

**The University of Maine  
School of Economics**

**ECO 489 – Senior Capstone  
Fall 2021**

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### **Course Description**

The economics senior capstone course encourages students to bring together the various threads of their undergraduate academic programs in an experience that typifies the diverse professional work of economists. Using current economic issues to set the context for the course, students will integrate and further develop the knowledge and skills they acquired as part of their economics major. Consistent with the writing-intensive nature of this course, students will gain valuable communication skills through writing assignments and presentations, in conjunction with the instructor and teaching assistant.

This course satisfies the Writing Intensive and Capstone Experience General Education requirements. It is worth three credit hours.

Prerequisites: Major in Economics or Financial Economics, Senior Standing and a grade of C- or better in ECO 321 and ECO 350 (or ECO 420), or permission of the instructor

### **Learning Objectives**

The objectives of this course are to:

- Provide students with a culminating, integrative academic experience that typifies the work and research of professionals within the discipline of economics.
- Improve students' ability to communicate and apply their economics knowledge effectively.
- Enhance students' analytical and professional skills.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you should:

- Be proficient at applying your knowledge of economics to make arguments and convey ideas.
- Be familiar with the work of professionals who apply economic thinking and conduct economic research.
- Have improved communication skills (e.g. critique and revise your own written and oral communications, tailor communications to distinct audiences, organize ideas effectively, adhere to proper mechanics and style, achieve clarity of expression in language, argument and idea).
- Have improved analytical and professional skills.

## **Course Structure**

This course will be delivered online from Monday, August 30 to Friday, December 10. It is asynchronous (i.e. we will not have scheduled classes). I will post materials on Brightspace every Monday. You should review these materials, which will form the basis of the assignment for the week. Simona and I will also provide individualized feedback/instruction the assignments. Please refer to the course outline for a list of topics and assignments.

## ***Office Hours***

Instructor – I will have Zoom office hours on Wednesdays from 10:30 am to 12:00pm. You may access the link on Brightspace under Content\Syllabus (Passcode: ECO). Please ‘stop by’ if you have questions. I will meet students on a first-come, first-served basis. After December 10, I will have Zoom office hours by appointment only. This should be pre-arranged via email.

Teaching Assistant – Please refer to Brightspace for more information about these office hours.

Economics Lab – You may visit the Economics Lab for free tutoring. Please refer to Brightspace for more information.

Please note that office hours and the Economics Lab will not be available when classes are cancelled due to inclement weather or other reasons such as Labor Day, Fall Break, Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Break.

Email – You are welcome to email Simona or I to arrange an appointment outside of office hours, or to ask questions. We expect you to be professional and concise; we will not respond to long, complex questions via email. Also, we will not respond to ‘instant messages’ on Brightspace; send all correspondence via email. Please allow up to two days for a response through the week, and three days on weekends and holidays.

## **Materials**

There is no required textbook for this course. I will regularly post materials on Brightspace and communicate via email. You are expected to be familiar with these platforms and to monitor your accounts. You are also expected to be familiar with Zoom. Simona and I will not provide support for these platforms. For assistance, please visit <https://www.maine.edu/information-technology/support/> or <https://online.umaine.edu/tech-support/>.

## **Grading**

Your overall grade will be determined by the following assignments, which must be completed on an individual basis.

### ***Discussion Board Posts (25 Percent Total)***

- Economic Questions due Sunday, September 5 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Economic Literature due Sunday, September 12 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Economic Data due Sunday, September 26 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Examples of Peer Professional Presentations due Sunday, November 7 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Your Academic Experience, Skills and Aspirations due Sunday, December 12 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)

***Technical Brief (35 Percent Total)***

- Literature Synthesis due Sunday, September 19 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Data Analysis due Sunday, October 3 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Draft of Technical Brief due Sunday, October 10 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Peer Review of Draft of Technical Brief due Sunday, October 17 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Final Technical Brief due Sunday, October 24 by 11:59pm (15 Percent)

***Peer Professional Presentation (20 Percent Total)***

- Draft of Peer Professional Presentation due Sunday, October 31 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Final Peer Professional Presentation due Sunday, November 14 by 11:59pm (15 Percent)

***Brief for Public Audiences (20 Percent Total)***

- Draft of Brief for Public Audiences due Sunday, November 21 by 11:59pm (5 Percent)
- Final Brief for Public Audiences due Sunday, December 5 by 11:59pm (15 Percent)

***Extra Credit for Working with the Writing Center (4 Percent Total)***

- Work with Writing Center on Technical Brief from October 4 to October 22 (2 Percent)
- Work with Writing Center on Brief for Public Audiences from November 15 to December 3 (2 Percent)
- More information will be provided on Brightspace. There will be no other opportunities for extra credit. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Assignments are generally due on Sundays by 11:59pm. More information about each assignment will be provided on Brightspace the Monday before the deadline, at the latest.

