

**ECON 225 Writing for Economists**

**Spring Session: January-April 2026**

**A01 T, W, F 9.30- 10.20am**

**UVic Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge and respect the lək'ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

**Instructor Information:**

**Name:** Dr. Muthoni Nganga

**Office:** BEC 340

**E-Mail:** muthoni@uvic.ca

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3-4pm. All online but you may book an appointment for in-person office hours. You may also email to book an appointment outside office hours- also online unless otherwise agreed.

Office hours zoom link: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uvic.zoom.us/j/82853670440?pwd=vbwMQbzQGba9apA7bKiIrhpgyLO8LX.1>

Meeting ID: 828 5367 0440

Password: 403427

**E-mail correspondence**

Always include the course code and course name in the subject line of your email. Without this information, I will not be able to respond. Emails should be limited to critical matters only such as booking appointments outside office hours. It is not advisable to ask class questions that require long answers or a discussion on email. They are both time consuming and often unclear especially when the student requires further clarification. You are encouraged to ask questions during class or office hours. I will not respond to emails that require long responses or those that can be answered using the course syllabus. Please note that I will not respond to emails asking me to summarize what you missed in class or to tell you whether the missed content was important- **All classes are important.** It is your responsibility to attend class and to catch up on any material you may have missed. Please connect with your classmates for notes and updates if you are absent. Students are advised to use their official Uvic email address for all course-related correspondence. Messages sent from non-Uvic email accounts may be filtered as spam and therefore may not be received. Please use your institutional email address when contacting the instructor or the teaching assistant.

Kindly use a professional tone in your emails.

I check and respond to emails on Monday- Friday (apart from holidays) between 2-4pm

**TA name:** TBD

**E-mail:**

## **Course Description**

This course offers extensive practice in economic writing and oral presentations. Economists write for a variety of audiences, including academic peers through journal articles, policymakers via policy briefs, and the general public through news articles and blogs. Our emphasis will be on the conventions and structure of academic economic writing. The course will cover essential elements of effective writing, such as constructing clear and concise sentences, writing well-structured paragraphs, understanding the standard sections of an economics paper, and knowing what to include in each section to ensure logical flow. A key theme of the course is the idea of writing as a "constrained optimization problem," where clarity, brevity, and completeness must be carefully balanced. For example, students will learn how to write an effective introduction using the "Introduction Formula.". Practical exercises will include drafting an introduction for a topic of your choice. The course will also explore best practices for presenting economic research. This course is designed to equip you with the skills to read, write and present research papers - a core component of the economics program.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Students will learn how to write clearly and concisely, approaching writing as a constrained optimization problem. They will learn how to give a clear presentation by engaging the audience as well as respond to questions arising from their presentation. Overall, this course is designed to equip students with essential skills needed to write and present academic papers in economics. You will build a strong foundation in writing and communication, while more practical experience such as developing full papers with methodology and data analysis will be covered in higher-level courses.

## **Delivery**

This course will be offered in-person following UVic's guidelines. Students may be required to wear masks during lectures, office hours, and exams (subject to public health guidelines).

## **Textbooks**

There is no main textbook for the course. We will however often refer to Writing Tips for Economics Research Papers – 2021-2022 by Plamen Nikolov (2022), as well as other freely available online articles and websites.

## **Course Schedule (tentative)**

	<b>Topic</b>
<b>1 month 2 weeks</b>	<b>How to write</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing as a constrained optimization problem</li><li>• Micro level and macro level considerations in writing</li><li>• Sections in an economics paper</li></ul>
<b>2-3 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to present</li></ul>
<b>Month 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations</li></ul>

**Note:** Classes will follow a discussion-based format, complemented by short in-class exercises and presentations

## **Attendance Policy**

Attendance may be recorded during certain class sessions; while it will not contribute directly to the final course grade, class attendance is strongly encouraged. Research shows that students who attend class regularly tend to perform better academically, as engagement in discussions and activities enhances understanding and retention of course material.

**Course assessments (see notes below the table)**

<u>Component &amp; Date</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<b>Weekly class exercises</b>	<p>Class exercises are scheduled for all/most Fridays and will collectively contribute 10% to your final grade. Please plan to attend class throughout the term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercises will be completed in groups of 2 or 3.</li> <li>• You may miss up to 2 exercises without penalty.</li> <li>• Any additional missed exercises beyond the allowed two will receive a grade of zero.</li> <li>• There are no make-up/deferred exercises. If you miss a class exercise, please do not email me -the policy already accounts for absences.</li> <li>• At the end of the term, I will drop your two lowest exercise grades. For example, if there are 7 exercises total, your final exercise grade will be based on your best 5.</li> </ul>	10%
<b>Midterm 1 Feb 4</b>	<p>How to write Well &amp; How to present Content/ additional information- see Brightspace announcement.</p> <p>Only one out of the two midterm exams will count toward your final grade; the lower score (of the two) will be dropped automatically. If you miss one midterm, that will be the one excluded- no penalty and no need to email me. However, if you miss both midterms, you will receive a grade of zero for the midterm grade. Please note that no make-up midterm exams will be offered. This policy already accounts for missed midterm exam situations.</p>	25%
<b>Midterm 2 Feb 25</b>	<p>The midterm exam questions will be reviewed and discussed in class after the grades are released. No additional answer key will be provided. It is therefore your responsibility to attend class. Individual sessions to review the exam questions will not be offered.</p> <p>While it is acceptable to request a regrade if you identify a grading error during the review, please note that no additional credit or make-up exams, or extra questions will be given to individual students for the purpose of raising a grade. It is considered unethical to ask for a grade bump.</p>	
<b>Paper section writing exam Feb 27, Mar 3 Final submission- Mar 10</b>	<p>More details on Brightspace- see Content- Assignments &amp; Exams</p> <p><b>Note: mandatory course component</b></p>	20%
<b>Final Exam Mar 13</b>	<p>All course content</p> <p><b>Note: mandatory course component</b></p>	25%
<b>Presentation Book date by January 20</b>	<p>See presentation guidelines on Brightspace- includes- how to book a slot, list of papers to select from etc</p> <p><b>Note: mandatory course component</b></p>	20%

