

**Economics 197 - Economic Rhetoric:
Using Economic Theory & Empirical Evidence in Arguing Policy
Summer Session II 2015**

Class Hours: T Th 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Location: Physical Science 130

Meeting Dates: 7/28 – 8/27
Class Website: CANVAS
(it's new... & better)

Instructor: David Bryan
Office: Engineering 2, 447
Hours: Tues 1:00 to 2:30 (or by appointment, Thurs)

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From the UCSC Course Catalog (emphasis mine)

"Economics students are expected to learn to ***effectively communicate*** economic theory and evidence relating to economic policy ***to audiences that do not have economics degrees***. The skills to be learned are both written and oral communication. Students learn to present convincing policy arguments in position papers, executive summaries, and in oral presentation that may include charts and other means of communication. Students must have satisfied the Entry-Level Writing and Composition requirement, as well as either 100A, 100M, 100B, 100N, or 113, before enrolling."

Students of economics must satisfy the major's upper-division Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement. *Economics 197* satisfies this requirement for Economics majors. It is intended "to familiarize you with the demand and rewards of working and writing within the economic academic community."

The Course Generally

Course Goals:

- Read, think, speak, and write with care and clarity.
- Write a clear, concise, finished piece of work.
- Prepare and deliver oral presentations effectively.
- Support opinions with compelling data, analysis and visual aids.

I want you to be clear from the outset: although this is an economics class, the primary goal is NOT for you to learn additional economic concepts. (Of course, you might, and that is surely a plus.) The focus of *Economics 197* is primarily EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION!

As you may already have experienced when speaking about your studies with family, friends, or acquaintances, it is not always easy to communicate 'things-economic' with people who neither have nor seek a degree in the field. Unless I tell you otherwise, the target for all of your work in this class is a reader/listener NOT trained as an economist. (This includes your instructor!) *Economics 197* asks that you speak about economics – not watered down, over-simplified economics, but your most sophisticated economic understandings - with people unfamiliar with the specialized language and shorthand so often taken for granted from within an academic discipline. As you force yourself to 'translate' economics into more common parlance, your reading, thinking, speaking, writing and understandings of economics should clarify and deepen.

Texts

1. Economical Writing (2nd edition), Dierdre N. McCloskey. This is a book about writing written by a highly regarded economist. Less than 100 pages, and an easy read, McCloskey's suggestions are not so easily put into practice. I hope you will read and reread sections of this book multiple times. (Available at the University bookstore) REQUIRED!

2. Additional sources. We will also be reading from and viewing a variety of other sources, some by academics, some by journalists, policy makers, and 'regular citizens.' (All of these will be available online either within eCommons, via a link to another site, or in class.)

3. Given the brevity of a summer "quarter," some of what you need to learn simply cannot be learned without you doing some independent work. To that end, I refer you to Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. It is a wonderful resource for this class as well as writing assignments you might bump into in your classes. I recommend you use it as a starting point. And/But remember, as with any resource, it is a tool, not the gospel.

Other REQUIRED Materials

Come to class with a writing implement and a notebook dedicated to the notes you will take and the writing you will do for this class. I love gadgets of all sorts, but I recommend pen/pencil and paper for this. I am certainly not opposed to you doing your work on a computer, tablet, etc., BUT I insist that you STAY OFFLINE while we are in class.

Written Work, Attendance, and Participation

Learning to is very different from **learning about**. Getting better at thinking, writing, and speaking requires thinking, writing and speaking! ... And oh yes ... it also requires **TRYING to get better** at thinking, writing and speaking. We can often learn **about** something while remaining relatively passive and just listening. That is mostly **not** the case with writing and speaking. You cannot be passive and expect results; you have to work at it. We will spend time together in class writing and reading that writing in response to assigned reading, our discussions, and other material. I will ask you to read some of your writing aloud, to offer your assessment of your own and others' work, and to welcome the same from your peers.

You need to arrive to class having read assigned materials and ready to participate. Tardiness, inattention and failure to prepare for class will be interpreted as a failure to participate fully in class and as lack of respect for the class and your fellow students.

Although I have tried to be sensitive to the realities of the calendar - a summer session is only five weeks long - it might seem otherwise. You will be asked to write regularly both inside and outside of class. If you do not stay current, you will find yourself in that place no student enjoys.

Grades and Grading Guidelines

Final grades in *Economics 197* reward both effort and results. We will try to account for all aspects of your work over the session. To do well in class you need, at minimum, to turn in all assignments on time and contribute regularly in class. Attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss a class for some pressing reason

– illness, family emergency, etc. – please let me know as far in advance as possible. Failure to attend class regularly can impact your grade significantly. Here’s how.

- Participation (total 20 points); 2 points possible/class x 10 classes) Showing up on time and satisfactorily completing whatever writing is assigned will earn you one (1) point. You may earn additional participation points by actively participating in class discussions. The quality of your ongoing participation will determine the strength of your participation grade.

