ECON 225 A04  
Writing for Economics  
CRN 11107

First Term September-December 2021

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Office Hours: before class, or virtual by appointment  

TA: Sydney MARTIN (sydneymartin@uvic.ca)

Class times: Tuesdays 6:30 P.M. – 9:20 P.M. in CLEA208

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect the original people on whose traditional territory the university stands. We are visitors here, the ancestral homeland of the L’kwungen, WSÁNEĆ, and Wyomilth people. We appreciate their stewardship of this beautiful place and feel privileged every day to experience the bounty of the land and sea.

Course Content

Economics 225 is not an English course. It’s a writing course for economists. Econ 225 is geared to a type of writing that combines clear, concise prose with theoretical analysis and the use of economics models. The course includes the study of grammar, syntax, and parts of speech. Students who complete Econ 225 should be able communicate their ideas clearly and concisely.

In this course you will think of writing as a constrained optimization problem. You will practice building clear, concise sentences. You will learn to think and write like an economist, and you will be exposed to the types of writing you are likely to encounter in your study of Economics. You will sharpen your skills with a research paper, a summary test, and a grammar test. You will take four quizzes that assess your knowledge of the course material. You will be asked to identify the parts of an argument essay, and you will be asked to explain how each part works.

In this course we want plain writing. The foundation of all writing is the sentence. You will need to know how to define a sentence: A sentence is a structure of logical relationships. You will need to know how to write a clear, concise sentence. Next, you need to know how to create a strong paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting sentences. Remember, you’re a carpenter here, a builder, not an interior decorator. You should build your sentences with plain words. Gradually, you should be able to build an essay that communicates your ideas and (possibly) persuades others to your point of view.

Econ 225 was developed almost twenty years ago in response to the need for writing skills in the undergraduate Economics program. It is not a grammar course, but you will be expected to learn grammar essentials. You will need to know how to take apart a sentence to see what makes it tick. You will be expected to hand in work that is proofread and carefully edited. Students who pass Econ 225 will be expected to handle the writing tasks in upper-level courses. They also should be able to handle the writing challenges they will encounter in the post-university world.

Keep in mind what the writer and essayist James Baldwin said in an interview with The Paris Review: "You want to write a sentence as clean as a bone. That is the goal." Or this from Stephen King, the horror writer, in On Writing, his memoir and writing guide: "Writing is refined thinking."
Books
1. **A textbook is not necessary this term.** A new edition is expected in 2022. Resources for writing will be included in this course outline and the OWL Purdue grammar website. We recommend that students read often and widely in magazines, graphic novels, online news sites, comics, manga, novels from different cultures, and classic economics texts. Reading is an important component of the course. It’s impossible to write well, or to recognize what a sentence looks like, unless you are reading. We have included a short list of recommended books at the end of this course outline. Check out your local library, bookstore, or amazon.com for other titles. One more thing: As economists, you should be well read; you should know about the world, about poverty, war, the arts, hunger, inequality, and happiness. Everything tells a story. Economics covers far more than math.


Grading
The final grade is determined as follows:

**40% Eight Quizzes**
These quizzes will be on grammar, syntax, mechanics, APA citation, and writing in general. The quizzes may have multiple choice questions. They may ask you to answer factual questions or to write short summaries or responses. Answers that are ambiguous, nonsensical, awkward, or sloppy will be marked wrong. **There are no partial points in the grading; an answer that is “partially” wrong is wrong.** Each quiz will have 10 questions. Study material for each quiz will be posted ahead of time
- Quiz 1: active/passive voice
- Quiz 2: subject-verb agreement
- Quiz 3: parts of the summary
- Quiz 4: Components of the Argument essay
- Quiz 5: APA and reference questions
- Quiz 6: in-text citation questions
- Quiz 7: Plagiarism
- Quiz 8: More grammar and writing—what is a sentence, fanboys, what did you learn?

**10% Grammar & writing Test at the end of the course**
The grammar and writing test will be based on lectures and the OWL Purdue website. It will have 20 questions.

