https://doit.missouri.edu/tech-support>

This class is fully online, so you must have reliable access to a computer connected to the internet. Other basic technical skills are required, such as navigating the course website and using a text editor. Additionally, you must use R or Stata statistical software, which may require you to download and install software; see Chapter 1 in the textbook for details.

If you anticipate internet connection problems during an exam: try to find a different computer that won't have problems. Failing that, print-to-PDF the exam as soon as you open it (so you have a .pdf file on your computer), and then start marking answers in your copy of the PDF. Email me the marked .pdf file within the allotted time window (I can see the time you send the email and the time you started the exam in Canvas). Then try copying answers from the .pdf back into Canvas, to save me the time (and possibly reduced accuracy) of manually grading. As a last resort, you could send me the PDF (or clear pictures of it) with your phone using cell data. Most important: failing to submit the exam by the deadline and only telling me about internet problems afterward will not get you credit.

10 Other Resources

Library You may access the University of Missouri Library Distance Education Support Service page at <https://libraryguides.missouri.edu/distance/>

Student Support Please click on the “Support & Policies” page within the course website. Within it, Tech Support has various resources for tech support, and Learning Resources has links to resources like NetTutor (free online tutoring) and the Learning Center.

Other Resources See the University’s Academic Policies and Expectations, also in “Support & Policies.” The “Other Student Resources” page is linked there, for Financial Aid, Counseling Services, and Academic Advising.

11 Other Policies

Academic Integrity Pledge “I strive to uphold the University values of respect, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work.” You are expected to adhere to this pledge on all graded work whether or not they are explicitly asked in advance to do so. Further details on academic integrity may be found in the course website: in “Support & Policies,” under “MU Policies & Expectations,” see “Academic Integrity.”

Other Policies Also in the “Support & Policies” page, under “MU Policies & Expectations,” see

- Statement of Nondiscrimination
- Students with Disabilities
- Intellectual Pluralism

and anything else that interests you. Information concerning student grade appeal procedures and non-academic grievances and appeals may be found in the Student Handbook.