

University of Victoria
ECONOMICS 499:
Honours Seminar

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OBJECTIVES:

This course, which is open to Honours students only, is intended to provide students with an opportunity to enrich their understanding of economics and the application of economic tools to the everyday world. The course is taught in an open seminar style which places the onus on students to engage in learning and provide topics of interest for study. Emphasis is placed on enhancing presentation skills (both oral and written). To help meet the goals of this course students are required to produce an honours thesis.

EVALUATION:

Evaluation in this course will consist of the following:

Class participation	20%	Note: only the thesis proposal and final thesis presentation will be included here
In-Class Presentations	20%	
Summary/Critique	10%	
Honours Thesis Paper	50%	

The Department of Economics uses the following letter grades and numerical equivalents

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

Note: E grades will not be assigned in this course. A mark below 50% will result in an F.

SOME DETAILS REGARDING COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Presentations:

Each student will be asked to lead discussion at various points during the year. You may be leading discussion of a paper the group has read, a Brownbag Seminar the group has attended, or a colleague's thesis work to date. Seminar participation grades will in part be a function of how well you lead these discussions.

In addition students will be asked to present on four separate occasions on topics related to their Honours Thesis as follows:

- Presentation related to the general topic area of proposed thesis (20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of general class discussion): by October 21.

Presentations are to be supported by visuals and will be chaired by a fellow student. This presentation should be viewed as a practice presentation and as such will not count toward the “In-Class Presentation” grade.

- Thesis Proposal Presentation (30 minutes followed by 20 minutes of general class discussion): November & December. Presentations are to be supported by visuals and they will be chaired by a fellow student. This presentation will count toward the “In-Class Presentation” grade.
- Presentation of draft thesis (30 minutes followed by 10 minutes of general class discussion): February/March. Presentations are to be supported by visuals and will be chaired by a fellow student. This presentation should be viewed as a practice presentation and as such will not count toward the “In-Class Presentation” grade.
- Thesis presentation (Conference format; with colleagues from econ dept. 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes for questions): April. Presentations are chaired by the honours advisors. This presentation will count toward the “In-Class Presentation” grade.

Summaries/Critiques

Students will be asked to write and submit for grading 1-page summaries/critiques of two seminal articles relevant to your topic

Homework exercises

Students will be required from time to time to complete homework exercises intended to complement and extend in-class discussions of topics of interest. These exercises will not be directly graded, but students will be called upon at random to solve problems from the assignments at the board, or to answer questions related to the exercises. Solutions to the exercises will be provided after the due date. Students are encouraged to work together on assignments, but only after seriously attempting all problems on their own.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. Students who are found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described on pages 32-33 of the Calendar, are subject to penalty by the University.”

Policy on Inclusivity and Diversity: The University of Victoria is committed to providing an environment that affirms and promotes the dignity of human beings of diverse backgrounds and needs. (UVic Calendar, p. 10)”

Individual Responsibility: This seminar is very different from other classes you’ve taken. The quality of the seminar will be determined less by your professors and more by the effort each of you places on making it work. If you show up well prepared with insightful comments and questions, it will be of much higher quality than if you are unprepared or disengaged. Your classmates and professors will notice if you are unprepared or disengaged. Furthermore, you alone are responsible for making progress on your thesis. If you find yourself running off the rails, it is up to you to take charge of the situation and quickly get back on track. Seek advice of the honours co-supervisors and your thesis advisor if necessary. But ultimately, this is your project. You own it and you are responsible for whether or not it turns out well.