**10% Summary Test**
You will be asked to summarize a short essay using no more than 80 words.

**10% Research Paper draft [There will be a lecture on this]**
The research paper will be written in the form of an argument essay but with in-text citations, a short lit review on the first page that summarizes your primary sources and explains how you will use it, and, of course, a references page. Briefly, paragraph one is an anecdote with your position. [The anecdote should be from your personal experience, not a statistic or fact; make the reader see it. Paragraphs two and three will be supporting examples; at the end of paragraph three you will include a counter-argument and a refutation/rebuttal; and the final paragraph, four, will be a call to action, calling on the reader or someone in authority to support your position. This is real world writing; it’s not intended for the recycling bin, so make sure your anecdote draws the reader in. The draft will not be a finished product, but it should be formatted properly at this stage with one or two pages of text and in-text citations and a references page. It should all the components, except it will not have an abstract. You are expected to write and rewrite the paper on your own time. (We recommend printing out at least two or three versions over a period of a few weeks and editing in red or blue pencil or pen before transferring the edits and rewrites to your electronic copy—drink tea or listen to music while you edit. Some people like to write like a lizard (go fast, stop, look, go fast) while others prefer to write everything out in a blaze of creativity and edit when it’s done—it’s up to you.) At any rate, you will hand in a typed draft of your paper—basically, your latest version. The references must include at least one academic source from a peer-reviewed journal. All paraphrases and summaries in the paper must be cited with page or paragraph numbers.
• All submitted work in Econ 225 will be in Times New Roman 12–point font. (The fonts on the modern computer were placed there originally by Steve Jobs after he audited a course on typography and calligraphy. The course was taught by a former Catholic monk. Years later, Jobs credited the course for his fascination with fonts and design.)

30% Research Paper
• Your final appear will be written in the form of an argument essay. We will be using the 7th edition of the APA style guide, as found on the OWL Purdue writing website. For the paper, you will be given a list of questions to choose from, for example, agree or disagree with Charles Dickens when he said that if every man and woman behaved decently, the world would be a decent place. Or you might be asked to agree or disagree that a onetime levy on each country’s wealthiest citizens would be the most practical and ethical way to pay for the costs of the pandemic. [Note: Some topics may be too recent to have academic sources; in the case of the pandemic question, you would look for sources on wealth taxes in general and when you find the right source, apply it to your discussion.]
• Your final paper MUST have at least one peer-reviewed journal article in its reference list. Ten points will be deducted from your paper for not having at least one peer-reviewed journal article.
• To find peer-reviewed journal articles, go to the UVic website, sign in with your UVic netlink ID, and find the Library page. Then type three key words into the search box that’s displayed on the page. You may need to modify your search terms and choose new key words, but eventually you’ll find a list of sources. You may need to narrow your search further. If you need to, google the publication and see if it’s a bona fide peer-reviewed journal. (Note: The Economist magazine is not a peer-reviewed journal.)
• The purpose of the paper is NOT to pile up words to reach the word count. And you don’t have to break new ground in the field in which you write. The purpose is simply to choose a subject and write a correctly formatted APA research paper clearly and concisely—in no more than 1,000 words. You must include at least one cited quotation from your primary source. Although APA doesn’t require it, you must cite summaries and paraphrases from your sources with a page number(s), or in the case of a website, with a paragraph number(s). Failure to apply these citations is considered inadequate attribution and will result in an automatic 10-point deduction.
• You are responsible for your paper, not the instructor or anyone else. We answer questions and provide direction; the rest is up to you. You will be expected to check your paper thoroughly to make sure you included at least one peer-reviewed source from an academic journal, that the source is actually peer-reviewed, that it is over 5 pp. (and not a letter to the editor, report, or review), that you cited all borrowed material, that all your formatting is correct, that your title page and references are correct, that you remembered the short literature review on the first page of your paper, and that your paper is clear, concise, and readable. [Yes, that’s a long sentence.]
• Students must put a word count at the bottom of the last page of their essay, before the References section. Papers with no word count will have 2 points deducted. Paper length: 900–1000 words.
• Your references list must be in correct APA style: Do not use a citation engine. They invariably make errors in APA. APA is unique. Instead, check your references against the examples in OWL.
• No “ezproxy” references in the references page—you must cite the author(s), the name of the journal, the volume number, issue number, the page range, and you must follow the examples given in OWL. The term “ezproxy” does not belong in your references. Once you find your academic source, download it onto your desktop. When you do, the page numbers will be visible.
• When listing a website in the references, keep the url structure simple. When citing a website inside the text, use a short paraphrase that identifies the website. See OWL for further directions.
• You MUST write a one page treatment on the research strategy you used to find the journal article that is your primary source. For example, state the number of the steps you took to find the article. [For example, 1. My paper topic is the war economy in the novel 1984, 2. I went to the UVic library site, 3. I wrote three key words in the Library search box: war, economy, and 1984, etc., etc., 4. To refine my search, I clicked “journal article” in the left hand column.] Some of your searching may result in a dead end, and you should state your search failures as well as your successes. Your last step should be stating the full name of the journal article you end up using. You must include this “search strategy” page with your final paper. It should be about one page. It will not be marked, but failure to include it will result in a 10 point deduction from your research paper grade.
• This course has zero tolerance for violations of Academic Integrity. If a paper is found to contain plagiarism (e.g., if you have copied words from a source as if they were your own, or if you have copied exact language without quotation marks), or if your paper is, in fact, a
bought or borrowed paper, it will receive an automatic 0. Students in ECON 225 are required to sign & print their name at the end of their paper and state: “I have not plagiarized any material and this paper was neither borrowed nor bought.” Papers without this statement at the end will have 10 points deducted from the grade. We’re aware that countless paper-buying companies advertise online and in chat groups. The temptation’s there. When you see these ads, think of two words: opportunity cost. If you do, we believe you will realize how much easier and safer it is to just do the work. You will thank yourself later. The people in these companies are just snake handlers, only they don’t get bit, you do.

