



ECON 423 A01

Economics and Indigenous Nations

Winter Session: 202609 – First Term, Fall 2026, 11151, 1.5 Unit Value, 3 Contact hours, 11:30 am -12:50 pm, Monday, Thursday, BEC 363.

UVic Land Acknowledgement

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

Instructor Name: Dr. Donn Feir

Office: BEC 380

Method of contact and availability: dfeir@uvic.ca; I will respond within two business days during term.

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-3:20 pm, In-person.

TA Name: Keddy Wright

Email: keddyme@uvic.ca

Teaching and assessment modality statement

This course is face-to-face; all knowledge checks are held in person, and part of the assignments must be completed in class. Readings will be available on Brightspace, and, when necessary, video and pre-recorded content will be available.

Course Content

Provides an introduction to economic theory and policy analysis relevant for Indigenous nations in Canada and elsewhere; draws on literature in development economics, health economics, economic history, and labour economics; applies economic principles to policy design in Indigenous contexts; introduces Indigenous research methods to economics students. Provides basic guidance on principles of conduct for working with Indigenous communities. Topics may include an economic history of specific Indigenous peoples, self-governance, labour market outcomes and property rights.

The course is designed to introduce you to the economic theory and policy analysis relevant for Indigenous nations and settlers in Canada and elsewhere. The course will use economic principles and literature to discuss the history of Indigenous-settler relations, modern economic development, and the broader social policies salient to Indigenous contexts, such as health, education, property rights, and governance. The course will provide the foundational basics for working as an economist in First Nations and other Indigenous contexts.

The economic questions surrounding land claims, governance, and service delivery are some of the most significant questions you will face as you move forward as a policymaker, businessperson, analyst, or resident in Canada. This course will give you the opportunity to become aware of some of the history and policies relevant in Indigenous contexts, to think about Indigenous economies from the perspective of the discipline of economics, and to think critically about the discipline of economics from the perspective of Indigenous scholars. Finally, the course's delivery and design aims to aid in the decolonization and Indigenization mission of the University of Victoria.

The course is a 400-level course with 300-level pre- or co-requisites covering theory and empirical methods. Students will be expected to read and contribute to the literature on Indigenous economic development. This course is known as a "capstone" course, usually taken near the end of your program, as it gives you the opportunity to integrate all the knowledge you have gained in your economics program with important real-world topics.

Class will sometimes involve lectures, but will often be based on discussions of readings and require student active engagement.

Course prerequisites/corequisites

ECON 313; ECON 345 or 365; or permission of the department

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.

Textbook

All required readings will be posted on Brightspace and will consist of journal articles, textbook chapters, and other readings.

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 are only outlines of the actual lectures.

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

Learning Outcomes

1. Broadly describe the history of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada, modern institutions and legislation facing Indigenous peoples and nations, and a basic set of facts regarding Indigenous nations in Canada.
2. Identify a set of economic theories relevant for Indigenous economic development by economists and Indigenous scholars.
3. Identify errors in reasoning of policy proposals or the assessment of causal relationships.
4. Apply basic economic concepts to Indigenous policy contexts.
5. Discuss the creation, interpretation, and ethics of data regarding Indigenous peoples and have a basic grasp of causal statistical arguments.
6. Write and articulate clear and concise economic arguments for policy and academic audiences.

In addition to the learning outcomes, by taking this course you will have the opportunity to:

1. synthesize the literature on a specific economic topic facing Indigenous peoples;
2. practice “two-eyed” seeing in policy evaluation and statistical analysis;
3. practice your oral communication skills;
4. enhance your written communication skills for policy and other audiences; and
5. learn from your colleagues;
6. undertake an applied project relevant for Indigenous economic development.

Course Structure, Assessments, and Grading

Statement about learning components

Lectures and class discussions will be in person, and lectures will typically not be recorded. Students will be expected to engage in class in order to practice communication skills and build understanding.

