



ECON 225 Writing for Economists – A02(11113)

Fall Session: September- December 2026

Course schedule: T, W, F 1.30- 2.20pm. Cornett Building- B108

UVic Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ 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: Tuesday, 2:30–3:30pm- All online. No appointment or email is required—simply log in to Zoom using the link provided on Brightspace (see Content>Office Hours).

You may also arrange an appointment outside the scheduled office hours. To request an appointment, please speak with me (the professor) after class (not email). If we arrange an online meeting, we will use the same Zoom link as for the regular office hours. If we arrange an in-person meeting, please note that my office door must remain open during the meeting.

The specified office hours are professor office hours.

Note- There will be no office hours on October 27. Instead, you may book an appointment to meet on Friday, October 23.

Communication:

Always include the complete course code (ECON 225 A02) 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. 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 or Brightspace notices/ announcements. 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 materials you missed. Please connect with your classmates for updates if you are absent from class.

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.

Kindly use a professional tone in your emails.

I check and respond to emails on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays (apart from holidays) between 1.30-3.30pm. Emails received after this time will be responded to during the next scheduled email-checking period.

TA name and contact: TBD

Course Description

This course offers extensive practice in economic writing and oral presentation. Economists write for a variety of audiences — academic peers through journal articles, policymakers through policy briefs, and the general public through news articles and blogs. Our emphasis will be on the conventions and structure of academic economic writing, covering essential elements such as constructing clear and concise sentences, writing well-structured paragraphs, and understanding the standard sections of an economics paper, including what to include in each section to ensure a logical flow of ideas.

A key theme of the course is the idea of writing as a "constrained optimization problem," in which clarity, brevity, and completeness must be carefully balanced. While we will not write a complete paper with all its sections, students will learn to write an effective introduction section using the "Introduction Formula" — a simple framework for checking that all the necessary components of an introduction have been included. Practical exercises will therefore include drafting an introduction on a topic of your choice.

The course will also introduce students to how economists identify and select research topics, including by learning from professors about how they selected topics for their own research and how this process relates to choosing research topics at the undergraduate and/or master's levels.

The course will also explore best practices for presenting economic research. Students will read a complete paper from a provided list of papers published in economics journals and present it in groups of two. Overall, this course is designed to equip students 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. Students 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 in accordance with UVic's guidelines, except for the class on Tuesday, October 27, and in the event of other unavoidable circumstances that require a class to move online. In such cases, the change will be communicated as early as possible.

Tuesday, October 27 class: You will not be required to attend class in person on this date. Instead, for this class, you will complete the assigned work independently. Instructions and instructional notes will be provided on Brightspace.

Students may be required to wear masks during lectures, office hours, and exams (subject to public health guidelines).

Course prerequisites/corequisites

Complete 1 of: ECON103 - Principles of Microeconomics; ECON103C - Introduction to Principles of Microeconomics and Financial Project Evaluation (1.5); ECON180 - Introduction to Economics and Financial Project Evaluation (1.5)

Complete all of: ECON104 - Principles of Macroeconomics (1.5)

Academic Writing Requirement satisfied

Declared: Honours, Major, General, or Minor in Economics.

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)

	<u>Topic</u>
1 month 2 weeks	<u>How to write</u> • Writing as a constrained optimization problem • Micro level and macro level considerations in writing • Sections in an economics paper • What constitutes a good topic • How to choose a topic • What is a research question- how to state research questions/ objectives • Writing an introduction section for a proposal • Differentiate between the introduction section of a research proposal and that of a completed research paper.
2-3 weeks	• How to present + chapter writing assignment
Month 3	• Presentations

Note: Classes will follow a discussion-based format, complemented by short in-class exercises, longer in-class and out-of-class assignments, 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 & Date</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Weekly class exercises	Open book 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. • Exercises will be completed in groups of 2 or 3. • You may miss up to 2 exercises without penalty. • Any additional missed exercises beyond the allowed two will receive a grade of zero. • There are no make-up/deferred exercises. If you miss a class exercise, please do not email the instructor/ TA -the policy already accounts for absences. • At the end of the term, I will drop your two lowest exercise grades. For example, if there are 6 exercises total, your final exercise grade will be based on your best 4.	10%

