



## ECONOMICS 225 : WRITING FOR ECONOMISTS

"The motor of meaning production is form, not content. . . . Basically, there is only one thing to be learned, that a sentence is a structure of logical relationships; everything else follows." -- Stanley Fish, 2009.

"No talking, no smoking, no knitting, no newspaper reading, no sleeping, and for God's sake, take notes." -- Vladimir Nabakov to his students on the first day of his lectures, Cornell University, 1948.

Spring Term 2012

A01, A02, A03  
CRN 23827, 23828, 23829

A04  
CRN 23830

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Office Hour: Thursday 5:30 - 6:20 p.m.  
or by appointment

TA to be announced

COURSE PREREQUISITES: Econ 103, 104, 1.5 units of first-year English

COURSE PRE OR COREQUISITES: One of Econ 203, 204, 245

Students satisfy the ECON 225 course requirement if they have:

1. received a B+ or higher in any first year English course at the University of Victoria, with the exception of ENGL 115; or
2. passed ENGR 240.

### ***COURSE RATIONALE***

Economics 225 is all about writing, research, and communication. The course was developed about seven years ago in response to the need for English composition and comprehension skills in the undergraduate Economics program. Economics 225 is geared to a type of writing that combines clear, concise prose with theoretical analysis and the use of economics models. The course content includes the study of basic grammar as well as the writing of summaries, argumentative essays, opinions, and empirical research papers. Students who complete the course will have learned to communicate clearly, give a presentation, and write with precision.

### ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

Economics 225 includes practice in composition and basic grammar with an emphasis on clear, concise writing. You will learn to think and write like an economist, and you will be exposed to the correct style of the various documents you are likely to encounter as an economist. You will sharpen your skills with quizzes, tests, in-class compositions, an empirical research essay, and a final exam.

## ***DIAGNOSTIC TEST***

At the start of the course, all students in Economics 225 will be required to write a summary that will serve as a diagnostic writing test. Based on the results, students who need remedial work will be strongly encouraged to see a tutor in the Economics department.

## ***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

You will demonstrate the ability to:

- prepare outlines and drafts of essays, and incorporate standard organizational styles and methods of citation in economics
- edit essays for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction
- write essays and opinion pieces that incorporate the presentation of information concisely, clearly, and correctly
- extract the key economic argument(s) from an article or body of literature, and write a summary of an article, movie, or body of literature
- write a correct abstract, paraphrase, and literature review
- write an empirical research essay in economics and organize numerical information in tables and figures to support written arguments simply, briefly, and clearly

## ***REQUIRED TEXTS***

1. Hume, S.E. (Ed.) (2011). *Economics writing: Global warming, rational irrationality, consumer behavior, sports, child labor, fashion, movies, and other things* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson.
2. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Pocket Oxford*, or other standard college-level English dictionary (not an electronic dictionary). Avoid anything published by Collins. Avoid Webster's Collegiate knockoffs. The University provides online access to the *Oxford English Dictionary* through the library gateway, or at <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/>.

Students must buy the *Economics Writing* textbook from the bookstore. Students are not allowed to purchase used copies from the secondary market. This is because a) it is a workbook that is sometimes used for tests, and b) profits from the book go to UVic student scholarships. **There will be no exceptions.**

## ***RESOURCES***

I recommend that you explore some of these resources for your own research and entertainment: To find these sites use the following search terms, or go to the ECON 225 website for direct links.

- [The New York Times\\*](#)
- [The Globe and Mail](#)
- [Freakonomics Blog](#)
- [FT Asia Pacific](#)
- [Tim Harford's blog](#)
- [Econbrowser.com](#)
- [Malcolm Gladwell's Blog](#)
- [The Economics of Love and Sex](#)
- [NPR's Planet Money](#)
- [The Economist](#)
- [Bloomberg](#)
- [Al Jazeera English](#)
- [Der Spiegel online](#)
- [The Huffington Post](#)
- [The Economists' Voice](#)
- [Slate](#)
- [A&L Daily](#)
- [Worthwhile Canadian Initiative](#)
- [Rolling Stone](#)
- Read widely: Newspapers, blogs, novels, movie reviews, video game reviews, or magazines.

\* Non subscribers can access only 20 archived articles and blog posts each calendar month on nytimes.com.

