

**Department of Economics  
Carleton University**

**ECON 3920C – Professional Practice of Economics**

Instructor: Dr. Xiaoyi Yan

2020 Winter

Email: cuLearn

Lectures: Thursdays, 18:05–20:55

Office: B-850 Loeb

Classroom: LB A720

Phone: 613-520-2600 x 1751

Office Hours: Thursdays 5:30-6:00pm or by app't

**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, Amanda Wright.

ECON 3920 A grade of C+ or higher is required to qualify for ECON 4905. DEF(erred 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
  - Spreadsheet, graph, table
  - Infographic
  
- 3) Team-based policy analysis and presentation
  - Topics chosen by student teams from a list provided by the Instructor or alternative topic approved by the Instructor. Teams will be chosen by the Instructor. Students will be given class time to meet in their teams, but should also expect to meet outside the class.

Three components will feature approximately equally in the instruction of the course. Class attendance is mandatory as there will be frequent in-class hands-on exercises.

Midterm exam (1.5 hour) in class on February 6, 2020

Winter break no class February 17-21, 2019

Final exam (2 hours) scheduled by the University during the final examination period

## Evaluation

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Class attendance and participation	Attendance in class; participation in team meetings in class	Throughout the term (see Sick Notes Policy)	10%
Assignment 1	Group proposal for research or policy analysis on a topic chosen by student groups (groups to be determined by the Instructor)	January 23, 2020	5%
Mini test	1.5 hour in class	February 6, 2020	10%
Assignment 2 (Take home)	Preparation of a briefing note and supporting materials on an article provided by the Instructor	February 13, 2018 No lecture, submission of assignment by 8:55pm	10%
Assignment 3	Production of infographics based on a topic chosen by students (one-page with multiple formats of information)	March 5, 2018	10%
Assignment 4	Spreadsheet production based on a case study	March 19, 2020	10%
Poster presentation	Individual presentation of a poster related to a component of the Team-based policy analysis	April 2, 2020	10%
Final examination	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	35%

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 are unable to write the midterm due to a valid documented illness, the weight of the midterm will be transferred to the final examination. The credit weights of assignments cannot be transferred.

No course grades are final until approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs. Application to write a deferred final examination must be made by the student at the Registrar's Office.

## **Sick Notes Policy**

Sick notes are required only in exceptional circumstances. You may miss up to TWO classes without a sick note.

Any requests for accommodation due to sickness must be accompanied by a Carleton University medical certificate: [https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/med\\_cert.pdf](https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/med_cert.pdf) and a signed third party release of information form allowing me to verify the authenticity of the medical certificate. The form can be found in cuLearn under this course.

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 handed in late will be reduced by 10 percentage points per day late. Please also see sick notes policy.

## **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 in December.

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

## **Plagiarism**

Please be aware that plagiarism is a 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” at [www.carleton.ca/economics/courses/writing-preliminaries](http://www.carleton.ca/economics/courses/writing-preliminaries).

## **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).