

SYLLABUS, SPRING 2017

ECONOMICS 487: RESEARCH METHODS IN ECONOMICS

Tuesday, Thursday; 9:30am-10:45am

Instructor: Dr. Laura Crispin

Location: Barbelin 306

CONTACT INFORMATION

E-mail: lcrispin@sju.edu

Telephone: 610-660-1594

Office Address: 107B Barbelin Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 12:30-1:30pm in my office; Wednesday at Starbucks, 2:00 - 3:30pm, and by appointment. Supplementary office hours before the final will be announced in class.

Email policy: I try to return emails as quickly as possible (usually within 24-48 hours), but during peak times, it may take me longer to respond. Please make sure to include your name in your email sign-off (I can't always tell who you are from your email address alone).

REQUIRED TEXTS AND SOFTWARE

James H. Stock, Mark W. Watson, *Introduction to Econometrics*. Prentice Hall, 2011.

Andrea A. Lunsford, *Easy Writer*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Publishing, 2014.

Steven Greenlaw. *Doing Economics*. Cengage, 2009.

Stata IC, student edition, 6-month data license (www.stata.com) [Do NOT cheap out and get "Small" version - it can't handle CPS data!]

An “unzipping” software, like Winzip or 7-Zip

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the course and the citation information will be provided in advance in class and on Blackboard.

Additionally, students with iPhones, iPads, or Android phones are strongly encouraged to download the "Socrative" app for use during class (it's free!).

INTRODUCTION

This course is an upper-level economics elective that provides students with an introduction into research methods. We will discuss current research in applied microeconomics and apply the methods learned to create original research. Throughout the course we will investigate multiple facets of research including literature review, data analysis, and analytic writing. Throughout the course, students will be given verbal and written feedback about their analysis and writing.

Throughout this course, there will be opportunities for reading about, writing about, and discussing current policies, problems, and events that are relevant to writing a comprehensive research paper. In order to gain the most from these discussions, students are required to take on an active role in these discussions.

OFFICIAL PREREQUISITES: ECON 101 - Introduction to Microeconomics; ECN410 – Econometrics (or comparable class)

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE: ECON 301 - Microeconomic Theory

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students must be able to:

- Perform a comprehensive literature review
- Find and critically evaluate academic, economic sources in discussion and in writing

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the above through informal writing assignments, an annotated bibliography, a formal inquiry paper, and written exams.

- Analyze cross-sectional data and discuss (verbally and in writing) empirical findings

Students will demonstrate their skills in this area of critical and analytical thinking through informal in-class writing, in-class workshops, and a formal inquiry paper.

- Learn how to write as an economist in both tone and content.
- Learn how to effectively and efficiently revise their original economic research

Students will demonstrate their abilities in the above areas through readings, in-class discussion and writings, in-class paper workshops, a formal revision process, and a formal inquiry paper.

GRADING

As indicated above, your grade for this course will be based on a variety of assignments. The fraction of the points allocated to each is shown below. Attendance is not accounted for specifically in your grade, but I expect all students to attend each class. Only four “unexcused” absences allowed. Only documented, university-approved absences will be considered “excused” absences. There will be no "extra credit" given.

	Grade Breakdown
Class Participation	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Inquiry Paper	35%
Initial Data Analysis and Write-up (5%)	
First Draft (5%)	
Peer Review (5%)	

Final Draft (20%)	
Presentation of Inquiry Paper	15%
Organization, Clarity, and Content (5%)	
Aesthetics of Presentation (5%)	
Response to Questions (5%)	
Quizzes	15%
Final Exam	25%

You are responsible for all material in the classes and book. The final exam will be comprehensive with an emphasis on new material. **Notes are not permitted during the exams, nor are formula sheets.** A standard four-function calculator may be used, but must be approved by the instructor before the start of the exam. (NO cell-phone calculators!)

PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION AND INFORMAL WRITING

Your participation grade will be based on your participation in classroom discussions, in-class informal writing exercises and brainstorming sessions, and online discussion boards. Active participants will receive full credit.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In order to help you evaluate academic articles and to help you become familiar with the tone and language of economics, I am assigning an annotated bibliography. After you have selected a research question, find at least five articles in the economics literature relevant to your question. After reading and re-reading each article, you will write a two paragraph summary of the article addressing the research question, methods, data, and findings. You will follow with a one or two page discussion of the article that incorporates criticism of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. The bibliography is due on Friday, March 10th via Blackboard at or before 5pm. Assignments sent after 5pm, but before midnight will lose 20 points. Assignments posted after midnight will receive a zero. Examples can be found at <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>.

