

Instruction Team Information

Continuing Lecturer Dr. Aaron G. Meininger Ph.D.

UCSC Economics Department

Office: E2, 403E

Office hours: By appointment (email is most effective). Official office hours are varied by quarter; please see the Canvas announcement.

Email: ameining@ucsc.edu

Head TA:	Teaching Assistants:

Discussion Sections and TA Office Hours:

TA	Email	Sections	Office and Hours
		TBD	TBD

Note: It is *strongly suggested* that you attend the section that you are enrolled in, but you may go to anyone's office hours for help.

Please see the canvas site's announcements section for the most up-to-date information about section and office hours.

Course Summary

From the UCSC Course Catalog: 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 presentations that may include charts and other means of communication. Students must have satisfied the Entry-Level Writing and Composition requirement, as well as either ECON 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.

How this class is relevant in the real-world: economics is a social science; it provides a framework in which to organize observed phenomena in order to develop an understanding of how the world works around us. The economy is a complex relationship of variables and behavior. Because of this inherent complexity, using the correct diction is necessary to the comprehension of economic relationships, and the dissemination of their abilities and caveats. The discipline of economics requires clear logic, clear thinking, and clear communication: it also promotes those qualities in those who study the subject.

This format for this course is IN-PERSON

Learning Outcomes

The program learning outcomes for the family of economics majors as they relate to this course include:

1. **Demonstration of Critical Thinking Skills:** Students are expected to be able to apply economic analysis to everyday problems in real world situations, to understand current events and evaluate specific policy proposals and to evaluate the role played by assumptions in arguments that reach different conclusions to a specific economic or policy problem.

and

2. **Demonstration of Communication Skills:** Students are expected to be able to communicate effectively in written, oral and graphical form about specific issues and to formulate well-organized written arguments that state assumptions and hypotheses supported by evidence.

By the end of this class, I aim to help develop three major skills within you:

- **How to Think Like an Economist:** Thinking like an economist does not mean taking any particular position on policy, but approaching policy like a scientist. This means clearly stating your assumptions about the world, following those assumptions to their logical conclusions, and assessing whether both

assumptions and conclusions match the world around us. Economists get from their assumptions to their conclusions using mathematical models. More than anything, thinking like an economist means thinking in terms of models, even as you understand the limitations of each model.

- How to Approach Society's Issues from an Economists' Viewpoint: Knowing economics is the best way to turn hope into practical solutions. One of our jobs as economists is to propose solutions to social problems. When you leave this class, you will have some sense of how economists approach society's problems, and how you can use the models you've learned to solve those problems. Though the models of this class are gross simplifications, and thus the solutions we find will have limitations, you will leave knowing how further study in economics may help you make the world a better place.
- How to better communicate economic issues and viewpoints: Economics is a very complex social science. The models and assumptions we use in academia may or may not match the real-world situation we find ourselves in on a day-to-day basis. With clear and precise communication, we can help to explain what all those statistics in the media actually represent, how they were collected, and from which sources. We can use this information and models to explain the effects of economic policy, both from a theoretical view and a practical view. Finally, with the help of economic history, we can try and learn about the unforeseen consequences of past economic policy, in order to make the policy of the future useful and efficient for all.

Specifically, this course aims to improve the ability...

1. To read, think, speak, and write with care and clarity.
2. To support opinions with compelling data and visual aids.
3. To write a clear, concise, finished piece of work.
4. To prepare and deliver oral presentations effectively.

Prerequisites

Students must have satisfied the entry-level writing and composition requirement, as well as either ECON 100A, 100M, 100B, 100N, or 113, before enrolling. For a refresher of the skills in ECON 100A, 100B, and 113, please refer to the information provided here. For a review of entry-level writing and composition, please see the following resources:

Recommended/Required Textbook and Materials

Recommended Text: Economics of the Public Sector (4e) Stiglitz and Rosengard. W.W. Norton, 2015

Other texts and online subscriptions: We will use many articles from many different sources. I can suggest a few alternative subscriptions, just come up and ask and I will be happy to share my thoughts. Some general useful subscriptions might be:

The Economist (<https://www.economist.com/>), The Wall Street Journal (<https://www.wsj.com>), NPR (<https://www.npr.org/>), CNBC (<https://www.cnbc.com>), BBC (<https://www.bbc.com>), MarketWatch (<https://www.marketwatch.com>), RT (<https://www.rt.com>), Al Jazeera (<https://www.aljazeera.com>), and Twitter (<https://twitter.com>).

Assignments and Assessments

Reading Assignments: These assignments are developed with the goal of deepening the students' understanding of the reading and helps students reflect on their understanding by encouraging them to make connections between their prior knowledge and new concepts. Often, these assignments ask students to make their thinking explicit, which also allows instructors to gauge student learning. The reading assignments **promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content**. Active in-class learning also provides students with informal opportunities for feedback on how well they understood the material. These assignments support the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

TA Feedback: These are meaningful interactions with the teaching assistants. These interactions support the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

In-class Active Learning Exercises: These assignments develop and utilize the lessons and tools described in class. These assignments support the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

Homework Essays: These assignments develop and utilize the lessons and tools described in class. These assignments support the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

Final Essay: The final essay is the student's representation of their ability to use the knowledge and tools of the class to communicate through writing their position on a public policy of their choice and to be able to support that decision through the use of economic rhetoric. This assignment supports the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

Final Presentation: This assignment is directly associated with the final essay. In this assignment, the student develops and gives a recorded oral presentation about the topic of their essay via Zoom or other online delivered media. This assignment is the student's representation of their ability to use the knowledge and tools of the course to communicate orally their position on a public policy of their choice and to be able to support that position through the use of economic rhetoric. Originality and professionalism are the focus of the online aspect of the course, it is also a place to express yourself creatively in the (somewhat stuffy) world of economics. Past students have successfully gone on to utilize their presentation, as well as the skills used, in their job search. This assignment supports the following learning outcomes: Critical Thinking Skills, Quantitative Reasoning Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills, and Communication Skills.

