Econ 428: Introduction to Economic Research

Course Name: Introduction to Economic Research
Course Number: ECON 428
Term Offered: Summer 2017
Credits: 4
Instructor name: Mahshid Jalilvand, PhD
Instructor email: mahshid.jalilvand@oregonstate.edu

Course Description:
Basic methods of economic research: concepts and models; data sources, collection, and presentation; hypothesis formulation and testing; policy analysis. Written assignments apply methods. (Writing Intensive Course)

Prerequisites: ECON 311 or ECON 411 PLUS ECON 315 or 415

Econ 428 Student Learning Objectives:
1. Locate published research and data in economics.
2. Summarize and assess the economics literature on a particular topic.
3. Critically evaluate an economics journal article.
4. Describe alternative economic research methods and how they are used to help answer economic questions.
5. Conduct a research study on an economic topic and present the results orally and in a formal paper.

OSU Writing Intensive Curriculum Outcomes
1. Develop and articulate content knowledge and critical thinking in the discipline through frequent practice of informal and formal writing.
2. Demonstrate knowledge/understanding of audience expectations, genres, and conventions appropriate to communicating in the discipline.
3. Demonstrate the ability to compose a document of at least 2,500 words through multiple aspects of writing, including brainstorming, drafting, using sources appropriately, and revising comprehensively after receiving feedback on a draft.


Additional required readings will be posted on Canvas throughout the term.

You will need a Netflix streaming video subscription or a copy of the DVD “Freakonomics”.

This course is offered through Oregon State University Extended Campus. For more information, contact: Web: ecampus.oregonstate.edu Email: ecampus@oregonstate.edu Tel: 800-667-1465
**Topics and Reading Assignments:** We will use published economics research to look at a broad range of topics and to explore how economists conduct research. Reading assignments and due dates will be given on Canvas and in the Course schedule.

**Evaluation of Student Performance**

**Grading:** Course grades will be based upon your performance in several areas: textbook comprehension, article discussions, writing work, presentations and a term paper.

**Textbook comprehension (10%)**
There will be weekly reading assignments from the textbook and a bullet point summary of those chapters are due by Sunday 11:59pm PST of the same week.

**Article Discussions (20%)**
This is a seminar course, and to participate appropriately you will need to have read the assigned article before each discussion. **Class discussions of articles will be led mainly by students and all students are expected to participate in each discussion.**

How will you be graded on this?

For each article I will distribute a list of important questions/topics covered in the article. Students will be randomly assigned questions/topics and will post their answers and ideas and lead the class discussion board on that question/topic. Question assignments will be posted on Sunday night before each week’s discussion. Each time you are assigned a question/topic, you will receive a grade based on your post and discussion. Additionally, every student is required to post 2 follow up comments in at least two different threads for each paper discussion.

Lead discussants: original thread posts are worth 15 points, each response post is worth 5 points (up to 10 points).

Non-leading participants: 12.5 for each response, up to 25 points (a more detailed and analytical responses are expected from the non-leading participants).

Students are encouraged to be engaged in the discussion throughout.

**Original threads are due by Tuesday 11:59pm PST of each week and all follow-up threads are due by Sunday 11:59pm PST of the same week.**

**Important notes on doing well on the article discussions:**

1) Do you have 3-4 paragraphs for initial post?
2) Did you have at least 2 peer responses of at least one paragraph in length?
3) Did you label your post correctly?
4) Did you get your initial post in by Tuesday?
5) Did you add value in the discussion board?

**Writing Work (20%)**
One of the goals over the term is to train you to write like an economist. Numerous writing assignments and exercises will help you achieve that goal. You will be expected to write, edit and present your work and ideas and to participate in peer reviews and collaborations with fellow students. Many of these assignments will be done in small groups (to be assigned the first week of the term).

**Make-ups for Article Discussions and Writing Work**
Please note that there are no make-ups for in-class work (either article discussions or writing work).
Research Paper (40%) (All work will be submitted to Turnitin)

Objective of paper: To demonstrate that you know how to apply economic thinking to one of two topic areas: labor markets or crime. Your paper should answer the question; “What does economics have to contribute to the discussion about (a specific) labor market issue(s), crime or happiness research?”