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A+</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F or N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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</table>

Students should review the University’s more detailed summary of grading.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, a successful learner will demonstrate the ability to:

- Write a clear, concise sentence and follow it with another
- Write a well-constructed paragraph
- Write a summary of an article, movie, or body of literature
- Write a well-organized research paper using APA citation
- Prepare rough drafts and edit for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction
- Write a paper or summary that presents information concisely, clearly, and accurately
- Extract the key economic argument(s) from a journal article
- Write a correct abstract, paraphrase, or literature review
- Organize numerical information in tables to amplify or support your arguments

**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
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists

The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance.

**Examinations**

Attendance at all scheduled examinations is mandatory. Consideration for missed examinations will be given only on the basis of documented illness, accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed final examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar.

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable 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. There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.

**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 show up in the first seven 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.

E-mail correspondence
Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and MUST 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 conclude with a signature that includes your full name and V#. Text message lingo should never be used.

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. 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.

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
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.

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.

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.

**Chat groups**

It is expected that some students may be in chat groups or messaging groups during the course. You may not use these groups to share or discuss answers during any test or quiz. This kind of cheating is easy to catch and results in the same penalties as other forms of cheating—a zero for the assignment and possibly the course.

**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, conclude with a signature that includes your full name and V#. Text message lingo should not be used.

**Electronic devices: No electronic devices, chatting, or web searching during tests**

**Note: 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](http://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](mailto:svpcoordinator@uvic.ca).

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course assumptions. Know them. Read the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must confirm your attendance by signing into Brightspace and</td>
<td></td>
<td>course outline thoroughly from top to</td>
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<tr>
<td>completing a mandatory diagnostic test before 11:59 p.m. PDT on</td>
<td></td>
<td>bottom. Make notes if you have any</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 September. If you do not, you will be considered a no-show and</td>
<td></td>
<td>questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>will be deregistered from the course. Waitlisted students must also</td>
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<td>Diagnostic test</td>
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<tr>
<td>complete the test to remain on the waitlist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course assumptions: The foundation of all writing is the sentence.</td>
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<td>A sentence is a structure of logical relationships. Our goal is to</td>
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<tr>
<td>write each sentence clearly and concisely. Writing is not the act of</td>
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<tr>
<td>piling up random words. Meaning comes from the form of a sentence—</td>
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<tr>
<td>without the correct form, meaning cannot emerge. The correct form</td>
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<td>does not exist without correct grammar and syntax.</td>
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<td>Think of writing as a constrained maximization problem—you want to</td>
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<td>maximize your reader’s knowledge subject to the page-limit constraint</td>
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<tr>
<td>of your paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always be clear when you write. Study grammar. Be able to define</td>
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<tr>
<td>the parts of speech.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 6 of 9
- Writing and reading a sentence. If you can write a sentence, you can write a paragraph, a summary, and an argument. The words that are precisely placed in a sentence carve out meaning on the page. Any questions?
- **Study grammar, mechanics, syntax, active/passive voice, and writing sections in the course outline and in OWL Purdue, our online grammar site.**
- Practice writing sentences in the comfort of your own home. Practice is essential.
- **Quiz #1:** active/passive voice
- Choose topic from list of topics and begin researching paper. You need to begin now; don’t wait. Find your peer-reviewed academic source and start drafting your paper, writing and rewriting, ideally by printing drafts and editing them with pencil while reading your words out loud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz #2: subject-verb agreement</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for summary test in week 5 by studying a sample summary that will be provided.</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html">https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html</a> to prepare for the grammar quizzes and research paper.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Research Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to format your drafts</td>
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</table>