While we are on the subject: some people are very comfortable thinking aloud in groups. Others are not... not at all! If you are more reticent, I invite you to use this opportunity to ‘get over’ some of your reluctance in a setting that I hope will feel comfortable.

Perhaps it goes without saying, but absence and late arrival will affect your grade negatively.

- Out-of-Class Written and Oral Assignments (total 80 points) (These may be organized differently as the summer unfolds)
 - (#1) Economic Principle to Non-Economist ; 1 to 2 pages (5 points) due 7/30
 - (#2) “Economics to English - Translation”; 1 to 2 pages (5 points) due 8/4
 - (#3) Economic Analysis (defensible economic position); 2 to 3 pages (10 points) due 8/11
 - (#4) Policy Memo 1 2 pages; (10 points) due 8/18
 - (#4) Debate; (10 points) due 8/18
 - (#5) Policy Memo (references required) ; 2 to 3 pages (20 points) due 8/25
 - (#6) Presentation & materials ; in class (20 points) due 8/27

Two more things about points and grades

First, focusing on points and grades will get in the way of just about everything education ought to be: a spirited, curiosity-driven frolic, in which we take risks and make (and correct) mistakes, so that we can take more risks and make (and correct) more sophisticated mistakes. On the other hand, for many, grades are an effective incentive to frolic. Although this may sound like an ambiguous approach to your assessments, I prefer that you simply recognize the ‘tension’ inherent in school as we know it.

Second, these guidelines are just that, ‘guidelines.’ If we discover other ways for my assessments to make more sense, I will implement them (never to your detriment). I recognize that I am far from infallible. If you think I’ve overlooked something when assessing your work, please come speak about it. At the same time, **do not expect ‘something for nothing.’** Sustained, spirited, high quality work in and out of class will earn stronger grades than lackluster work and ‘ho hum’ effort.

General Paper Formatting and Guidelines

(You might be inclined NOT to take this seriously! I IMPLORE YOU, please do so!)

- Please use 12-point font and one-inch margins. Double spaced, please. And please don’t get fancy with your fonts. (Times, New Roman, Garamond, Arial, Avenir... nothing flowery or large.)
- Documents must be turned in as Microsoft WORD documents (or documents that can be opened using Word) via the Assignment feature in the class’ CANVAS site.
- Unless circumstances change, we will grade your papers using the VIEW FEEDBACK tab within the GRADE function within CANVAS. We may or may not have ‘class-readers’ who will read and assess your papers. Although a reader may be reading and commenting on your work, I will read all of your work and assign grades. (If anything about this changes, we will let you know.)

- What if you do not have Microsoft Word? First of all, there are computers in the library with WORD loaded and available for your use. You can also try OPEN OFFICE, an open source business/productivity program that allows you to read and create WORD-compatible documents. Also if you are a MAC user and you use Pages, the program allows you to save your doc as a WORD doc.
- When an assignment asks for a certain number of pages, this does NOT include a reference page or endnote page. (If the assignment calls for them, these are in addition to the page number requested.)
- Papers should be saved with filenames in the following format: **last name first initial assignment title**. Your file will be returned on CANVAS, read, annotated and assessed.
- Your submissions must be on time; late papers will negatively affect your grade. In the event of illness and/or other family or personal circumstances, please contact me before the due date.
- Most of you did not take seriously the piece about how to name and hand in assignments. "What's the big deal?" you thought "... as long as I hand it in!?" So you ignored it. I am repeating it here because for reasons of recordkeeping and time (MY TIME) it is very important!!

Academic Integrity (from the UCSC Writing Program)

By enrolling in the university, students automatically agree to abide by its policies, including those on academic misconduct. Academic integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide your conduct and decisions as members of the UCSC community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must cite your sources to avoid plagiarism. This requires more than citing direct quotations or paraphrasing. There is absolutely nothing wrong with using ideas that come from others; academic work is an additive process. We all rely on the work of others to advance our collective knowledge. Simply be sure to give credit where it is due. Failure to do so is a serious breach of academic integrity.

It may not always be easy to recognize whether you are legitimately citing the work of others or whether you have "crossed the line" into plagiarism. To become acquainted with what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, make an effort to familiarize yourself with and follow citation practices.

(see <http://library.ucsc.edu/library-research-resources>) and the university's Rules of Conduct regarding student conduct and discipline: <http://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/pdf/student-handbook.pdf> beginning on page 45).

You should know that I take this very seriously. Experience tells me that sometimes things "seem too good to be true." And sometimes when they seem that way, they are. Your readers and I will check papers using a variety of search engines in order to verify authorship. I am more than willing to give strong grades to everyone in class. I will also report academic dishonesty if it appears.

Office hours

I encourage you to take advantage of office hours to discuss your work or speak about things related to class. If you are unable to meet during regularly scheduled hours, please contact me and we can try to set up an alternative time.

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me as soon as possible, preferably within

the first week of the Summer Session. Contact DRC by phone at [831-459-2089](tel:831-459-2089) or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.