INQUIRY PAPER

You may chose your own research question related to this course or may ask for suggestions. On January 31, there will be an in-class brainstorming session to help jumpstart your paper. By February 9, you need to have two possible research questions with several sentences addressing the question, the motivation, and indicating how you will answer the question (using data, reviewing previous literature, etc). Your will post your two questions and brief write-up on the Blackboard discussion site before class on February 9.

A rough outline of your paper (3-5 pages) is due via Blackboard on February 27. A nearly-completed draft (approximately 10 pages in length, without tables) is due via Blackboard on March 20, and a hard copy due in class on March 21. For each of these components, they will be submitted by 5pm on the due date. Assignments submitted

after 5pm and before midnight on the due date will lose 20 points. Assignments submitted after midnight will receive a grade of zero.

You will be assigned a peer's paper and are responsible for reading the paper and suggesting revisions and edits. Peer reviews are due (hard copy) in class on March 30th. If you fail to bring this assignment to class, you will receive a zero. You will receive the feedback from your peer and myself approximately April 6th.

The final paper, which should incorporate comments from your peer review, your presentation, and from me, is due on the last day of class. The length of this final draft should be 15-20 pages (not including tables/figures). Papers should be submitted via Blackboard (no hard copy needed). Late papers will lose 10 points of their grade for each business day after the due date (ex. a paper that is a 85/100 will drop to 75/100 if handed in one day late). Final papers will be graded and returned with comments at the end of final exam week. Please come to Dr. Crispin's office to pick up your paper at that time.

Further details of the paper requirements, examples of each stage, and a grading rubric will be provided later in the semester.

INQUIRY PAPER PRESENTATION

During the final weeks of class, you will present your current draft to the class. In order to do this, you'll need to create a multimedia version of your paper that summarizes your motivation, your research question, previous literature, analysis, and conclusion. Your slides should be succinct, well-formatted, and include references (in-text with a bibliography on the last slide). You will have 15 minutes to present, with several minutes to answer questions at the end.

CITATION STYLE

Although there is no convention in economics, in this course, we'll be using the Chicago style for citations. Please make sure that all of the above assignments conform to this convention. For your reference, please see *Easy Writer*, pages 288 - 313.

QUIZZES

The quizzes will contain a combination of multiple choice and short answer essay questions related to the most recent materials preceding the quiz. Please come prepared with a #2 pencil and calculator.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions that incorporates material from the entire course. It will be held during the assigned final exam period. Please come prepared with a #2 pencil and calculator. Prior to finals week, previous exams will be provided along with study materials to help you better prepare.

MISSED CLASS POLICY

As discussed above, class attendance and participation is critical in this fast paced, writing intensive study of research methods. However, emergencies may arise and force you to miss class. If you are ill and/or contagious, please do not come to class! In these circumstances, you are required to get the lecture notes and materials from a classmate **BEFORE** the next lecture. You are encouraged to come to my office hours to discuss any questions regarding the materials.

MAKE UP POLICY

There will be no opportunity to make-up a missed quiz, regardless of the reason for absence. Students missing the final for unavoidable and formally verifiable reasons will be given a makeup exam. Exams missed for avoidable or for unverifiable reasons will be assigned a grade of 0. I cannot change the date/time of an exam to accommodate students' travel plans. Students must plan their end of quarter travel arrangements accordingly.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Texting, cell phone, and laptop use during class is distracting to your peers and to me, and therefore, the use of laptops and cell phones is not permitted during class. Should you need to make a phone call or send a text message, please do so before or after class. Students who are texting during class will receive a zero for their class participation grade. If your texting during class becomes a distraction, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to be familiar with the **SJU Academic Honesty Policy**, published in the Student Handbook and University Catalog, and to adhere to it at all times. Unauthorized use of notes or assistance during an exam will result in failure of the assignment.