Assignments involving a presentation, again, are intended to build communication skills and support the

internalization of knowledge. Knowledge checks are a confirmation that students understand the more “facts-based” parts of the course, rather than an opportunity for deep dives and creative thinking that will be available in the class project. There will be two dates on which an alternative learning activity will be provided due to instructor conflicts (September 17 and October 8th).

Use of AI

AI may be used to support students' work, but students are responsible for the content they produce and must be able to demonstrate full knowledge and understanding of their work upon oral assessment. Avoiding plagiarism, inaccurate citations, and incomplete or incorrect work is also the student's responsibility. If asked about AI use, honesty is required. AI may not be used during exams

Grading Scheme

The course grade is determined as follows:

Two in-class assignments, each carrying a weight of 15% (total of 30%). These assignments will be submitted in two components. The first component is to be prepared before class. The second component will be completed in class and will take the form of a presentation. All students should submit independent work.

Two in-person knowledge checks, carrying a weight of 15% (total of 30%). The knowledge check will be in class, based on course material, and conducted independently.

In-class participation carries a weight of 15%. The participation grade is based on both attendance and demonstrated active engagement in the class. If you cannot attend a lecture because of a valid reason, e.g. you are sick, please notify me by email before the start of the lecture. Excused absences will not affect your attendance score. Speaking up in class can be intimidating for some students, but learning to ask questions in public spaces is an important life skill. To help encourage students who might be less used to sharing their ideas or questions, thinking about these before class can help.

One final project worth 25%. The final will be in class, based on course material, and conducted independently.

In lieu of the more traditional final project, students can choose a creative project that reflects a deep knowledge of the material, advances in skills related to the material, and/or an oral demonstration of knowledge. Students should speak to me and receive approval before pursuing this option.

Mandatory/Essential Course Components

To pass the course, you must pass the in-person class participation grade, which can not be deferred and requires participation in at least 70% of the lectures. Students must also receive a passing grade on the final project and a cumulative pass on the knowledge checks.

Dates of Assessments, Due Dates of Assignments

The assignments have two components, and the first part is due before the start of class, and the in-class component will be on September 28th and November 23rd.

The knowledge checks will be on October 19 and December 7th.

The final project is due December 19th

Grading Scale

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%
F or N	0-49%

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

Missing Assessments

Should students encounter a situation in which they miss an exam or cannot submit an assignment by 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 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](#). I will not respond to informal requests for academic concessions. Note that a concession may involve shifting the weight of course components depending on the nature of the course component.

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 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.

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](#). You must file your question within one week of issuance of your grade.

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.

Course Structure

Week	Topic	Additional Notes	Assessment
1 (September 10)	Introduction		
2 (September 14, 17)	Knowledge Foundations and Philosophy	Pre-Recorded Material online September 17 th (no in-person class)	
3 (September 21, 24)	History and Development		
4 (September 28, Oct 1)	History and Development		Assignment 1 (presentations)
5 (Oct 5, Oct 8)	Culture and Identity	Pre-Recorded Material online Oct 8 th (no in-person class)	
6 (Oct 12, 15)	Restitution (effects and calculations)	No class Oct 12 (Thanksgiving); Guest Lecture	
7 (Oct 19, Oct 22)	Restitution (effects and calculations)		Knowledge check 1
8 (Oct 26, Oct 29)	Property Rights		
9 (Nov 2, Nov 5)	Governance		
10 (Nov 9, Nov 12)	Reading Week		No class Nov 9.
11 (Nov 16, Nov 19)	People vs Place-Based Policy		
12 (Nov 23, Nov 26)	People vs Place-Based Policy		Assignment 2 (presentations)
13 (Nov 30, Dec 3)	People vs Place-Based Policy		
14 (Dec 7 th)	Wrap up		Knowledge check 2 (Final Project due Dec 19)

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 should not be used in class unless a concession is received.