**Note:** The weight of any of the assessment items cannot be shifted to any other assessment item.

### **Exam Coverage**

I will not respond to emails asking, “*What will be covered in the exam?*” Instead, use the class exercises as a guide - these reflect the types of material and skills that will be assessed. I will post an announcement on Brightspace at least one week before an exam for additional information on exam coverage. It is your responsibility to regularly check Brightspace for updates. This ensures that all students receive the same information at the same time.

### **Missed Final Examination**

Consideration for missed final exams will be given only on the basis of the University’s policies at the time, accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar: [University Examination Policies](#)

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans during lectures or exam dates to be able to attend all classes and examinations. There will be no special accommodation (and no makeup exams) if travel plans conflict with examinations held during class hours or the examination period.

### **Presentations**

This is one of the mandatory course components. See the presentation requirements on Brightspace. You must book a presentation paper and date by January 20. I will publish a final presentation schedule by January 25th- See more (**Important!**) details in the presentation assignment file uploaded on Brightspace.

### **Mandatory course components**

The paper section writing exam, the final exam and the presentations are required components of the course. Failure to complete any of these will result in a grade of “N” regardless of the cumulative percentage on the course. N is a failing grade and factors into GPA as a value of “0.”

### **Grading Scheme**

Minimum Grade Requirements: A grade of 50 (D) is required to pass Econ 225.

The tests in the course will primarily have short-answers, writing components, discussions and presentations. The course grade is determined as follows:

#### **Grading Scale:**

<b>Passing Grades</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	65-69
C	60-64
D	50-59
<b>Failing Grades</b>	
F	0-49
N	0-49

### **Course Policies**

This course adheres to the [Department 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
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists

### **Brightspace**

Brightspace is used extensively for the course. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system. The lecture materials, class exercises, assignments and important announcements will be posted in Brightspace. ***Please note that the lecture notes online are only outlines of the actual lectures, and additional material and discussions will be covered during the lectures.*** All announcements will be posted in Brightspace. Students are advised to check it frequently.

**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 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. Students are responsible for being aware of this deadline and will not be eligible for credit in the course despite continuing to complete coursework.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity requires 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. Review “[What is Plagiarism](#)” for the definition of plagiarism. Note: Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software as well as selected for plagiarism audits. This applies to all exams and submitted work, including problem sets, the research project, and forecasting competition entry.

Students must abide by UVic academic regulations and observe standards of ‘scholarly integrity,’ (no plagiarism or cheating). This applies to all assignments and exams (take-home or otherwise). Any online exams must be taken individually and not with a friend, classmate, or group. All alleged violations of academic integrity will be investigated and 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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI may not be used in this course except in cases where its use has been explicitly approved by the professor and determined to be ethically appropriate. Should you violate this rule, you will have violated UVic’s academic integrity policy and a complaint against you under this policy will be filed accordingly.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

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

## **Appeals**

Depending on the nature of your concern, the order in which you should normally try to resolve the matter is:

1. Me, the course instructor
2. the Associate Chair: [econassoc@uvic.ca](mailto:econassoc@uvic.ca)
3. the Associate Dean of Academic Advising
4. the Senate.

If you're seeking a formal review of an assigned grade, you should also consult the regulations in the academic calendar regarding [review of an assigned grade](#).

## **University 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. See [General University Policies](#)

## **Accessibility & Health Resources**

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.

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

[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.

[Elders' Voices](#) - The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

## **Other Resources for students**

- a. [Student wellness](#)
- b. [Centre for Accessible Learning](#)
- c. [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.
- d. [Library](#) resources
- e. Centre for Academic Communication ([CAC](#))
- f. Learning Strategies Program ([LSP](#))
- g. [Academic Advising](#)
- h. Economics Undergraduate Advising: [ecadvice@uvic.ca](mailto:ecadvice@uvic.ca)
- i. [Student Awards and Financial Aid](#)

- j. [International Student Advising](#)
- k. Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
- l. [Student groups and resources](#) including UVic [Ombudsperson](#)

### **Course Experience Survey (CES)**

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 ideas as to how the **instructor** could have helped you learn more effectively.
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how this **course** could be improved.

### **Repeating Courses**

According to the University of Victoria Calendar <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar>

*“A student may not attempt a course a third time without the prior approval of the Dean of the Faculty and the Chair of the Department in which the course is offered unless the calendar course entry states that the course may be repeated for additional credit. A student who has not received this approval may be deregistered from the course at any point and may be asked to withdraw from his or her declared or intended program.”*

In order to request permission to attempt this course for the third time, you must follow the instructions provided under the link **Repeating Courses** at

<http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/course%20policies/index.php>

Failure to obtain permission will result in deregistration from the course.