| Quiz #3: Parts of the summary | 4 |
| Research Strategies           | Quiz 3 |
| How to choose an academic source | |
| Summary practice              | |

| **Summary writing test**       | 5 |
| How to write an argument essay | Summary writing test |

| Quiz #4: Components of the Argument essay | 6 |
| Writing APA references              | Quiz 4 |
| Including appendices in your paper   | |

| Quiz #5: APA and references | 7 |
| Peer-editing your research draft | Quiz 5 |
| **Draft research paper due: 26 October by 11:59 p.m. PST** | Draft paper due |

| Quiz #6: In-text citation questions | 8 |
| Formatting checklist for final papers. APA review | Quiz 6 |
| Writing an abstract in APA style | |

| Quiz #7: Plagiarism | 9 |
| Work on your research paper, get it ready. Review course material | Quiz 7 |
| Peer-editing your paper for submission | |

| **Final Research paper due: 16 November by 11:59 p.m. PST** | 10 |
| NOTE: Late papers will not be accepted and will receive a 0. | Final paper due |
| More on academic writing | |
| Reading and writing critically | |
• **Quiz #8:** More grammar and writing—what is a sentence, fanboys, what did you learn?
• Review for grammar test
• Read OWL and course outline notes

| 11 | Quiz 8 |

• Course review / CES
• **November 30 Final grammar quiz**

| 12 | Grammar Quiz |

**Expectations for the course**

• All written work must be proofread and edited. **Careless, unedited work will receive an automatic failing grade.**
• Zero tolerance for cheating
• Questions on class material should usually be posted in person via Zoom or by email during office hours. It is not efficient to provide lengthy explanations of class material over email. Many of your questions can be answered by looking up material on OWL or reading the course outline. Should you send email for whatever reason, put ECON 225 and your section number in the subject line. Students are responsible for all material covered in lectures whether they miss a lecture or not.
• Your summaries in Econ 225 **must not contain any quoted material.** They must not contain any exact language from the source except, if needed, keywords, technical terms, numbers, or proper nouns.

**RESOURCES**

Some resources for your research and entertainment:

- The New York Times
- The Globe and Mail
- The Guardian
- The BBC
- Freakonomics Blog
- FT Asia Pacific
- Tim Harford's blog
- The Economists' Voice
- A&L Daily
- NPR's Planet Money
- China Daily
- Bloomberg
- The National Review
- Al Jazeera English
- Deutsche Welle
- Der Spiegel online
- The Huffington Post
- The New Yorker
- Freakonomics
- Economics for Public Policy
- Democracy Now! blog
- Nation of Change
- Adbusters.org
- Slate
- xkcd.com
- Econbrowser.com
- Malcolm Gladwell's Blog
- Internet Movie Database
- Four Word Film Reviews
- Movies for Economists
- Rotten Tomatoes
- Metacritic

Read widely: Newspapers, blogs, novels, movie reviews, video game reviews, magazines, manga—watch movies and note their economics content, from older movies like *Fight Club* to movies like *Nomadland*

**Short suggested book list:**

1. *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates
2. *The Rape of Nanking*, Iris Chang
3. *Hiroshima*, John Hersey
4. *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, Peter Matthiessen
5. *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools*, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada staff
6. *Legacy: Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing*, Suzanne Methot
8. *Indian Horse*, Richard Wagamese
9. *How to be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi
10. *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson
11. *1984*, George Orwell
14. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, as told to Alex Haley
15. *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell
16. *Freakonomics*, Steven Levitt & Stephen Dubner
17. *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin
18. *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Daniel DeFoe
19. *The Sixth Extinction*, Elizabeth Kolbert
20. *Gambling with Armageddon: Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Martin J. Sherwin
21. *A Beautiful Mind*, Sylvia Nasar
23. *Crime and Punishment*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky
25. "*Babi Yar,*" Yevegeny Yevtushenko