

**University
of Victoria**

Economics

ECON 499 A01

Honours Thesis and Seminar

Spring Session: 2025 01 – CRN 23479, 1.5 Unit Value, Class Time: M & Th 1-2:20pm, Course schedule: Course Begins September 4th and ends December 4th. Class Room: CLE A326. All Course Materials will be posted on Brightspace.

UVic Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Honours Instructors:

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Course Content

Calendar Entry

Seminar for honours students only. Includes oral presentations related to the student's proposed thesis research, which is carried out under the direction of a faculty supervisor.

Course Description

The course is focused on students developing and writing an honours thesis, a work of novel research. It provides students with an opportunity to engage with and produce research at the frontiers of economics. Students will learn about current research methods and how to write and present effectively. The seminar format requires students to interact with both the instructors and each other.

Course Format

The course consists of two 75-minute lectures per week. Readings will be identified before the lectures, and students are expected to have read them before attending class. Students are also expected to prepare for and contribute to class discussions of readings and other material.

Learning Outcomes

By fully participating in and completing the requirements of the honours programme, a student will meet the following objectives:

1. Communicate research effectively to general and academic audiences.
2. Develop a feasible research proposal contributing to the existing knowledge body.
3. Conduct novel and independent economic research.
4. Demonstrate a high level of competence with the research methods relevant to their research.
5. Apply and understand economic analysis to research.
6. Write clearly and compellingly in the disciplinary style of economics.
7. Present research clearly and compellingly.
8. Effectively use software programmes appropriate to their research, such as Latex, Python, Stata, and R.

Class Discussion and Preparation for Class

This course may be very different from other classes you have taken. The quality of the seminar will be determined less by your professors and more by the effort and contributions of each of you. If you show up well-prepared with insightful comments and questions, not only will you contribute to a higher quality of our discussions in class you will also likely produce a much higher quality thesis. Your class participation grade in the course will, in large part, reflect your effort and success at contributing productively to discussions. It is advisable to do your weekly seminar preparation early so that you have time to mull over some of the big ideas we will be discussing. This will also allow you to discuss material with your classmates ahead of time, which is a good way to hone your preparation.

Department Research Seminars

The department hosts weekly research seminars that bring scholars from all over the world to present current research. We encourage you to attend these seminars regularly and we will require you to attend some of these seminars. We will give you at least a week's notice to attend a particular seminar. We will follow up the required research seminars with a discussion in the following honours seminar. Attending required research seminars will count toward your class participation grade.

UVic Research seminars are generally held Fridays from 3:00-4:30pm. The schedule (frequently updated) can be found at [Economics Seminars](#).

Course prerequisites/corequisites

Admission to the Economics Honours Programme.

Textbook

There is no text for the course. Readings will be available on Brightspace unless otherwise specified.

Brightspace

Brightspace is used extensively for the course. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system. The lecture notes will be posted in *Brightspace*. Please note that the lecture notes online only outline the actual lectures.

All announcements will be posted in *Brightspace*. Students are advised to check it frequently.

Grading

Grading Scheme

The course grade is determined as follows: *[Provide a summary of the techniques to be used to assess students' performance in the course and how assignments, tests and other course work will be evaluated. Provide a breakdown indicating the weight assigned to each part of the course. Include any compulsory attendance/participation requirements]*

Class participation: Includes the quality of participation and attendance. Carries a weight of 15% of the final grade.

In-class presentations: There will be four in total. Three will count towards your final grade; the fourth is an ungraded practice presentation of the final thesis. Each carries a weight of 5%, thus 15% of total grade.

Written assignments: Five writing assignments in total (excluding thesis). Each carries a weight of 4%, comprising 20% of the total class grade.

Thesis and Presentation: The presentation counts for 10% of the final grade, while the paper counts for 40%. This implies that they are 50% of your final grade together.

Presentations

Students will be asked to present on at least four separate occasions on topics related to their honours thesis. The occasions are described below. Exact dates found in the tentative schedule later in this outline. Times may be amended.

