CARLETON UNIVERSITY
Department of Economics

Honours Capstone Seminar
ECON 4905A – 2023 Summer

In person lectures (😊): Mondays and Wednesdays 6-9pm
Location: Tory Building 213

Instructor: Dr. Susan Bennet
Email: susan.bennet@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Weekly, by appointment. Sign up via Google docs link, or email directly to set up appointment. Use Zoom link for virtual office hours. In person office hours will take place 1 hour before the scheduled lecture, by appointment only. I will announce special office hours prior to paper due dates. There is also a **mandatory** meeting after check-in #2 for which I will post sign-up times.

TA: Matt Soosalu

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A. Course Objectives and Description
The objective of this course is to guide you through the creation of an original research paper using **publicly available microdata**. A major research paper is required.

This course will be delivered in person. *Students are expected to attend lectures*. This course is centered on the exchange of ideas in a research environment, and it is not possible to participate fully in the course if you are not present during the scheduled lectures.

Prerequisite(s): ECON 3900 with a grade of C+ or higher, ECON 3920 with a grade of C+ or higher, and registration in an Honours Economics program.

Precludes: additional credit for ECON 4890, ECON 4900 (no longer offered), ECON 4901, and ECON 4902.

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.

B. Communication.

My primary means of communication with the class will be via Brightspace. I will place my lecture slides on Brightspace, along with additional resources that will be discussed in class. If I need to communicate important information to the class – e.g. changes in due dates, cancellation of class, reminders, or hints about assignments – I will do so via Brightspace. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULARLY CHECKING YOUR EMAIL AND/OR BRIGHTSPACE.**

C. Texts

There is no required text. However, you may find the following sources to be useful:

Angrist and Pischke. 2015. *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect*. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford.

Angrist and Pishcke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics*. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford.

Cameron and Trivedi. 2010. *Microeconometrics Using Stata, Revised Edition*. Stata Corp.

Kennedy, P. 2008. *A Guide to Econometrics, 6th Ed*. Wiley-Blackwell

D. Topics:
- How to find a topic for an economics research essay
- How to conduct a literature review
- Where to find data
- Data management and analysis in Stata
- Modelling
- Regression analysis
- How to write about results

E1. Evaluation:

Warmup Assignments: 4 @ 5%. I will take the best 3 = 15%.
Check-in #1: Topic and data – 5%
Check in #2: Summary statistics plus mandatory meeting – 5%
First draft – 20%
Posters plus comments – 15%
Final Paper – 30%
Participation – 10%

E2. Detailed discussion of evaluation:

Warm-up Assignments: For the first four to five classes, we will be working on a research project together. Each week I will assign exercises that require you to practice what we have discussed during

the lecture. The assignments will be due the day after the relevant lecture. These assignments are intended to help you acquire and/or refine the skills that are necessary to complete your original research paper. We will work through these assignments together in class, in detail. *I do not accept late warmup assignments*.

Feasibility Checks: The majority of your grade will be based on your individual original research paper. To ensure that you are on the right track, you are required to submit a short description of your topic and the data source you plan to use. This is feasibility check number 1. In addition, you are required to meet with me, via Zoom, to discuss your summary statistics. This is feasibility check number 2. I will announce plenty of virtual office hours to accommodate meeting with all of you after the submission of feasibility check number 2.

First Draft: The first draft will consist of a list of references which will be used for your literature review, a data description, and descriptive statistics. In addition, you must also provide me with a description of the estimation method you have chosen, preliminary regression results, and a discussion of said regression results.

Final Paper: The final paper will contain the revisions that arise from my comments on your first draft as well as any new sections that I may suggest on reading your first draft. In addition, you must provide a full introduction, a literature review, concluding remarks and a complete bibliography.   You must hand in a first draft prior to submitting your final paper. The majority of your grade for the final paper is based on the revisions to your first draft.

Poster Session: You will present your final paper in a poster session that will take place toward the end of the term. My expectation is that you will all be **active participants** in the poster session. This includes not only presenting your own work, but also listening to the presentations of others in the class and providing comments on those presentations.

Participation. I cannot overstate how important it is to come to lectures if you plan to succeed in this course. 1) Attending lectures gives you the opportunity to ask questions. This will be especially important as we work through the warm-up paper. 2) It allows you to exchange ideas with your colleagues, which is an important aspect of this course. 3) Coming to lectures is a good way to overcome the time inconsistency problem that many students encounter. You may intend to keep up by working through the lecture slides, but my experience is that many students fall behind. In this course, falling behind is very hard to fix. 4) I will not write a reference for grad school or work if I do not know you well.

Your grade will be based on your *active* participation in the class. I will regularly ask you to share your research progress, informally, with the class. I will ask questions during the lectures.

E3. Submission of course work

We will be using Brightspace to submit assignments. Due dates and times will be posted on Brightspace and discussed during lectures.

Failure to submit any course work without a compelling reason accompanied by a self-declaration of illness will result in a mark of '0' for that component of the course. Grades will be reduced by 10 percent for every 24 hours that an assignment is late, *except for warmup assignments, which will not be accepted after the due date*. All requests for extensions will only be consider with a compelling reason. Please see https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf for the self-declaration of illness form.

Please note that if you fall ill the day before (or the day of) an assignment due date, I will ask you to submit what you have completed up to that point. The remainder can be submitted once you recover.

See Academic Regulation 2.3 Standing in Courses/Grading System for the official meanings of course grades, and note that it stipulates that no course grades are final until approved by the Faculty Dean.

F. Plagiarism

Please be aware that plagiarism is a serious offense at Carleton and should be recognized and avoided. I do not want to discourage students from working through problems and learning together, where appropriate. However, please be aware that it is plagiarism to borrow the work of another student. This applies to any work, even if that work is lines of programming code. This is particularly important in this course, where creating programming code will be an important aspect of your research.

From Carleton's academic integrity policy: "Examples of plagiarism include submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own". For further discussion on this topic, please see Carleton's academic integrity page: Academic Integrity Policy

A rule of thumb is that you can ask other students for help on programming issues, but you should not be using ANY code written by anyone other than yourself. Documenting your programming code is an important safeguard against plagiarism. Using a "writing cleanroom" is also a good policy to avoid plagiarism. For information on using the cleanroom approach to writing, please see https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2016/08/10/how-to-use-an-writing-cleanroom-to-prevent-plagiarism/#:~:text=A%20writing%20cleanroom%20is%20very,way%20to%20avoid%20accidental%20plagiarism.

G. Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and 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. You can obtain more information about accommodations at https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613- 520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at carleton.ca/equity/accommodation.

H. Academic Resources
The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is 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/).