## **MARKING SCHEME**

A	B	C	D	F
A+: > 90%	B+: 75-79%	C+: 60-64%	D: 50-54%	F: < 50%
A: 85-89%	B: 70-74%	C: 55-59%		
A-: 80-84%	B-: 65-69%			

## **EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### *1. Diagnostic Summary (10 marks)*

- Provide a 200- to 250-word summary, in class, of a reading to be announced. The reading will be taken from one of the essays in the Economics Writing text. **Note: The summaries that you write in Econ 225 must not contain any quoted material. They must not contain any exact language from the source except, if needed, technical terms, numbers, or proper nouns.** The summary serves as a diagnostic indicator. Students who fail the summary writing test because of problems with grammar, sentence construction, or overall clarity will be asked to go over their papers with the Teaching Assistant. **Students who fail the first summary test will be allowed to rewrite it with the TA, and the paper will be re-assessed for a possible passing grade.**

### *2. In-class essay of argument (10 marks)*

- Topic to be announced. Students will be asked to write, in class, a classical essay of argument of approximately 400 words.

### *3. Five short quizzes (25 marks)*

- These **unannounced** quizzes will be based on selected text readings. The quizzes will ask you to answer factual comprehension questions or to write summaries or short response essays. The readings will be announced in advance of the quizzes.

### *4. Grammar Test (5 marks)*

- In-class grammar test based on grammar lectures. There may be bonus questions on the abbreviations and symbols for editing and proofreading.

### *5. Summary Exam : Summary Writing (10 marks)*

- You will be asked to summarize a source. Topic TBA.

### *6. Library Class for Research Paper (5 marks)*

- Students will be asked to submit, for five marks, by the end of class, a citation in APA style from at least one peer-refereed journal article relating to their topic. Citations will be graded on accuracy and completeness. The library class (date TBA) is also **mandatory**. Students who miss the library class will lose the five marks for the citation, AND have five marks deducted from their research paper. This means that a paper that receives 10/20 would become 5/20.

### *7. Presentations (5 marks)*

- Dates will be announced. Giving a presentation to the class is required to complete the course. Everyone is required to attend the presentations. Missing any presentation classes will affect your presentation grade. Part of your presentation will be fielding questions from your colleagues. Read Appendix G (pp. 125-126) in *Economics Writing* for a guideline.

## 8. *Research Paper (20 marks)*

- Write a 1000 word empirical research essay in APA style. Papers must have a minimum of three scholarly peer-refereed sources, and must be based on topics that are taken from one of the Economics websites or blogs on the course outline page. Students will need to indicate in advance, on paper, the website/blog/date the topic is from, and are required to submit a 100 word summary of the original source, with citation, stapled to the front of their essay. Students must put a word count at the bottom of their research paper before submission.
  - Students must hand in all drafts with their final essay. Papers that are submitted without attached drafts will be considered **incomplete**, and will be penalized 10 points.
  - **Please note:** At least one draft will be peer edited in class. If you don't participate in the peer-editing session, 10 marks will be deducted from your research paper grade unless you have a documented excuse. This means that a research paper receiving 10/20 would become 0/20. Students who arrive at the peer-editing session without three copies of their full draft will have 5 marks deducted from the research paper grade.
  - **Penalties on the research paper are cumulative, so if you miss the library class AND the peer editing, you will receive a zero on the paper.**
  - **This course takes violations of Academic Integrity very seriously. If a paper is found to contain plagiarism, it will receive a 0.** Students in ECON 225 are required to tear out the perforated pages on plagiarism: Appendix J, pp. 131-134. Students must write, on page 131, "**I have read and understood this content on plagiarism.**" They must print and sign their name, and write the date. They must staple this section to the front of their final paper before handing it in. Final papers handed in without this document will be considered incomplete and will be penalized 10 points.

Note: I will lecture on the writing of briefing notes and news releases. Along with op-eds, these are genres you will likely encounter if you work as a business or economics writer. We will practice writing these genres in class. You will not be graded on them, but that doesn't mean they have lost their value. To the contrary, if you find that you can use these skills, they will have great value.