1. Thesis proposal presentation (October 28/31)
 - a. 15 minutes followed by 10 minutes of general class discussion.
 - b. You will be required to present your proposal without a visual presentation.
 - c. This presentation will count toward the in-class presentation grade.
2. End of semester update (November 28/31)
 - a. 15 minutes followed by 10 minutes of general class discussion. You will be required to present your proposal with a visual presentation.
 - b. This presentation will count toward the in-class presentation grade.
3. Presentation of draft thesis (Not Graded, March 24/27)
 - a. 20 minutes followed by 5 minutes of general class discussion)
 - b. Presentations are to be supported by visuals.
 - c. This is a practice presentation and will not count toward the in-class presentation grade.
4. Thesis presentation (TBA – Approximately Near the End of Exams. Will be decided jointly in class)
 - a. 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes for audience questions
 - b. Presentations are to be supported by visuals.

- c. This presentation will count toward the honours thesis paper and presentation grade.
- d. This will be a public presentation that other students, faculty, and others may attend.

Written assignments

Students will be asked to write and submit for grading six writing assignments throughout the two terms. These assignments will help develop your writing skills for your thesis.

The assignments are:

1. Proposal for thesis (1-2 pages): September 27th
3. Draft introduction and literature review (2-5 pages): November 8th
4. Draft data and methods sections (2-5 pages): January 10th
5. Draft of thesis (length as required): March 28th
6. Final thesis (length as required): April 26th

Note that the dates and lengths of these assignments may be modified if unanticipated events regarding the term or class arise.

Each of these assignments will count toward your writing assignment grade. We require that all draft writing assignments be well-written, well-presented, and with references properly provided.

We strongly encourage the use of LATEX for all writing in this course. We will be giving a tutorial on its use.

Honours Thesis

Much of the course is structured around the development and execution of a major research project, the honours thesis. Students are encouraged to investigate topics of their own interest and write a thesis that demonstrates command of the topic, constitutes novel research, and advances knowledge on that topic.

After identifying broad questions of interest, students will arrange for a faculty supervisor for the thesis, become thoroughly acquainted with the relevant contemporary published literature on the topic, identify appropriate sources of data if relevant, conduct the necessary research, and write up results in a thesis format. The thesis will be evaluated both on content and exposition. At the close of the course, the students will present a summary of their findings to the class and interested students and faculty.

You are responsible for making progress on your thesis. If you find yourself in difficulties, seek advice early from the honours co-supervisors and your thesis advisor.

Mandatory/Essential Course Components

To pass the course, the thesis paper submission and the scheduled presentation defence are mandatory. A class participation grade of at least 70% is also mandatory to be eligible to submit your thesis and presentation. [Dates of Assessments, Due Dates of Assignments]

Grading Scale

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F or N
90-100	85-89	80-84	77-79	73-76	70-72	65-69	60-64	50-59	0-49

Students should review the University's more detailed [summary of grading](#).

Missing Assessments

Should students encounter a situation where they have an assignment at its due date, they may qualify for an academic concession. Students are required to indicate the specific grounds on which they are requesting an academic concession and to provide a justification outlining the impact of the circumstances on their ability to complete course requirements. For in-course extensions, please [fill in the form and follow the instructions on the form](#). Instructors will not respond to informal requests of academic concessions. In case you miss the thesis deadline, fill in a [request for a deferral](#).

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the final defense date has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. Students do not qualify for an academic concession if travel plans conflict with the examination.

Course Policies

This course adheres to the [Undergraduate Course Policies](#) of the Department of Economics that deal with the following issues:

- Academic concessions
- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Late adds
- Late assignments
- Repeating courses
- Review of an assigned grade
- Sexualized violence prevention and response
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists

The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance:

Waitlist Policies

- Instructors have no discretion to admit waitlisted students or raise the cap on the course.
- Students on the waitlist should discuss with the instructor how to ensure they are not behind with coursework in the event they are admitted.

- Registered students who do not participate as specified in this outline during the first 7 calendar days from the start of the course may be dropped from the course.
- Registered students who decide not to take the course are responsible for dropping the course and are urged to do so promptly out of courtesy toward waitlisted students.
- Waitlist offers cease after the last date for adding courses irrespective of published waitlists.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires a commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University.

