

**Department of Economics
Carleton University**

ECON 3920A – Professional Practice of Economics

2023 Fall

Instructor: Dr. Xiaoyi Yan
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TA: TBD
Lectures: Tuesdays 18:05–20:55
Classroom: Log into Carleton Central to view
the location on your timetable.
Office Hours: Tuesdays 17:30-18:00

Course Description

Development of skills used by professional economists, including writing professional documents such as policy briefs and memos, data visualization, communication of economic ideas in non-technical terms, presentation skills, and team-based problem solving.

Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s): 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 renee.lortie@carleton.ca to check that credit may be given for all courses.

ECON 3920 A grade of C+ or higher is required to qualify for ECON 4905. Deferred final grade status at the end of this course will prevent continued registration in any other course for which the former is a prerequisite.

Objective

The course aims to develop the practical skills used by professional economists, including writing professional documents, data visualization, communication of economic ideas in non-technical terms, presentation skills, and team-based problem solving.

Economists are information workers. A professional economist needs to have the knowledge and the skills required to find, analyze, interpret and explain information. The aim of this course is to provide you with an opportunity to build skills and gain knowledge that will help you achieve professional success, whether it be as an economist or in a related career.

Students are expected to be hands-on practicing and improving their skills and knowledge under the guidance of the Instructor.

Readings/texts

There are no required texts. Reading materials will be identified and/or shared by the Instructor electronically throughout the course.

Course Outline

There will be three broad components in this course:

- 1) Instruction on writing for economic research and analysis
 - Writing basics
 - Styles of writing
 - Practical writing

- 2) Information visualization and presentation of empirical material
 - Data source, data quality, database
 - Spreadsheet, graph, table
 - Infographic

- 3) Policy analysis and research
 - A topic relevant to Canadian and/or international policy of interest is chosen by students. This section of the work is carried out throughout the term by students; class time may be given as appropriate to facilitate students' completion of this requirement.

Three components will feature approximately equally in the instruction of the course. Lectures will be delivered in-person. Class participation is mandatory as there will be frequent in-class exercises that count towards the course performance. Students are encouraged to participate in classroom discussions and exercises.

Brightspace will be used for the following: All course announcements and emails; assignments and in-class exercises; lecture notes; online submission of assignments, Mini Test and Final Exam.

Mini test (1.5 hour) will take place virtually on October 17, not e-proctored; students are

required to work from a computer, complete the test online with camera on in Zoom.

Final exam (2 hours) will take place virtually, not e-proctored, scheduled during the University's final examination period; students are required to work from a computer, complete the test online with camera on in Zoom.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. Application to write a deferred final examination must be made at the Registrar's Office.

Evaluation

Component	Description	Due Date	Weight
Class attendance	Electronic submission of in-class exercises (maximum 10)	Throughout the term	10%
Assignment 1	A proposal for policy analysis on a topic chosen by students	3 rd class Sep 26, 2023	5%
Assignment 2	Preparation of a briefing note; supporting material on an article provided by the Instructor	5 th class Oct 10, 2023	10%
Mini test	1.5 hour during class time	6 th class Oct 17, 2023	15%
Assignment 3	Quantitative analysis based on a case study	10 th class Nov 21, 2023	10%
Assignment 4	Production of infographics based on the topic chosen by students (one-page with multiple formats of information)	11 th class Nov 28, 2023	10%
Final exam	The final exam will cover all material studied during the term. It will involve writing short analysis, data presentation and interpretation. No multiple choice questions.	2-hour exam as scheduled during the final examination period	40%

All written material submitted will be evaluated on the basis of:

- 1) quality of the economic reasoning;
- 2) quality of the background information used;
- 3) quality of the writing including spelling, grammar and stylistics of presentation;
- 4) choice of appropriate format and structure.

If you miss writing the mini test, the weight of the mini test will be transferred to the final exam.

No course grades are final until approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs.

Class Attendance

All in-class exercises count towards your attendance mark up to 10 points.

Other requests for accommodation due to, for example, bereavement or stress, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Late Assignment Policy

The grade of any assignment that is electronically submitted late will be reduced by 10 percent per day late.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations are required to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre (PMC) to complete the necessary letters of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs at least two weeks prior to the exams. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline of submitting completed forms to the PMC for University-scheduled examinations. For more information, please consult <http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>.

For religious and special needs such as pregnancy, students should consult with the instructor and equity services (ext. 5622 or www.carleton.ca/equity).

Academic support is also available at the [Centre for Student Academic Support \(CSAS\)](#) - a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning. CSAS offers academic assistance with [online student success](#), course content, academic writing and skills development. For more details, visit the [CSAS website \(https://carleton.ca/csas/\)](https://carleton.ca/csas/).

Plagiarism

Please be aware that plagiarism, as defined in the University Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offence and should be recognized and avoided. Any use of generative AI tools to produce assessed content is considered a violation of academic integrity standards. For further information, please see [“Academic Integrity and Academic Offences”](#).

Intellectual Property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).