## 9. *Final Exam (10 marks)*

- The final exam is on the last day of class. Students will be asked to write an essay of argument in response to a question based on a reading from the *Economics Writing* textbook. **The exam date is for everyone in the class. No exceptions will be made. Do not make any travel plans or other plans that conflict with that time and date.**

## ***COURSE POLICIES***

- Students are expected to familiarize themselves with all Department of Economics course policies., available at [http://web.uvic.ca/econ/undergraduate/course\\_policies.php](http://web.uvic.ca/econ/undergraduate/course_policies.php)
- The course outline is regularly updated for clarity, and may change to adapt to the needs of the class. The online version is considered current, and in effect.
- **Please note: All written work must be proofread and edited. Careless, unedited work will receive an automatic failing grade.**
- To foster discussion, reading assignments for the week must be completed by the first day of class that week. For example, the reading and discussion assignments for Week 2 must be completed by the first class day of that week.
- Get into the habit of writing well – when you correspond with me by email, please use correct grammar and wording,
- Questions regarding class material should usually be posed during class or in person during office hours. It is not feasible to provide lengthy explanations of class material over email. Should you send email for whatever reason, please put ECON 225, and your section number in the subject line. Students are responsible for all material covered in lectures whether they miss a lecture or not.

- The UVic calendar states: Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled. A department may require a student to withdraw from a course if the student is registered in another course that conflicts with it in time.
- The UVic calendar's attendance policy states that an instructor may refuse a student admission to a lecture or laboratory because of lateness, misconduct, inattention, or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course. Students who neglect their academic work, including assignments, may be refused permission to write the final examination in a course.
- Students must bring their *Economics Writing* text to every class, especially classes when there is a quiz or test. If you show up for a test without your *Economics Writing* text, and the text is required, you will receive a zero on the test.
- **Regular and prompt attendance is expected. You must attend at least 80 per cent of your classes. If you don't, you will receive an incomplete ('N') for the course.**
- Course assignments are mandatory. You must write the final exam, and hand in at least 80 per cent of the course work, including the final paper. If you don't, you will receive an incomplete ('N') for the course.
- Students with disabilities seeking academic accommodation are expected to contact the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability as early as possible
- Emails should be limited to critical matters such as inability to attend class or an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the course name and number in the subject line. Questions on course material should be asked during office hours or in class. The standard format for writing a letter must be used. This means it should start off with a salutation (e.g., Dear . . . ), include full sentences, and conclude with a signature that includes your name (e.g., Sincerely, your full name). Text message lingo and facebook-ese should not be used.
- The department may cancel the registration of a student if the student fails to attend class within the first 7 calendar days, or the first three hours of class from the start of the course. A student who for medical or compassionate reasons is unable to attend during the required period should contact the department within that time.
- Accommodation for missed in-course tests and late assignments will be given only on the basis of documented illness, accident, or family affliction. Students should immediately consult with a physician, a counsellor, or another health professional to obtain official documentation. **This documentation must specifically cover the date of the missed examination or assignment deadline; it should normally be dated on or before this date and be submitted to the instructor within 10 days of this date.**
- If make-up tests are assigned, they will be scheduled by the Department on Friday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. Students must be registered for these tests by their instructors in order to be permitted to take them.
- In the event of a missed final examination, or submission of an assignment after grades are submitted by the instructor, students must submit a Request for Academic Concession (RAC) to Undergraduate Records with the required official documentation from a health professional within 10 working days of the end of the examination period. The RAC form is available on the Undergraduate Records website at <http://registrar.uvic.ca/undergrad/records/forms/pdf/acad.pdf>
- This is a professional writing course and we will take a professional approach, just as if you were in a business, government, or professional organization. This means there will be no intrusive chatting in class, no playing with electronic devices, and reading assignments will be completed. Class discussions hopefully will be open and lively.
- Phones **must** be turned off in class. There will be no messaging, secret or otherwise, at your desks. Students who violate this rule will be dismissed from class.
- The final research paper must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced throughout, with APA margins. For tables and figures, use a sans-serif font. Further instructions on the final paper will be given in class and can be found in the text under Components of an Empirical Research Paper. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted.