Specifics: Your paper needs to be a minimum of 2,500 words but this requirement should be viewed as just that: a minimum. Your paper should be as long as necessary (but not exceeding 3,500 words) to clearly express your ideas and thoughts and no longer. There is no minimum number of references for the paper; again, you should have as many references as necessary to fully support your ideas and no more. This term paper is a term long project and should be viewed as such. Your paper should reflect ten weeks of concentrated effort and work, not a couple of days of cobbling something together.

- Proposal: One page proposal for your research idea with at least 2 sources: due Wednesday of Week 3 at 11:59pm PST. No late papers accepted.
- Background Paper: A two page background paper on your topic: due Sunday of Week 4 at 11:59pm PST. No late papers accepted.
- Outline: A detailed outline of your term paper: due Sunday of Week 6 at 11:59pm PST. No late papers accepted.
- Rough draft: due Sunday of Week 7 at 11:59pm PST. No late papers will be accepted.
- Final Draft: due Sunday of Week 10 at 11:59pm PST. No late papers will be accepted.

Research Paper Presentations (10%)

During Week 10, you will present the results of your research and term paper with a narrated PowerPoint slideshow that will be posted to Canvas. Each presentation will be about 10 minutes in length. There are no make-ups for presentations.

- Presentation: due Monday of Week 10 at 11:59pm PST. No late presentations will be accepted

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam or project, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. All work turned in for this course must be original work and must not be used for credit in any other course, current or past. That is you cannot turn in a term paper in this class that is substantially similar (or identical) to work turned in for another course for credit. Refer to the Schedule of Classes for more information on academic dishonesty. Student conduct guidelines can be found at http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/regulations/

Communications:

Ground Rules for Online Communication & Participation:

- Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum so that the entire class may benefit from our conversations. Please email your instructor for matters of a personal nature. The instructor will reply to course-related questions and email within 24-48 hours.
- Online threaded discussions are public messages, and all writings in this area will be
viewable by the entire class or assigned group members. If you prefer that only the instructor sees your communication, send it to me by email, and be sure to identify yourself and the class.

- Posting of personal contact information is discouraged (e.g. telephone numbers, address, personal website address).

- **Online Instructor Response Policy:** I will check email frequently and will respond to course-related questions within 24 hours during the business week. Weekend emails may face a longer response time.

- **Observation of “Netiquette”:** All your online communications need to be composed with fairness, honesty and tact. Spelling and grammar are very important in an online course.

  What you put into an online course reflects on your level of professionalism. Here are a couple of references that discuss
  - writing online: [http://goto.intwg.com/](http://goto.intwg.com/)

- Please check the Announcements area and the course syllabus before you ask general course "housekeeping" questions (i.e. how do I submit assignment 3?). If you don't see your answer there, then please contact me.

### Guidelines for a productive and effective online classroom

- The discussion board is your space to interact with your colleagues related to current topics or responses to your colleague’s statements. It is expected that each student will participate in a mature and respectful fashion.

- Participate actively in the discussions, having completed the readings and thought about the issues.

- Pay close attention to what your classmates write in their online comments. Ask clarifying questions, when appropriate. These questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or devalue comments.

- Think through and reread your comments before you post them.

- Assume the best of others in the class and expect the best from them.

- Value the diversity of the class. Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to class.

- Disagree with ideas, but do not make personal attacks. Do not demean or embarrass others. Do not make sexist, racist, homophobic, or victim-blaming comments at all.

- Be open to be challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices.

### Student Assistance:

**Contacting the instructor:** I am very responsive to student emails/questions and will respond within 24 hours of any communication throughout the week. Weekend emails may face a longer response time.

**Technical Assistance:** If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the [OSU Computer Helpdesk online](mailto:osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu).

**Tutoring:** Effective fall term 2009 we went to a new Online Tutoring Service - [NetTutor](http://www.nettutor.com) to meet the needs of Ecampus students. NetTutor is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows
tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours.

**Writing Center:** You should familiarize yourself with the Writing Center and are expected to take advantage of the services it offers. ([http://cw1.oregonstate.edu](http://cw1.oregonstate.edu))

**Disruptive Behavior:** Behaviors that are disruptive to teaching and learning will not be tolerated, and will be referred to the Student Conduct Program for disciplinary action. Behaviors that create a hostile, offensive or intimidating environment based on gender, race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation will be referred to the Affirmative Action Office.

