

# Research Methods in Economics - ECON 3900A

Carleton University  
Department of Economics

Early Summer 2021

Instructor: Florian Richard  
Office Hours: By appointment

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Class Hours: Monday & Wednesday 18:05 - 20:55

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## Course Description

This course covers the basics of conducting applied economic research. This includes the selection of topic, literature review and survey, selection of research method and approach, formulation of hypothesis, testing of hypothesis using statistical analysis, and summarizing results. You will organize and complete the research project in stages. This process includes the following steps:

- choice of a topic;
- finding, critically evaluating and describing the relevant economics literature on this topic;
- developing a research proposal;
- finding relevant economic data sources and collecting economic data;
- analyzing these data using appropriate statistical and econometric techniques;
- clearly and meaningfully summarizing, tabulating and explaining the findings;
- writing a final report/paper;
- presenting your results.

During the first week of classes you are expected to choose a topic, form a team and get organized to start your research projects. The first few lectures will cover the basics of data analysis, linear regression models using the software STATA. During the rest of the course, I will guide through the process of conducting applied economic research. I will be working closely with you at every stage of your research project, however, the paper must be the product of each group's effort. Each student must demonstrate the capacity to do independent work.

## Prerequisites

ECON 2030 with a grade of C+ or higher, ECON 2103 with a grade of C+ or higher, ECON 2210 (or equivalent) with a grade of C- or higher, and ECON 2220 (or equivalent) with a grade of C+ or higher. Students who believe they have taken a similar background course or courses from another university must provide appropriate documentation to the Department of Economics [Undergraduate Administrator](#). A grade of C+ or higher is required to qualify for ECON 4905. DEF(erred final grade) status at the end of this course precludes (continued) registration in any other course for which the former is a prerequisite.

## Research Paper

The research paper must be analytical and innovative. The study must first clearly identify the problem to be investigated. The paper must analyze economic models that address this problem in a rigorous way. The paper must have:

- A concise abstract explaining the problem explored and the main conclusions.
- A well-written introduction to explain why your topic is important and interesting and how does it fit in the relevant literature.
- An explanation of the economic theory underlying the chosen topic, the hypotheses that will be made and the analytical/empirical/econometric methodology that will be used.
- An explanation of the data sources and data that you use.
- A clear and well-organized presentation of your results in words as well as relevant tables and graphs (if appropriate) to illustrate these results.
- A conclusion summarizing and evaluating your results and suggesting possible improvements.

The paper must be neat, well organized, written in correct English with no grammatical or spelling errors and no typos. The format of the paper and of the bibliography (references) section must be done according to the provided instructions.

## Textbook

### Required Textbooks

- Robert H. Neugeboren, *The Student's Guide to Writing Economics*, First Edition, 2005. (A digital copy of the book is available online through [Macodrum Library website](#).)

### Other References

- James H. Stock and Mark W. Watson, *Introduction to Econometrics: Brief Edition*. Addison Wesley Longman, 2007.

- McCloskey, D. N. *Economical writing*, 2000. Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press.
- Christopher F. Baum, *An introduction to modern econometrics using STATA*, Stata Press, 2006.

## Online Communication

Lectures will be recorded live on Zoom. Course material including recorded lectures and STATA tutorials will be uploaded on Brightspace. I will also use Brightspace to send you the links to the virtual meetings through which I give you feedback on your research work. The links I send via Brightspace takes you to the Zoom platform. In terms of the equipment needed, it suffices to have either a laptop or a smart phone, although a laptop is recommended.

I understand that some of you might face technical challenges. This can be related to various reasons such as not being able to get the required equipment or not having access to stable internet connection. In such cases, please send me an email as soon as possible to figure out an alternative communication method.

## Grading Policy

The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

Writing Quiz	10%
Empirical Assignment	20%
Research Proposal	15%
Virtual Presentation	15%
Final paper	40%

Students who can document a compelling reason for missing any of the deliverables will be excused. In such cases, an extension of the deadline will be granted. Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No course grades are final until approved by the Faculty Dean. Application to write a deferred final examination must be submitted online to the [Registrar's Office](#).

## Plagiarism

Please be aware that plagiarism is serious offence at Carleton and should be recognized and avoided. For further information on how to do so, please see "Pammett on Plagiarism and Paraphrasing by clicking [here](#).

## Accomodation Statement

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services [website](#).
- **Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services [website](#).
- **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first scheduled evaluation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, please contact me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable) [here](#).

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation by clicking [here](#).