

## Course Description in Undergraduate Calendar

Students discuss and present papers, learn research methods and write a critical review of the literature on an economic topic of their choice.

## Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this course students will:

1. Know how to search for research papers and scholarly journal articles.
2. Know how to evaluate information found on the internet.
3. Know how to analyze critically the research of others.
4. Understand the following approaches to empirical economic research:
  - a. Social experiments
  - b. Field experiments
  - c. Laboratory experiments
  - d. Natural experiments
  - e. Observational studies
  - f. Simulation of dynamic general equilibrium (DGE) models
5. Have gained experience at presenting, individually and as part of a team, the research work of others.
6. Have gained experience writing a critical review of the literature.
7. Have been introduced to the process of economic research.

## Lectures and Office hours:

Lectures: Tuesday 9:30-11:20am and Thursday 9:30-10:20am

Office hours: Wednesday 11am-12 and Thursday 10:30-11:30am

## Text

Custom Courseware for Economics 3FF3

## Evaluation

There is no final examination. Evaluation will be based on one test, a series of assignments and classroom participation which is expected in all classes. The written assignments develop the students' research skills and build towards the research review paper that is the final and most important piece of work.

The test on the topic "natural experiments" will be held on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The instructor will announce ahead of time the specific paper students need to study to prepare for the test. Students will be allowed to bring an annotated print out (no electronic versions of the paper will be allowed) of the research paper to help them answer the test questions.

The following weights will be used to determine the final grade for the course:

Library assignment #1: Econlit, bibliographic indices, citation indices	2%
Library assignment #2: Internet Searches	2%
Econometrics Assignment #1	2%
Econometrics Assignment #2	2%
Test on the topic "natural experiments"	8%

Report 1 (Proposal of topic and articles for student's research review paper; 2-3 pages)	4%
Report 2 (Detailed outline and summary of student's research review paper; 5-9 pages)	10%
Student's research review paper (approx. 20 pages)	30%
Team A presentation of assigned research paper	12%
Team B critical discussion of assigned research paper	8%
Class presentation of student's research review paper	10%
Individual class participation (other than Team A and B)	10%

### ***Late submissions***

Deadlines for submission of assignments, reports 1 and 2 and term paper are given in the schedule below. If you submit your work late you will be penalized as follows:

Late by 24 hours or less: 15% penalty

Work submitted more than 24 hours late will not be graded.

### ***Guidelines and requirements regarding reports 1 and 2, class presentations, and final paper***

- See Avenue to Learn

### ***Individual class participation***

-Grading categories are the following

No unexcused absences with frequent good comments/questions: 70-100% of marks

No unexcused absences with frequent weak comments/questions: 50-70% of marks

No unexcused absences with few comments/questions: 25-50% of marks

-Each unexcused absence reduces your participation grade (the one you would have received with no unexcused absences) by 5 percent.

Missing a 50 minutes lecture counts as one absence.

Missing a 110 minutes lecture counts as 2 absences.

For example, if you would have received 60% with no unexcused absences and have 3 such absences, then your participation grade will be  $60\% - 3 \times 5\% = 45\%$ .

-A "good" comment or question reflects knowledge of, and thought about, the paper and subject under discussion. A "weak" question does not, for example, a simple request for more information.

-AN OPEN ELECTRONIC DEVICE IS COUNTED AS AN ABSENCE FROM CLASS. PLEASE LEAVE THESE CLOSED.

-I take attendance at the start of class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make your presence known. Otherwise you will be counted as absent. Non-trivial late arrivals will be counted as partial absences. Dates where you were absent will be posted on Avenue to Learn (under *Grades*).

-The only valid excuses for absences are those approved by your Faculty office; it is your responsibility to submit documentation to that office. Use the McMaster Student Absence Form ([www.mcmaster.ca/msaf](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf)) if you have an unavoidable absence.

### ***Individual and Team Presentations***

Grades for individual and team presentations will be based on accuracy and quality of economic content as well as the effectiveness of both your slides and verbal presentation.

For team presentations, all members of a team will normally receive the same grade.

## **Team Formation:**

The team must have the same membership when it serves as Team A and as Team B. A list of team members must be provided to the Instructor and approved by all members of each team by the end of class on Thursday September 14th. If you are not a member of a team by this date, you will be assigned to a team by the instructor.