**Disabilities:** Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

**Term Paper Guidelines**

**Objective of paper:** To demonstrate that you know how to apply economic thinking to one of two topic areas: labor markets or crime. Your paper should answer the question; “What does economics have to contribute to the discussion about (a specific) labor market issue(s), crime or happiness research?”

**Specifics:** Your paper needs to be a minimum of 2,500 words but this requirement should be viewed as just that: a minimum. Your paper should be as long as necessary (but not exceeding 3,500 words) to clearly express your ideas and thoughts and no longer. There is no minimum number of references for the paper; again, you should have as many references as necessary to fully support your ideas and no more. This term paper is a semester long project and should be viewed as such. Your paper should reflect thirteen weeks of concentrated effort and work, not a couple of days of cobbling something together.

**Submission guidelines:** Each submission must be accompanied by a cover letter, detailing your work process in creating the document. You should include areas where you struggled, what you think the best sections of the paper are and (for the first 3) what the next step in your process will be. We will use Safe Assign on Canvas for our papers.

**Grading:** Your term paper will be graded on two distinct but equally important points.

1. Content: How interesting and informed are your ideas? Is this paper a “book report” (bad) or your own original thinking, supported by ideas you have read and researched (good)? How well have you expressed those ideas?
2. Presentation: Is the paper clear, concise, easy to follow and well-edited? Are there spelling or grammar mistakes? Is the paper well-written?

Failure to turn in a rough draft will result in your final paper grade being dropped by 2 letter grades. Failure to turn in the proposal, background, or Outline will result in your final paper grade being dropped by 1 letter grade. A late paper will receive a score of zero.
# Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Discussion Paper*</th>
<th>Writing work</th>
<th>Craft of Research readings</th>
<th>Term Paper Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 1; due Sunday at 11:59pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chs 1&amp;2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Research topics</td>
<td>The Economic Reward for Studying Economics; Article Discussion Post #1</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 2; Part 1 due Tuesday at 11:59pm PST; Part 2 due Sunday at 11:59pm PST.</td>
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<td>Chs 3&amp;4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>From a topic to a research question</td>
<td>Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?; Article Discussion Post #2</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 3; Part 1 due Wednesday at 11:59PST; Part 2 due Sunday at 11:59pm PST.</td>
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<td>Chs 5&amp;6 Paper Proposal Due, Wednesday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Backgrounds</td>
<td>The Causes and Consequences of Distinctly Black names; Video: Freakonomics: A Roshonda By Any Other Name (4:50-23:00); Article Discussion Post #3</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 4; due Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>Chs 7&amp;8 Background Paper Due, Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Drafting: Making Claims</td>
<td>The Immigration Equation; Article Discussion Post #4</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 5; due Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>Chs 9&amp;10</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings/Assignments</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Drafting: Creating an Outline</td>
<td>The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime Video: Freakonomics: It’s Not Always A Wonderful Life (50:08-1:03:28); Article Discussion Post #5</td>
<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 6; due Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>Chs 11&amp;12</td>
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<td>Rough Draft Week</td>
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<td>Ch summaries + Writing Assignment 7; Part 1 due Tuesday at 11:59pm PST; Part 2 due Friday at 11:59pm PST.</td>
<td>Chs 13&amp;14</td>
<td>Rough Draft Due, Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Using and Creating Surveys</td>
<td>Money, Sex and Happiness; Article Discussion Post #6</td>
<td>Ch summary + Writing Assignment 8; due Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Revising your Draft</td>
<td>How Not to Buy Happiness; Article Discussion Post #6</td>
<td>Ch summary + Writing Assignment 9; Part 1 due Tuesday at 11:59pm PST; Part 2 due Sunday at 11:59pm PST.</td>
<td>Ch 16</td>
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<td>Final Draft Week and Presenting your Work</td>
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<td>Ch summary + Writing Assignment 10; due Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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<td>Ch 17</td>
<td>Presentation Due; Monday at 11:59pm PST Final Paper Due; Sunday at 11:59pm PST</td>
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*Initial discussion posts are due by midnight Tuesday and responses by midnight Sunday (all PST)

**NOTE:** This Syllabus is Subject to minor changes which will be announced through emails and announcements.