

**Economics 197 - Economic Rhetoric: Using Economic Theory and Empirical Evidence in  
Arguing Policy  
Summer 2022**

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Office Hours: TBA  
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### Course Description

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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.

### Course Objectives

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- 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 and visual aids

### Course Texts and Reading

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Assigned Readings: I have linked many articles found in The Guardian, The New York Times, The Atlantic Magazine, The Economist, The Financial Times, Business Insider, etc. These articles are meant to inform you on topics such as income inequality, the minimum wage, wealth inequality, trade agreements, budget deficits, taxes, etc. These are the topics you can write about if you choose. Many of these articles are examples of what you should be able to

write as a graduate of Economics. We will use them as initial sources of more significant research that will form the basis of the largest writing and speaking assignment. I will specify a topical schedule and will let you know which articles are relevant. Most of them are titled in the link itself.

## Course Requirements

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- The class will work in the following way: we will meet on zoom during class for discussions of potential writing topics. We will also review the relevant economics. Hopefully you will find several topics of interest to write about. The first two short papers and in-class writing assignments should provide you with feedback to inform your writing on your final paper.
- You will write 2 short papers that are 2-3 pages in length. These will be focused on the topics covered in weekly discussion and/or in the articles posted on Canvas. You may also write about any economic topic that interests you. If you are not sure if it is appropriate to the course, please ask in advance. These papers need to be submitted to Canvas.
- You will write one long paper that is between 10-12 pages in length. This paper will be an in-depth presentation and argument on one of the topics covered in class, one of the linked articles, or one of your own ideas. If you have a topic that you would like to write about that is not mentioned, please ask because as long as it relates to your work as a student of Economics, I will approve the topic. This research will be presented in a 10-15-minute presentation that will need to be recorded on your own. There are several ways to do this that we can discuss.
- We will take two “midterms” during the quarter. They will be held during our normal class time. The purpose of these tests is to evaluate your ability to write, rewrite, and edit your own work over the course of a limited time period. The “quiz” will be posted to Canvas. You will be given a few questions to choose from. You will select one question, write a 1-2-page essay, and spend the time perfecting the essay. At the end of the exam period, you will submit the essay on Canvas.

## Topical Schedule

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The topics you should be able to write about as a graduate of Economics are vast. We will discuss some of these topics on zoom/in class together and I will attempt to post material reviewing the relevant economics that you have covered in some of your other courses.

Subjects of public policy are an application of many of the things you should have already learned. We will spend this quarter writing about those topics. Effectively writing about such things as the minimum wage requires a basic review and understanding of the relevant theories you have covered in other courses.

Many of the linked articles could have been written by someone with a degree in Economics. We are going to learn how to perfect our writing on these subjects. As I mentioned previously, while the short papers will be somewhat specific, the long paper can be on a topic not covered

as long as you provide a detailed description of how it relates specifically to the subject of economics. It is important for the sources of our information to be impeccable.

## Grade Calculations

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- 10% of your grade will come from attendance and participation. I may include at least one mandatory TA section. Part of this 10% comes from participation “quizzes” that you will find in Canvas.
- 30% of your grade will come from the two combined midterms. Each of the two midterm essays will be worth 15% of your grade. Content as well as quality of the writing will be considered. The exam will give you a choice between several questions that will be based on specific articles that I ask you to read.
- 30% of your grade will come from two short essays. Both are of equal weight at 15%. These may have specific topics or directions that will be given out in class and posted. I will give you many subject options as we move through the course. If you choose a topic for this short paper, you may use the same topic for the longer research paper discussed below. This will allow you to invest in a minimal amount of research before deciding if you want to commit to the topic further. Each of these short-papers requires three references that do not need to be empirical papers but rather news or opinion pieces.
- 30% of your grade will come from the final paper (20%) and presentation of that paper (10%). You need to submit your video by the last day of class.
- Learning Support Services offers writing tutoring. Follow this link to register and see how it works remotely (through zoom I believe). I would recommend scheduling one of these sessions with a writing tutor. If you miss a lecture, you can recover the points by attending one of these sessions. You will need to have your tutor send me an email confirming that you have completed a session. Follow this link to schedule: <https://lss.ucsc.edu/programs/writing-support/sign-up-for-writingtutoring.html>

## General Paper and Formatting Guidelines

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- Please use 12-point font, double-space, and one-inch margins. Do not get fancy with the font you use. Your work should look professional.
- Documents must be uploaded to Canvas. The due date is listed with the assignment on Canvas.

- When an assignment asks for a certain number of pages, this does not include the reference pages or endnote pages. If the assignment requires these, as the final paper will, these pages are in addition to the page number requested. Also, do not try to format your paper in strange ways in order to accomplish the required length. In other words, do not choose a large font, right justify, etc.
- You will lose points if your assignments are late. Generally, I will accept papers on the day that they are due, by 11:59 p.m. (see Canvas)

## Research/Policy Paper and Presentation Instructions

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- While the shorter papers require reading links and writing opinion pieces, the longer paper requires that you do your own research beyond the links already available. Many of these posts reference or are summaries of economic research. You are required to find empirical papers on your subject and use them to write your policy paper.
- You are required to write a 10-12-page research/position paper in which you must take and defend an economic policy position. You may make an economic argument in favor or opposed to one or another policy. You may also opt to illuminate an area of study relevant to the field of economics. This format would be more of an informative paper rather than persuasive. An example would be explaining Brexit (although this could also be a position paper), or explaining the financial crisis of 2008. In the first case, you must take and defend a position with clear evidence and sound argument.
- You need at least 4 sources for this paper. At least two of them need to be empirical papers on the subject. The other sources can be from places like the New York Times, etc., or wherever you got your idea in the first place. A good source for these papers would be to look at the Journal of Economic Perspectives as it tends to cover many different subjects.
- As with all your writing, it is fine to ask others to think with you, or to read and comment on your work. In fact, this is highly recommended. However, when it comes time to put your thoughts on paper, your work must be your own, with appropriate citation of source materials. This is an opportunity to practice using the skills you will need later in employment, graduate school, and life in general.

## Other Information

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Please see the information concerning academic integrity. Do not copy someone else's writing unless it is a direct quote, in which case it should be quoted and given proper citation. Do not copy other students writing either, for obvious reasons. Academic integrity will be taken very seriously in this course.

We have a Teaching Assistant assigned to this course. I will post his contact information ASAP. He will be helping me grade as well as helping you with your writing if you choose to visit his office hours. I cannot proof your papers in office hours. For proof-reading, please take your paper to the writing lab. I would recommend meeting with the TA at least once as he is helping with the grading of the papers. His email address will be posted in the announcements on Canvas.

**Dates:**

Paper #1:	Tuesday, June 28 <sup>th</sup>
“In-Class” Essay #1:	Tuesday, July 5 <sup>th</sup>
Paper #2:	Tuesday, July 12 <sup>th</sup>
Final Paper Brief Outline:	TBA
“In-Class” Essay #2:	Tuesday, July 19 <sup>th</sup>
Presentations	Thursday, July 21 <sup>st</sup>
Final Paper:	Thursday, July 21 <sup>st</sup> (or sooner if finished!)