

ECON 674: Economic Analysis of Law
Spring 2023 Syllabus
University of Maryland-College Park
Department of Economics
Master of Science in Applied Economics Program

Location: Tydings Hall 2109

Instructor: Yong Paek (ypaek@umd.edu)

Office hours: 5 30pm-6 30pm Wednesday (Zoom) and by appointment

TA: Sebastian Montano (Montano@umd.edu)

TA Office hour: 5pm-6pm Monday and by appointment

Class Times

Class will be 15 in-person meetings held each Thursday evening from 6:30pm-9:30pm with a break around 7:45pm. Classes begin on January 26th and end on May 11th. There will be no class on March 23rd due to spring break.

Prerequisites: ECON 641 and ECON 644 (ECON 644 can be taken concurrently).

Grading: Students' grades will be a function of their performance on 5 graded requirements:

- Homework (30%)
- Participation in-class discussions (10%)
- Final Expert Report and Presentations (30%)
- Midterm exam (10%)
- Final exam (20%)

For each category, students will receive a score on a scale of 0 to 100. The weighted average of those scores will determine the final letter grade, with the following cut-offs:

93-100	90-92	80-89	70-79	60-69	50-59	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	0-9
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F

Course Objectives:

Our program has 7 general learning outcomes for students:

1. **Ability to understand, evaluate and analyze economic data**
2. **Ability to understand and interpret statistical evidence from economic data**
3. **Ability to apply empirical evidence to assessing economic arguments**
4. Ability to apply macroeconomic theories to policy discussions
5. **Ability to apply microeconomic theories to policy discussions**
6. **Ability to communicate economic ideas to a broader audience**
7. Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of policy programs using sound economic techniques

The learning outcomes that pertain to this course are to link outcomes 1, 2 to 3, 5, and 6.

The following section describes each course component in further detail:

Homework (30% DUE 2/16/2023, 3/9/2023, 4/20/2023)

The homework will consist of three problem sets, each worth 10%. Students may work with others, but they must submit their own solutions. Submissions must be made online through ELMS and are due no later than 6:00PM on the day they are due.

Each problem set will have two components:

1. A problem solving component related to the prescribed text book
2. A data analysis component that will build up to the final report due at the end of the semester.

The data analysis component of the problem sets will drive the presentation topics and expert report component of the course. **Consequently, the problem sets are extremely important for succeeding in course.**

More specifically, the problem sets will explore two data sets throughout the semester and all students will explore and analyze both data sets as part of the homework.

However, students working in groups of two or three each group will each be allocated to one of the two data sets to delve deeper for the expert report due at the end of the semester. Each group's members and the expert report data set for each group will be determined at random once the final headcount of the class is determined when HW1 is due.

Details about the expert report can be found further below in this document.

In-class Participation (10% DUE 3/9/2023, 4/20/2023, 5/4/2023)

On the day that problem sets are due, before the suggested solutions are posted on to ELMS after class, two groups will present their findings and solutions to the data analysis component of the problem set. The presentation will be 30 minutes consisting of a 20-minute presentation and 10 minutes of discussions where the class will discuss and offer constructive feedback on the analysis.

On May 4th there will also be a final presentation for the groups that have not yet presented. These presentations will be helpful to learn from each other's analysis and make final improvements for your own group's expert report.

Each student's quality of participation in these post-presentation discussions will be noted and assessed.

The Expert Report and Presentations (30% DUE 5/18/2023)

The expert report will be a maximum of 3,000 words. Data analysis using STATA is encouraged but not necessary. Other software such as R and Excel can also be used to develop the economic arguments required for the expert report provided clear and error free code is submitted at the time of report submission. If you feel strongly about using software other than the ones mentioned above, please come and see me to discuss.

For the expert report, student groups who have presented throughout the semester will each submit an expert report (one report per group) based on the data sets covered in the problem sets.

I will provide an example of a real expert report filed in court (April 27th) so you can get see how the structure of such reports should be laid out. The last two classes before the final exam (May 4th) will be workshops where teams present findings and progress to the class. Note that by this point should have made solid progress made through the problem sets and utilization of office hours.

The grade for the final report will be based on the combination of the quality of presentations in class and the written report.

The report will need to be formatted following the APA formatting and style guide (See here for details <https://lib.guides.umd.edu/c.php?g=327052&p=2194819>)

Mid-terms (10% DUE 3/16/2023)

Some problems motivated by textbook material

Final Exams (20% and 5/11/2023)

Some problems motivated by textbook material

Tentative Schedule

1/26/2023

- Introduction to course
- Overview of U.S. Legal System and Case Studies
 - C&U chs. 1-2

2/2/2023

- Economics Review: Profit maximization, utility maximization, game theory (oligopolies and market power)
- **HW1 distributed (Economic concepts and simple data cleaning tasks on data sets relating to an expert report topic)**

2/9/2023

- Economics Review: Data cleaning, visualization, and basic econometrics

2/16/2023 - HW1 DUE (allocate class to expert report teams)

- Theory of Property Law
 - C&U, chs. 3-4
 - Coase, "The Problem of Social Cost," J of Law & Econ (1960)
- **HW2 distributed (Property, Tort Law and Data Visualization and Analysis Tasks for Data Set 1)**

2/23/2023

- Applications of Property Law
 - C&U, ch. 5
 - Besen and Raskind, "An Introduction to the Law and Economics of Intellectual Property," J of Econ Perspectives (1991)

3/2/2023

- Theory of Tort Law
 - C&U, ch. 6
 - Landes, William & Richard A. Posner, "The Economic Structure of Tort Law" (1987).