Specifically, with respect to plagiarism, the policy is defined as "plagiarism, the appropriation of information, ideas, or the language of other persons or writers and the submission of them as one's own to satisfy the requirements of a course. Plagiarism thus constitutes both theft and deceit. Compositions, term papers, or computer programs acquired, either in part or in whole, from commercial sources or from other students and submitted as one's own original work shall be considered plagiarism. All students are directed to the standard manuals of style or reference guides for discussions of plagiarism and the means by which sources are legitimately acknowledged, cited, quoted, paraphrased, and footnoted—whether presented in an oral report or in writing," (<http://www.sju.edu/int/resources/registrar/ahpolicies.html>). **You are responsible for knowing what does and does not constitute plagiarism.** If you have any questions or concerns, please schedule an appointment with Dr. Crispin to discuss.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with state and federal laws, the University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. For those who have or think that you may have a disability requiring an accommodation (learning, physical, psychological) should contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Room G10, Bellarmine, 610-660-1774 (voice) or 610-660-1620 (TTY) as early as possible in the semester for additional information and so that an accommodation, if appropriate, can be made in a timely manner. You will be required to provide current (within 3 years) documentation of the disability.

For a more detailed explanation of the University's accommodation process, as well as the programs and services offered to students with disabilities, please go to www.sju.edu/studentlife/studentresources/sess/ssd. If you have any difficulty accessing the information on-line, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at the telephone numbers above.

THE WRITING CENTER

You may also wish to take advantage of the Writing Center, where undergraduate and graduate student tutors can assist you at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting to revising. The main Writing Center is located in Merion Hall 162; the satellite is located in PLC 128. To make an appointment, go to sju.mywconline.com or call or stop by the Writing Center during open business hours. You can reach someone in the Merion Hall location at [\(610\) 660-1341](tel:6106601341) and the PLC satellite at [\(610\) 660-1920](tel:6106601920). For hours and additional information, visit the Writing Center website at www.sju.edu/writingcenter.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED)

Tuesday, January 17: Syllabus and General Information; Overview of Research Methods and Statistics/Econometrics Review

Thursday, January 19: Overview of Research Process; Introduction to CPS Data and Stata; Readings in Applied Microeconometrics using CPS Data

Tuesday, January 24: Guest from Bureau of Labor Statistics; CPS data workshop

Thursday, January 26: Readings in Applied Microeconometrics using CPS Data

Tuesday, January 31: Working with CPS Data; **Brainstorming Paper Topics**

Thursday, February 2: Working with CPS Data (cont'd)

Tuesday, February 7: Writing an Introduction; Using Data to Motivate a Research Paper

Thursday, February 9: **Quiz #1 (CPS Data Basics)**; Introduction Writing (cont'd)

Paper Topics Due via Blackboard before class

Tuesday, February 14: Critical Reading in Applied Microeconomics

Thursday, February 16: Critical Reading (cont'd); Critical Writing

Tuesday, February 21: Using Data to Answer a Research Question: Summary Statistics

Thursday, February 23: Using Data to Answer a Research Question: Summary Statistics

Monday, February 27: Outline of Paper posted to Blackboard at or before 5pm

Tuesday, February 28: Using Data to Answer a Research Question: Regression Analysis

Thursday, March 2: Using Data to Answer a Research Question: Regression Analysis

Tuesday, March 7: Empirical Analysis and Writing: How to Discuss Findings

Thursday, March 9: **Quiz #2 (Critical Reading; Data Analysis)**; Empirical Analysis and Writing: How to Discuss Findings

Friday, March 10: Annotated Bibliography Due

Tuesday, March 14: SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 16: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 20: Draft due via Blackboard by 5pm

Tuesday, March 21: Analysis workshops in class; **Draft due at the Beginning of class**

Thursday, March 23: Peer review during class including analysis write-up workshopping

Tuesday, March 28: Readings in Applied Microeconometrics

Thursday, March 30: Readings in Applied Microeconometrics; **Peer Reviews Due at the Beginning of Class;**

Tuesday, April 4: **Quiz #3 (Critical Reading, Multivariate Analysis)**; Readings in Applied Microeconometrics

Thursday, April 6: Analysis and writing workshops in class; **Drafts returned with peer and professor comments;**

Tuesday, April 11: Outstanding issues and review; Final in-class writing & analysis workshop session

Thursday, April 13: In-Class Paper Presentations

Tuesday, 4/18: GO TO MONDAY CLASSES (Easter Monday make-up day)

Thursday, April 20: In-Class Paper Presentations

Tuesday, April 25: In-Class Paper Presentations

Thursday, April 27: In-Class Paper Presentations

Tuesday, May 2: Dr. Crispin presents research, discussion of current events, review for the final; **Final papers due via Blackboard by 5pm**

Wednesday May 3: Friday schedule

Thursday May 4: Reading Day

Final Exams: 5/5/17 - 5/11/17; Our final exam is on May 8th at 10:30am in our usual classroom.