Review [What is Plagiarism](#) for the definition of plagiarism. Note: Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

Student Code of Conduct

The Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences Faculties have adopted this [Student code of conduct](#). Please, review.

University Policies

- University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
- [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Diversity / EDI](#)
- [Equity statement](#)
- Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)
- [Policy on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness](#) - The University is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

Sexualized Violence Prevention & Response

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. Students are encouraged to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting www.uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Contact svpcoordinator@uvic.ca.

Resources for Students

[UVic Learn Anywhere](#) - UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.

[Centre for Accessible Learning](#) - Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, you are free to approach me; however, you must register with the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) (CAL) for formal arrangements to be made. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

[Centre for Academic Communication](#) - Offers coaching on [academic integrity](#), including preventing accidental plagiarism. Provides support to students with time management, reading, writing, speaking, understanding academic expectations, and other aspects of academic communication as well as creating academic posters, blogposts, PowerPoint slides, and e-portfolios.

[Health Services](#) - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.

[Support Connect](#) - a 24/7 mental health support service for students

- Toll-free (calls from North America): 1-844-773-1427
- International collect calls: 1-250-999-7621

[Counselling Services](#) - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.

[Indigenous Student Services](#) - Indigenous UVic students have access to many sources of support on campus. Before, during and after your time at UVic, you are encouraged to explore programs and services available to you, such as [Indigenous counselling services](#) and the [Elders in Residence](#), as well as non-academic programs that may be of interest to you.

[International Student Support](#) - The University of Victoria offers a number of resources to support international students as they pursue their studies. UVic's [International Centre for Students](#) is the primary office supporting international students on campus at the university-wide level and provides various supportive program through the [UVic Global Community Initiative](#), including a Mentorship Program and Conversation Partner Program.

For academic advising-related questions, students in the Economics Department are also encouraged to meet with the Economics Undergraduate Advisor (Brooklynn Comish-Trimble, ecadvice@uvic.ca) as well as an academic advisor in the [Academic Advising Centre](#) early in their studies to help map out a plan to declare a major and complete university program requirements. Other resources include the [Centre for Academic Communication](#) and the [Math and Stats Assistance Centre](#).

The International Student Liason in the Economics Department is Dr. Paul Schure who can help you connect with other international and domestic students in the Department. His email address is schure@uvic.ca. Please, reach out if you are interested.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future.

When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to the [CES log-in](#). You will use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be completed on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

What strengths did your **instructor** demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?

Please provide specific suggestions as to how the **instructor** could have helped you learn more effectively.

Please provide specific suggestions as to how this **course** could be improved.

Course Structure

[Provide information about the progression of the course, the type of material to be covered and the due dates for important assignments and tests. Simple tables can be used in course outlines. However, for accessibility reasons, they must not contain merged or split cells].

Topic	Week	Due Dates and Exam Information
Introductions, Current Ideas and Course	1	
Doing Research	2	
Writing	3	
Generative AI for research and other software	4	Research Proposal Due
Bitler Talks and TRC	5	
Bitler discussion and Economists' methods	6	
Economists' methods	7	
Economists' methods	8	
Student Presentations	9	Proposal Presentations
Economists' methods and Carollo talk	10	Introduction and Literature Review Due
Carollo discussion and discussion of selected economics papers	11	
Discussion of selected papers and Student presentations	12	Research Presentations
Student presentations	13	Research Presentation Classes end on Dec 4th

E-mail Correspondence

Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the course name and number in the subject line. Questions on course material should be asked during office hours or in class. The standard format for writing a letter must be

used. This means it should begin with a salutation (e.g. Dear....), include full sentences and it must conclude with a signature that includes your **full name and V#** . Text message lingo should not be used.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are not permitted for use in class unless it is a specified “work together” day or other prespecified use.

Use of AI

We will discuss AI usage as part of the class.

Educational Technology involving storage outside Canada

No educational technology involving storage outside Canada is mandatory for the course. However, you have the option of using various platforms to assist you in your research. Please insure you are aware of the services privacy policy and terms of use.