If you miss an assignment deadline for a valid unforeseen reason (e.g. illness, death in family), you must contact me within 48 hours and provide documentation. If valid, I will work with you to reschedule the deadline. Otherwise, late submissions will not be accepted, and I do not allow re-takes or make-up assignments.

Your overall grade will be assigned as follows:

A (93 to 100 percent); A- (90 to 92.9 percent); B+ (87 to 89.9 percent); B (82 to 86.9 percent); B- (80 to 81.9 percent); C+ (77 to 79.9 percent); C (72 to 76.9 percent); C- (70 to 71.9 percent); D+ (67 to 69.9 percent); D (62 to 66.9 percent); D- (60 to 61.9 percent); F (less than 60 percent).

## Course Outline

Week	Topic	Assignment
August 30 – September 3	Asking and Answering Economic Questions	Discussion Board Post (Economic Questions) Due Sunday, September 5 by 11:59pm
September 6 – September 10	Making Sense of Economic Literature	Discussion Board Post (Economic Literature) Due Sunday, September 12 by 11:59pm
September 13 – September 17	Advancing Economic Arguments in Writing	Literature Synthesis Due Sunday, September 19 by 11:59pm
September 20 – September 24	Finding and Visualizing Economic Data	Discussion Board Post (Economic Data) Due Sunday, September 26 by 11:59pm
September 27 – October 1	Advancing Economic Arguments with Data	Data Analysis Due Sunday, October 3 by 11:59pm
October 4 – October 8	Writing for Peer Professional Audiences	Draft of Technical Brief Due Sunday, October 10 by 11:59pm
October 11 – October 15	Giving and Receiving Peer Feedback	Peer Review of Draft of Technical Brief Due Sunday, October 17 by 11:59pm
October 18 – October 22	Individual Consultations with Instructor and/or Teaching Assistant	Final Technical Brief Due Sunday, October 24 by 11:59pm
October 25 – October 29	Presenting to Peer Professional Audiences: Best Practices	Draft of Peer Professional Presentation Due Sunday, October 31 by 11:59pm
November 1 – November 5	Presenting to Peer Professional Audiences: Examples	Discussion Board Post (Examples of Peer Professional Presentations) Due Sunday, November 7 by 11:59pm
November 8 – November 12	Individual Consultations with Instructor and/or Teaching Assistant	Final Peer Professional Presentation Due Sunday, November 14 by 11:59pm
November 15 – November 19	Writing for Public Audiences	Draft of Brief for Public Audiences Due Sunday, November 21 by 11:59pm
November 22 – November 26	Thanksgiving Break	–
November 29 – December 3	Exploring the Economics Profession	Final Brief for Public Audiences Due Sunday, December 5 by 11:59pm
December 6 – December 10	Communicating Your Skills and Aspirations, Reflecting on Your Undergraduate Academic Experience	Discussion Board Post (Reflecting on Your Undergraduate Academic Experience) Due Sunday, December 12 by 11:59pm

Any changes to the course outline will be announced on Brightspace.

## **Required Syllabus Statements**

### ***Academic Honesty***

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

### ***Students Accessibility Services***

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services, 121 East Annex, 581.2319, as early as possible in the term. Students who have already been approved for accommodations by SAS and have a current accommodation letter should meet with me privately as soon as possible.

### ***Course Schedule Disclaimer (Disruption Clause)***

In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities (due to COVID-19 or other long-term disruptions), the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

### ***Observance of Religious Holidays/Events***

The University of Maine recognizes that when students are observing significant religious holidays, some may be unable to attend classes or labs, study, take tests, or work on other assignments. If they provide adequate notice (at least one week and longer if at all possible), these students are allowed to make up course requirements as long as this effort does not create an unreasonable burden upon the instructor, department or University. At the discretion of the instructor, such coursework could be due before or after the examination or assignment. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to a student's grade for the examination, study, or course requirement on the day of religious observance. The student shall not be marked absent from the class due to observing a significant religious holiday. In the case of an internship or clinical, students should refer to the applicable policy in place by the employer or site.

### ***Sexual Discrimination Reporting***

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to Title IX Student Services or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000.

For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-871-7741 or Partners for Peace: 1-800-863-9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Title IX Student Services: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services.