

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

ECONOMICS 499
HONOURS SEMINAR
Fall and Spring, 2016

1 COURSE INFORMATION.

	Chris Auld	Merwan Engineer
Instructors.	auld@uvic.ca	menginee@uvic.ca
	BEC 348	BEC 350
Course Hours.	3 lecture hours per week	
Course location:	BEC 363, Wednesdays, 12:30-3:20	
Prerequisites.	Instructors' consent.	

2 COURSE DESCRIPTION.

The course is focused on students developing and writing an Honours Thesis, a work of novel research, providing students with an opportunity to engage with, and produce, research pushing the frontiers of economic knowledge. The course is taught in an open seminar style which places an onus on students to interact with both the instructors and each other. Emphasis is placed on developing skills in all aspects of economic research, including literature review, empirical and theoretical methods, writing, and presentation.

3 EVALUATION.

Course evaluation is as follows.

class participation	20%
in-class presentations	15
written assignments	15
honour's thesis paper and presentation	50

The course grade is then calculated using the weights indicated above. As per current University of Victoria standards, a percentage grade will be assigned. As a guide to determining standing, these letter grade equivalents will generally apply:

A+	90-100	A	85-89	A-	80-84	B+	77-79	B	73-76
B-	70-72	C+	65-69	C	60-64	D	50-59	F	0-49

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, at the instructor's discretion, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.

Note that no intermediate grade will be assigned at the end of the first term.

4 COURSE COMPONENTS.

4.1 PRESENTATIONS.

Each student will be asked to lead discussion at various points during the year. You may be leading the discussion of a paper the group has read, a research 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 at least four separate occasions on topics related to their Honours Thesis as follows:

- Presentation of a paper related to the general topic area of proposed thesis (10 minutes followed by 5 minutes of general class discussion): by October 28. 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 (20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of general class discussion): November and December. Presentations are to be supported by vi-

suals 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. 30 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.

4.2 WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS.

Students will be asked to write and submit for grading one or two writing assignments. Possibilities include a draft of your thesis introduction and/or written summaries/critiques of seminal articles relevant to your topic.

4.3 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. Often these exercises will consist of reading and assessing material for class discussion.

4.4 HONOUR’S THESIS.

Much of the course is structured the development and execution of a major research project, the Honour’s Thesis. Students are encouraged to investigate topics of their own interest and write a paper which constitutes novel research which advances the state of human knowledge on that topic. After identifying broad questions of interest, students will arrange a faculty supervisor for the Thesis, become thoroughly acquainted with the relevant contemporary published literature on the topic, identify appropriate sources of data if the project is empirical, conduct the necessary research, and write up results in a formal thesis format. At the close of the course, a presentation to the class and interested faculty will be given summarizing the findings.

This course may be very different from other classes you have 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, the thesis will be of much higher quality than if you are unprepared

or disengaged, and your classmates and professors will notice if you are unprepared or disengaged. Further, 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 from 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.

5 STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the *Policy on Academic Integrity* in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University.

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

Department policies. The course adheres to all department policies presented here: <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/coursepolicies/index.php>