3/9/2023 - HW2 DUE (First set of presentations, 2 groups present findings on Data Set 1)

- Theory of Tort Law
 - C&U, ch. 7
- Applications of Tort Law

3/16/2023 - MID TERM (will cover non-data analysis material covered in HW1 and HW2)

3/23/2023 - Spring Break

3/30/2023

- Theory of Contract Law
 - C&U, ch. 8
- **HW3 DISTRIBUTED (Tort law, Contract Law, Antitrust and Data Visualization and Analysis Tasks for Data Set 2)**

4/6/2023

- Applications of Contracts
 - C&U, ch. 9

4/13/2023

- Antitrust and Federal Regulations

4/20/2023 – HW3 DUE (Second set of presentations, 2 groups present findings on Data Set 2)

- Applications of Antitrust and Federal Regulations:
- Price Fixing and Mergers
- FCC Spectrum Auctions

4/27/2023

- Guest lecture from industry economist
- Kicking off expert report writing process

5/4/2023

- The expert report and its role in court things to be aware of

- Expert report workshop/presentations for groups that have not presented yet.

5/11/2023 – **FINAL EXAM (will cover all non-data analysis material covered in course)**

5/18/2023 (No class) – **Expert Report Due**

Standard Policies

Policies related to all graduate courses at the University of Maryland are posted on this page of the Graduate School's website:

<https://gradschool.umd.edu/faculty-and-staff/course-related-policies>

Please familiarize yourself with these policies related academic integrity, non-discrimination policy, accessibility, absences and accommodations, grading, academic standing, grievance procedures, and other important policies.

Additional notes that should appear in all MS in Applied Economics program syllabi:

Work Load: Mastering the material covered in this course requires a significant amount of work outside of class. Students should expect to spend more time outside of class than in class – typically at least twice as much time.

Academic Progress: The graduate school requires that students maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the graduate school. Students on academic probation must ask the program's director to petition the graduate school if they want to remain in the program. The petition must include a plan for getting the student's GPA up to at least 3.0. Students who do not live up to their plan can be forced to leave the program without having earned the degree. Note: a grade of "B" corresponds to a GPA of 3.0. A grade of "B-" corresponds to a GPA of 2.7.

Excused Absences: If you miss any class meetings for any reason, you are still responsible for all material covered during the meeting you missed. It is your responsibility to work with study

partners, the teaching assistant, and the instructor to make sure you catch up on the missed material. Instructors routinely facilitate things by posting lecture notes, etc.

If you need to miss an exam or other graded course requirement because of illness, injury, or some other emergency: Follow doctor's orders and get documentation. Get in touch with the instructor as soon as you're able – preferably prior to missing the exam or deadline. Communicate with the instructor to make up the course requirement as soon as possible. You are entitled to recover before you make up the course requirement, but you are not entitled to extra days to study beyond the time the doctor's note says you've been incapacitated. If you are incapacitated for more than a week or so beyond the end of the term, your grade in the course will be an "Incomplete." In such cases you must negotiate a plan with your instructor for completing the course requirements. Once you make up the course requirement the instructor will change your "I" to the appropriate letter grade.

School Closings and Delays: Information regarding official University closing and delays can be found on the campus website and the snow phone line: (301) 405-SNOW (405-7669) The program director will also announce cancellation information to the program as an announcement on the program's ELMS/Canvas site. This will generally be done by 1:00 p.m. on days when weather or other factors are an issue. When classes need to be canceled during the semester, we make every effort to schedule makeup classes.

UMD Counseling Center: Sometimes students experience academic, personal and/or emotional distress. The UMD Counseling Center in Shoemaker Hall provides comprehensive and confidential support services that promote personal, social, and academic success. The cost of these services is covered by the fees you already paid when you registered for classes, and there is no additional charge if you use the services. Proactively explore the range of services available, including the Counseling Service, Accessibility and Disability Service, and the Testing Office, all described at <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>

Graduate Academic Counselor: The UMD Graduate School also has an academic counselor available to support students who are having difficulty navigating mental health resources on campus, are considering a leave of absence and/or need assistance finding mental health care off campus. The Graduate Academic Counselor also facilitates bi-weekly Graduate Student Circle Sessions which provide an opportunity to learn about resources and connect with other graduate students. Students can learn more about the Graduate Academic Counselor by going to: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/gradcounselor>

Course Evaluations: Near the end of the term, you will receive an email inviting you to submit a voluntary and anonymous course evaluation. Your feedback on courses will be very helpful in improving the quality of instruction in our program.

Access to Morrill Hall and Morrill 1102: Morrill Hall is locked every day from 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. Your university ID gives you swipe access to the back door of the building. There is keypad access to the door of Morrill 1102. The code will be shared with students by the program coordinator.