

Economics 9447
Topics in Microeconomic Policy Analysis
Spring 2020

Class Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45 AM
107 Geological Sciences Building

Course Website: Canvas – <http://courses.missouri.edu>

Instructor: Dr. Bradley R. Curs

Office: 218D Hill Hall

Phone: 573-882-2759

Email: cursb@missouri.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-6:00 PM

Set appointment at: <http://faculty.missouri.edu/cursb/>

Prerequisites:

Economics 8451, 8473 (concurrent enrollment acceptable), or equivalent.

Economics 9473 is recommended. (Economics 9446 is *not* a prerequisite.)

Course Description:

The objective of Economics 9446 and 9447 is to provide a toolkit for the evaluation of key economic policy questions in the areas of labor, public economics, social welfare and health. The courses will cover the most current and relevant empirical techniques in these fields, and provide context and examples of applications. Although the focus of the courses is in the areas described above, the toolkit will be useful for research in all areas of applied microeconomics and policy analysis. Economics 9446 and 9447 may be taken in any order.

Grading:

Assignments (3): 30 percent (10 percent each)

Exams (2): 30 percent (15 percent each)

Research Paper Proposal: 5 percent

Research Paper Draft: 10 percent

Research Paper Presentation: 5 percent

Final Research Paper: 20 percent

There is no preconceived designation of the number of students to receive each grade, nor any ceiling on the number of “A” grades to be assigned if all students exhibit the high standard of performance expected for that grade. In general, 94% and above will be reserved for an “A”, 90-93% for an “A-”, 88-89% for a “B+”, 82-87% for a “B”, 80-81% for a “B-”, 78-79% for a “C+”, 73 – 77% for a “C”, 70-72% for a “C-”, and anything below 70% for a “F”.

Any late assignments will be docked 10% of the available points if turned in within one week of the original due date and 25% of the available points until the final submission time of 7 PM on May 13th.

Course Requirements: The student's learning will be assessed through the following assignments:

Assignments (3) – Due: 7 PM on February 16, March 8, and April 26

There will be three empirical assignments due throughout the semester in which students will apply the empirical tools learned within the course to datasets and research questions provided by the instructor. Collaboration between students is but students must turn in individual assignments and complete their own data analysis and interpretation of the results.

Exams (2) – in class on March 17th and May 7th

There will be two exams during the semester. The first exam will be given during week 9 of the semester and the second exam will be given during week 15.

Research Paper

A research paper, and associated presentation, related to the material covered in this class is required. Students will have latitude to determine the topic and focus of this research paper, subject to approval of the instructor. Examples of potential research papers include: a new empirical study utilizing a research design from this course; continuation and revision of an empirical paper from a previous course (e.g. ECON 9446); a comprehensive review of the empirical literature around a particular topic, with a focus on the rigor of the research methods. Specific details of each requirement will be distributed through the course.

- a. **Proposal – Due: 7 PM on February 8**
- b. **Full Draft – Due: 7 PM on April 19**
- c. **Presentation – At assigned time during weeks 14 and 15**
- d. **Final Paper – Due: 7 PM on May 13**

Attendance and Contribution to Class Discussion Policy

Your attendance in class is vital to your individual, and our collaborative, learning. Thus, attendance is mandatory except for cases of excused absences, which include advanced absence requests (submitted by email) related to illness, family emergency, inclement weather, and professional development (e.g., presenting a paper at a conference, interviewing for employment).

A student's contribution to the discussion in class is critical to their own learning of the material as well as the learning of other students. While contribution will not be formally assessed as a component of the student's grade, a lack of quality contribution in class (as determined by the instructor) may result in the lowering of a student's letter grade by up to one full grade. A student who is failing to contribute quality discussion to the classroom will be privately notified by the instructor to increase the quality of their contribution before any grading penalties will be assessed.

Course Readings (Required):

Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2009). *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cunningham, S. C. (2018). *Causal inference: The mixtape (version 1.7)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.scunning.com/mixtape.html>

You will also be responsible for a number of readings as detailed on the course Canvas website.

Course Readings (Suggested):

Murnane, R. J., & Willett, J. B. (2011). *Methods matter: Improving causal inference in educational and social science research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Topics and Schedule (Subject to Change):

Introduction and Regression Review (Week 1)

Correlated Errors (Weeks 2-3)

Experimental Research Design (Weeks 3-5)

Regression Discontinuity (Weeks 5-8)

Duration and Hazard Models (Weeks 8-9)

Matching Techniques (Weeks 10-11)

Synthetic Control (Weeks 11-12)

Quantile Regression (Week 13)

Student Presentations (Weeks 14-15)

Academic dishonesty:

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

Office of Academic Integrity website: <https://oai.missouri.edu/>

Disabilities Act:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the MU Disability Center, S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Academic Pluralism:

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects students' rights. Students who have questions regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the department chair or director of graduate studies; the director of the [Office of Academic Integrity](#); or, the [Office of Inclusion, Diversity & Equity](#). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor at the end of the course.

Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion and Privacy

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.