

Course Syllabus Econ 197

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.

Course Description:

This course satisfies the major's upper-division disciplinary communication (DC) requirement for economics majors. It is intended to familiarize students with the demands and rewards of working and writing within the economic academic community.

Relevance in the Real World:

Economics is a social science that provides a framework to organize observed phenomena and develop an understanding of how the world functions. The economy represents a complex interplay of variables and behaviors. Due to this inherent complexity, precise diction is essential for comprehending economic relationships and disseminating their implications and limitations. The discipline of economics necessitates clear logic, clear thinking, and clear communication, fostering these qualities in those who study the subject.

Course Format:

This course will be conducted **in-person**.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes for Economics Majors:

Demonstration of Critical Thinking Skills: Students will apply economic analysis to real-world problems, understand current events, evaluate specific policy proposals, and assess the role of assumptions in arguments that lead to different conclusions about economic or policy issues.

Demonstration of Communication Skills: Students will communicate effectively in written, oral, and graphical forms about specific issues and formulate well-organized written arguments supported by evidence, clearly stating assumptions and hypotheses.

By the end of this course, you will develop three major skills:

1. **How to Think Like an Economist:** Thinking like an economist involves 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 use mathematical models to derive conclusions from their assumptions. Thinking like an economist means thinking in terms of models while understanding their limitations.
2. **How to Approach Society's Issues from an Economist's Viewpoint:** Economics helps turn aspirations into practical solutions. Economists propose solutions to social problems. By the end of this class, you will understand how economists approach societal issues and how to use the models learned to solve these problems. Although the class models are simplifications with limitations, you will learn how further study in economics can contribute to making the world a better place.
3. **How to Better Communicate Economic Issues and Viewpoints:** Economics is a complex social science. The models and assumptions used in academia may not always match real-world situations. Clear and precise communication is essential to explain statistics in the media, how they were collected, and their sources. You will learn to use this information and models to explain the effects of economic policy theoretically and practically. Additionally, economic history will help you understand the unforeseen consequences of past policies to create more effective future policies.

Specifically, this course aims to improve your ability to:

- Read, think, speak, and write with care and clarity.
- Support opinions with compelling data and visual aids.
- Write clear, concise, and polished pieces of work.
- Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations.

Prerequisites

Students must have satisfied the Entry-Level Writing and Composition requirement, as well as one of the following courses: ECON 100A, 100M, 100B, 100N, or 113, before enrolling.

For a refresher on the skills covered 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:

1. Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

2. The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr.
 3. The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill
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Recommended/Required Textbook and Materials

Recommended Text:

- **Economics of the Public Sector** (4th Edition) by Joseph Stiglitz and Jay Rosengard. W.W. Norton, 2015.

Other Texts and Online Subscriptions:

Throughout the course, we will utilize articles from various sources. If you need suggestions for alternative subscriptions, feel free to ask, and I will be happy to share my recommendations. Some general useful subscriptions include:

Some Sources of Information Some Sources of Information

Bloomberg	MarketWatch
The Economist	Fox
The Wall Street Journal	RT
NPR	South China Daily
CNBC	Al Jazeera
BBC	

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 Presentation:

In-Person Policy Presentation Assignment Description

This assignment is directly associated with the final essay. In this assignment, students will develop and deliver a live, in-person oral presentation on the topic of their essay. Each student will present their position on a public policy of their choice, using the tools and knowledge developed in the course to support their argument through economic rhetoric.

This in-person presentation is an opportunity to demonstrate originality, professionalism, and the ability to communicate complex policy ideas clearly and persuasively. While economics can sometimes feel formal or rigid, this assignment also offers space for students to express themselves creatively—through style, structure, visuals, or delivery. Many past students have used their presentations and the associated skills to strengthen their job search and professional portfolio.

This assignment supports the following learning outcomes:

- **Critical Thinking Skills**
- **Quantitative Reasoning Skills**
- **Problem Solving Skills**
- **Specialized Knowledge and Application of Skills**
- **Communication Skills**

Grading Policies

Assignment Readability and Submission: You will not receive 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 encounter a connection error just before the deadline. It is advisable to upload your homework well before the deadline to avoid these issues. The average turnaround time for grading major assignments is one week.

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

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 (or two class periods in Summer School) to bring it to the attention of your TA or me. After that period, the grade posted online stands as final.

Grade Cutoffs: When the time for final grades comes, requests to round up grades 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 of 5% per day. This penalty does not apply to the final essay or the final presentation; these are subject to a 10% reduction per day. Late assignments should still be submitted via the Canvas system. TAs and readers will have up to one extra week to grade late assignments from the date the schedule/calendar indicates they would normally be done or from when you turned it in, whichever is longer.

Missed Assignments: Missed assignments will only be accepted under very dire circumstances and only if there has been prior communication with me and approval for the submission. 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.

Grade Curve: 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 suggests that it is in your interest to study as though there is no curve, as performing far worse than your peers will negatively impact your grade.

Grading Breakdown

Reading Assignments – 15% of final grade

Homework Essays – 40% of final grade

In-class Active Learning Assignments – 25% of final grade

Final Presentation – 20% of final 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 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 exam content confidential.
- Properly citing 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 or purchasing any material from another student or source and submitting it as your own.
- Plagiarism, including using 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 work completed for one class in 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 your 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, we can discuss ways to 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 course materials for the purpose of learning, engaging with your peers, and

completing assignments. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by using course materials only for purposes associated with the course.

You are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, including but not limited to:

- 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, and notes) are your intellectual property, and you may use them as you wish.

Religious Accommodations

UC Santa Cruz welcomes the 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 accommodations for religious practices.

The instructor will review the situation 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 available to support you.

Mandatory Reporting: Please be aware that if you inform 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 as all UCSC employees

who are not designated as “confidential” employees (a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I must make this 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 ensure you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential Resources: 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 your 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.

Additional Resources:

- **Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (SAFE) website:** Provides information and resources for different situations.
 - **Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS):** Offers confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
 - **University’s Title IX Office:** Report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence by calling (831) 459-2462 or using their [online reporting tool](#).
 - **UC Police Department:** Reports to law enforcement can be made at (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
 - **Emergencies:** Call 911.
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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 in determining how to handle a bias incident involving another student, staff member, or faculty member.

To report an incident of hate or bias, please use the following form: [Hate/Bias Report Form](#).

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 assist 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 email 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, email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts: For all emergencies, dial 911. For other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, please refer to the relevant campus resources.

Instruction Team Information

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

- **Department:** UCSC Economics Department
- **Office:** E2, 403E
- **Office Hours:** By appointment (email is most effective). Official office hours vary by quarter; please see the Canvas announcements.
- **Email:** ameining@ucsc.edu

Teaching Assistants:

TA Email Sections Office and Hours

TBD Email TBD TBD

Note: It is strongly suggested that you attend the section in which you are enrolled, but you may visit any TA's office hours for help. For the most up-to-date information about sections and office hours, please see the announcements section on the Canvas site.