Grading Breakdown

TA Feedback – 5% of final grade

Reading Assignments – 15% of final grade

Homework Essays – 20% of final grade

In-class Active Learning Assignments – 20% of final grade

Final Essay/Thesis – 20% of final grade

Final Presentation – 20% of final grade

Grading Policies

You will not get credit if the TA or I are unable to read your assignment. You are responsible for ensuring your homework is uploaded by the deadline and in proper condition. We will not make allowances for cases where you upload the wrong file or there is a connection error just before the deadline (I suggest you upload your homework well before the deadline to avoid this problem). The average turnaround time for grading the major assignments is one week.

Written Assignment Grading Rubric: The grading rubric for all written assignments is located in the “files” section of the Canvas course site.

Re-Write Grading (HW1,2,3): (no rewrites for this class as we do not have any graders)

- 1) Rewrites must be turned in by the date noted in the schedule/calendar.
- 2) Make sure to check for mistakes that the graders didn't catch or mark explicitly, I do actually read these rewrites.
- 3) When you do the rewrite, please make all your changes in bold underline so that I can easily see the differences between the two drafts.
- 4) Re-writes can give you up-to 20% back on your assignment. I.e., If you get a 95% and do a perfect rewrite, it can be replaced with 100%; if you get a 75% and do a perfect rewrite, it can be replaced with a 95%. You cannot get over 100% from a re-write, you cannot get a lower grade than your first submission, either.

Errors in Grades: Grades will be posted regularly on Canvas. If you believe there has been a mistake in any grade you have two weeks from the date it was posted to bring it to the attention of your TA or myself. After that time period, the grade posted online stands (think of this as a statute of limitations for grade changes).

Grade Cutoffs: When the time for final grades comes, I often receive emails like this: "I'm really close to the cutoff for a [LETTER GRADE]. Is there any way my grade can be rounded up?" Such emails will go unanswered. There is no reason your grade should be rounded up when the grades of others are not.

Late Assignments: Assignments not turned in on time will be subject to a late penalty (20%). The MAXIMUM time an assignment can be late is 23 hours and 59 minutes from its due time and date. You will still turn your late assignment into the Canvas system. TAs and readers will require extra time to grade your late assignments, they will get up to one week of extra time to grade the late assignments from the date the schedule/calendar says they would normally be done.

Missed Assignments: Missed assignments will only be accepted under very dire circumstances. If you have a long-term illness or other condition that prevents you from completing your coursework, please contact your residential college to discuss a medical withdrawal.

*All grades can be curved to ensure the distribution of final grades is no worse than the historical distribution for economics classes. Elementary game theory shows that it is in your interest to study as though there is no curve, as doing far worse than your fellow students will doom your grade.

Academic Integrity

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following exam rules
- Using only permitted materials during an exam
- Viewing exam materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Keeping what you know about an exam to yourself
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam
- Accessing exam materials without permission
- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Using cell phones or other electronics to obtain outside information during an exam without explicit permission from the instructor
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.
- Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Misconduct page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

Accessibility

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by email, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Intellectual Property

The materials in this course are the intellectual property of their creators. As a student, you have access to many of the materials in the course for the purpose of learning,

engaging with your peers in the course, completing assignments, and so on. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by only using course materials for purposes associated with the course. For instance, you are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share the login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, such as: video and audio files, assignment prompts, slides, notes, syllabus, simulations, datasets, discussion threads. Conversely, any materials created solely by you (for example, your videos, essays, images, audio files, annotations, notes) are your intellectual property and you may use them as you wish.

Religious Accommodations

UC Santa Cruz welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request reasonable accommodation for religious practices. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation without penalty. You should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your instructor early in the term. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students office](#).

Title IX/CARE Advisory

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as “confidential” employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through [CARE](#). Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else

without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the [Sexual Violence Prevention & Response \(SAFE\) website](#), which provides information and resources for different situations.
- [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can also report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University's [Title IX Office](#), by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their [online reporting tool](#).
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

Report an Incident of Hate or Bias

The University of California, Santa Cruz is committed to maintaining an objective, civil, diverse and supportive community, free of coercion, bias, hate, intimidation, dehumanization or exploitation. The Hate/Bias Response Team is a group of administrators who support and guide students seeking assistance in determining how to handle a bias incident involving another student, a staff member, or a faculty member. To report an incident of hate or bias, please use the following form: [Hate/Bias Report Form](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

Student Services

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Student Success and Engagement Hub](#)

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

[Tutoring](#) and Learning Support

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

[Slug Support Program](#)

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Slug Help/[Technology](#)

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts

Slug Help/[Emergency Services here](#). For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, start . Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.