By Wednesday Sept 20<sup>th</sup>, teams will be assigned two initial topics and dates (one as Team A and one as Team B). These initial assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Teams will have until the end of class on Tuesday Sept 26<sup>th</sup> to inform the instructor of any mutually agreeable trades with other teams concerning dates and topics. The only restrictions are that your team may not be Team A and Team B for the same topic, AND you cannot change the date on which a paper is presented. The final list will be posted on Avenue to Learn by Friday September 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **On Line Elements**

I will be using Avenue to Learn to post course announcements, files that you can download, and your grades. In this course we will be using both Avenue to Learn and e-mail. Students are expected to check the 3FF3 Section C01 course page on a regular basis.

*Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.*

**E-Mail Policy.** In keeping with official policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences, I will respond only to student e-mails sent from a McMaster account. This is for your protection.

## **Writing Help**

McMaster students now have free access to an on-line program to help with writing. The user copies and pastes text into the program and receives notification of errors and suggestions for corrections. This program is called Grammarly. To register as a user, go to <http://www.grammarly.com/edu/> and click on “Sign Up” at the top of the page. I encourage you to try this and give me feedback.

Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre provides a variety of services to help students improve their writing. These services include Writing Assistants and a Writing Process Workshop. Much more information is at <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/academicsupport/#academicWriting>.

*Note that your assignments will be graded on both economic content and writing style.*

## **Academic Ethics**

The *Senate Policy Statements*, which are available in the Senate Office in Gilmour Hall, contain the *Senate Statement on Academic Ethics*, to which your attention is drawn. The statement explains the expectations that

McMaster University has of its scholars. It is the responsibility of each student to adhere to the statement. Breaches of academic ethics fall into two categories:

*disregard for the norms of scholarly integrity, without necessarily intending to deceive; academic dishonesty*, which is an intentional disregard for the norms of scholarly integrity.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

The forms of academic dishonesty especially relevant to this course:

Failure to reference in quotation mark a direct quote from another source.

Plagiarism - the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.

### Turnitin.com

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to have their work submitted to Turnitin as well as to the instructor (electronically and in hard copy) so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin must still submit copies to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld, (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

In order to submit your electronic copy directly to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) see the instructions on Avenue to Learn.

### 2017 Schedule

Monday's Date	Deadlines (on Thur. unless noted)	Tuesday 9h30-11h20	Thursday 9h30-10h20
4 Sept.		Course outline; Intro to Research, Correlation & Causality	Correlation & Causality
11 Sept.	Team members & Library Assignment #1	Social Experiments	Natural Experiments
18 Sept.	Library Assignment #2	Natural Exp.; DGE models	Review of Econometrics
25 Sept.	Econometrics Assig. #1	Review of Econometrics	Review of Econometrics
2 Oct.	<b>Report 1 (proposal ; due Friday)</b>	Test on natural experiments	TBA
9 Oct.	----- Mid term recess -----		
16 Oct.	Econometrics Assig. #2	Team Presentations	Team Presentation
23 Oct.		Team Presentations	Team Presentation
30 Oct.	<b>Report 2 (outline and summary)</b>	Team Presentations	Team Presentation
6 Nov.		Individual Presentations	Individual Presentations
13 Nov.		Individual Presentations	Individual Presentations

20 Nov.		Individual Presentations	Individual Presentations
27 Nov.		Individual Presentations	Individual Presentations
4 Dec.	<b>Final paper (hardcopy and electronic versions) due by noon on Wednesday December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016</b>	Individual Presentations	---no class, term is over---

The schedule above might have to be modified according to course enrollment.

## Readings for the First Four Weeks

Topic	Readings
Reasoning	“Statistics and Logic,” Chapter 1 from Lucy Horowitz and Lou Ferleger, <i>Statistics for Social Change</i> . Black Rose Books, 1988.
Correlation vs. Causation	“Controlled Experiment,” Chapter 1 from David Freedman, Robert Pisani, Roger Purves, <i>Statistics</i> . Norton, Third Edition, 1998
Observational Studies	“Observational Studies,” Chapter 1 from P. Rosenbaum, <i>Observational Studies</i> . Springer, 2nd ed. 2002., pp. 1-10.
Social Experiments	“The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research,” Gary Burtless, <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 1995, 9, 2
Natural Experiments	“Natural and Quasi-Experiments in Economics,” Bruce Meyer, <i>Journal of Business and Economics Statistics</i> 13(2): 151-161 (1995)
Laboratory Experiments	“Laboratory Economics: Of Rats and Men.” Chapter 9 from T. Sandler, <i>Economic Concepts for the Social Sciences</i> , Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Field Experiments	“Field Experiments: An Introduction.” Jeffrey Carpenter, Glenn Harrison and John List in Jeffrey Carpenter, Glenn Harrison and John List (eds). <i>Field Experiments in Economic</i> , JAI Press, Research in Experimental Economics, vol. 10, 2004.

## Course Modification Warning

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017