- **Please keep a copy of all work – including material that you hand in or material that is returned – until final marks have been posted.**
- Economics 225 has a Teaching Assistant who will tutor students needing remedial help with their writing. Students who need additional help can see me during office hours or by appointment. If you need remedial help, you are required to use the course TA, not the library's writing centre.
- **Please note that students are not permitted to hire or let someone do their work for them.** The UVic Calendar has information on plagiarism under the Policy on Academic Integrity, available at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2011/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>.
- Students are required to read, study, and understand the sections on plagiarism on the library link and in the Calendar (see below.) Students in ECON 225 are required to tear out the perforated pages on plagiarism: Appendix J, pp. 131-134. Students must write, on page 131, **"I have read and understood this content on plagiarism."** They must print and sign their name, and write the date. They must staple this section to the front of their final paper before handing it in. Final papers handed in without this document will be considered incomplete and will be penalized 10 points.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1:**

- Welcome and Introduction
- The sentence, the summary, the argument, the op-ed, and the briefing note
- Course assumptions: A sentence is a structure of logical relationships. The engine that produces meaning in a sentence is form, not content.
- Grammar lecture on common writing problems. **Students are encouraged to browse the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/> to prepare for the grammar lectures.**
- Discussion: "The New World Disorder"

### **Week 2:**

- Writing an op-ed and a summary.
- Discussion: The summary.
- **Quiz #1:** The quiz will be on the Abstract and Introduction to van Kooten's "The Economics and Policy of Global Warming."
- Fun lecture on common problems with grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.
- Abbreviations and symbols for editing and proofreading (handout)
- **Diagnostic Summary** in-class 10 marks (Topic TBA in class). Note: The summary exam serves as a diagnostic indicator. Students who fail the summary writing test because of problems with grammar, sentence construction, or overall clarity will be asked to go over their papers with one of the Teaching Assistants.

### **Week 3:**

- Discussion: building and writing an argument.
- **Quiz #2:** The quiz will be on any or all of the following: "In China, Fear of Fake Eggs and Recycled Buns," or "Child Labor Cases Uncovered in China."
- Research papers: organization: introduction, research methods, results, graphs, charts, integrating quotations

#### **Week 4:**

- Grammar lecture includes research writing.
- **Quiz #3:** The quiz will be on any or all of the following: "Why Animals Fight," "Greenwashing," or "The Economics of Tipping."
- Discussion: writing an op-ed.

#### **Week 5:**

- **Grammar Test** 5 marks. The test will be based on information from the grammar lectures.
- Topic selection for research papers.
- **In-class essay of argument**, 10 marks, topic TBA.

#### **Week 6:**

- **Quiz #4:** The quiz will be on any or all of the following: "Lace, Silk, and Hard Times," or "In Online Games, a Path to Young Consumers."
- Students will submit a 100 word summary of the source their research paper will be based on. Ultimately, this page will be stapled to the front of your final research paper.
- In class discussion on briefing notes and news releases.
- Read the section entitled "Writing an Empirical Research Paper in Economics" on pp. 111-114 in *Economics Writing*
- Date TBA: Library class on economics research.

#### **Week 7:**

- Reading Break. All classes cancelled this week.

#### **Week 8:**

- Peer-editing research paper in class. **Peer editing is mandatory.** Note the section on peer editing in this course outline under "Research Paper." **You must bring 3 typed copies of your full draft, including title page, lit review, and references. Students who do not bring three copies of their full draft to the peer editing session will have five marks deducted from their research paper grade.** You also have to bring your *Economics Writing* text because we will use the checklist in the back when we peer edit.
- Read "The Presentation" in *Economics Writing* (pp. 125-126)

#### **Week 9:**

- Economics in Movies. Guest lecture by Bijan Ahmadi
- Review for the summary exam.

#### **Week 10:**

- **Summary Writing Exam**, 10 marks, topic TBA.

#### **Week 11:**

- **Quiz #5:** The quiz will be on any or all of the following: "Rational Irrationality," or "The Role of Islamic and Sectarian Political Regimes . . ."

**Week 12:**

- Presentations
- *Students who have not seen the TA about their research paper will not be allowed to make appointments after March 21.*

**Week 13:**

- Presentations

**Week 14:**

- Presentations
- Review
- **Your Research paper is due immediately before the final exam.**
  - Late papers received before Friday at 9:00 a.m. will be docked 4 of 20 points.
  - Papers will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m. on Friday and will automatically receive a 0.
- **Final Exam is on the last day of class.**
  - Wednesday, April 4 (A01, A02)
  - Thursday, April 5 (A03, A04)

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

Questions and Comments to [sehume@uvic.ca](mailto:sehume@uvic.ca) or [ahmadi@uvic.ca](mailto:ahmadi@uvic.ca)

See <http://web.uvic.ca/~sehume/econ225.html> for the most current version of this document.  
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