Midterm 1 Tue, Oct 06, 2026	How to write Well & How to present Content/ additional information- see Brightspace announcement. 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.	25%
Midterm 2 Wed, Oct 28, 2026	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. 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.	
Assignment Learning from Economists Submit by Sept 25 Extended deadline – Sept 27	An assignment on how research topics are chosen More details on Brightspace- see Content- Assignments & Exams- learning from Economists	5%
Paper section writing exam Nov 3, Nov 4 Final submission- Nov 10	More details on Brightspace- see Content- Assignments & Exams- Writing Exam <i>Note: mandatory course component</i>	20%
Last Exam Friday, Nov 20 2026	All course content <i>Note: mandatory course component</i>	25%
Presentation Book date by September 23	See presentation guidelines on Brightspace- includes- how to book a slot, list of papers to select from etc <i>Note: mandatory course component</i>	15%

Note on missed assessments/ request for grade shifting: The weight of any of the assessment items cannot be shifted to any other assessment item.

Please note that the assessment components during the term have built in flexibility for all students as you can miss 2 out of the total class exercises and one midterm without losing any weight on course components, opt to use the extended deadlines for some assignments submissions, rendering the need for in-course concessions via special arrangements unnecessary. As such, no make-up assessments will be given. For the learning from Economists assignment, presentations and paper section writing assignment/ exam, please refer to the assignments' details uploaded on BRS. The assignments have built-in flexibility to accommodate

unforeseen circumstances. **Accordingly, no deadline extensions beyond those already provided for in the assignments, and no make-up assignments, will be offered.**

Exam Coverage

I will not respond to emails asking, “*What will be covered in the exam?*” Instead, use the in-class exercises as a guide - these reflect the types of material and skills that will be assessed in the exams. 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 (BRS). You must book a presentation paper and date by September 23. I will publish a final presentation schedule on BRS by September 25th. You must complete both the slides submission and the in-class presentation for this course component to be considered complete. See more **(Important!)** details in the presentation assignment file uploaded on Brightspace.

Mandatory course components

The paper section writing exam (see note below), 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.”

Note on the Section Writing Exam: You must complete both components of the assessment—the in-class (handwritten) exam and the final submission—for your work to be considered complete. If you fail to complete either component, your part submission will not be graded, and you will receive an “N” grade.

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:

Passing Grades	Percentage
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
Failing Grades	
F	0-49
N	0-49

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

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 is fundamental to all scholarly work. At the University of Victoria (UVic), students are expected to comply with the university's academic regulations and must not engage in acts of dishonesty, falsification, misrepresentation, or deception in any academic work. Violations of [the University's academic integrity policy](#) may result in academic or disciplinary consequences.

Use of AI

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
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](#).

[Include your process of dealing with grade inquiries on assignments and exams. E.g, "I only respond to grading inquiries in writing. You must file your question within 1 week of issuance of your grade and the release of the answer key. Do not approach me after class to discuss grading concerns."]

University Policies and Statements

Please note that this course is executed in a manner consistent with these University statements and policies.

- a. University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
- b. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- c. [Academic Integrity](#)
- d. [Academic Concession Regulations, Academic Concession and Accommodation](#), Academic Accommodation – Policy AC1205
- e. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- f. [Student Conduct](#)
- g. [Accessibility](#)
- h. [Diversity / EDI](#)
- i. [Equity statement](#)
- j. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- k. [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)

Resources for students

- a. [Student wellness](#)
- b. [Centre for Accessible Learning](#)
- c. [UVic Learn](#). UVic Learn 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. Academic Skills Centre ([ASC](#))
- f. Learning Assistance Program ([LAP](#))
- g. [Academic Advising](#)

- h. Economics Undergraduate Advising: 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](#)

Student Experience of Learning (SEL) Survey

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential SEL survey 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.

Repeating Courses

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.