

Economics 349(L01) The Economics of Social Problems

Instructor: Rob Oxoby
Phone: 403.220.2586
Email: oxoby@ucalgary.ca

Lecture Location: online via D2L
Lecture Days/Time: TR 8:00 – 9:15

Office: SS402
Office Hours: MW 14:00 – 16:00

Winter 2021

Course Description:

This course will use the tools of economic analysis to contribute to our understanding of various social problems. Using the economic model of the rational agent, we will explore how individuals behave in social context and evaluate policies addressing the issues in question. Topics to be covered include discrimination, crime, health care, income inequality, and poverty.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop skills around using and interpreting economic methods, particularly economic models.
2. Introduction to the use of economic measures of growth and development, with an emphasis on broader socio-economic and distributional measures (e.g., health, poverty, Gini coefficient).
3. Introduction to economic research on the causes and effects of income inequality; introduce different theories of economic allocations and their underlying philosophies.
4. Know and understand various measures of poverty and economic theories as to the causes of poverty; know and understand the components of poverty and their underlying theories.
5. Know and understand the theories of taste-based and statistical discrimination; understand the consequences of each type of discrimination; introduction to other theories of discrimination from other fields (e.g. expectation states, social identity)
6. Know and understand the economic theories underlying criminal behaviour and the judicial system; develop familiarity with the criminal justice system in Canada and the distributional aspects of crime.
7. Know and understand the concept of externalities as applied to environmental problems; develop understanding of the methods used to mitigate environmental problems.
8. Know and understand the economic theory of human capital as applied to population health and develop a familiarity with single payer and private insurance health care systems.
9. Develop the skills necessary to conduct research. This includes developing a research question, choosing an appropriate methodology, reviewing relevant literature, and communicating results. This outcome includes professional skills developed through peer review exercises.

Course Outline:

1. Review of Economic Principles
2. The Distribution of Income
3. Poverty
4. Discrimination
5. Crime and Punishment
6. Drugs and Addiction
7. Aging, Health Care, and Pensions
8. The Environment

Prerequisites/corequisites:

Econ 201

Required Textbook(s):

LeGrand, Propper, and Smith, *The Economics of Social Problems*, MacMillan, 2008.

In addition to readings from the text there will be required readings from economics journals and the popular press. These will be posted on D2L.

Books on Reserve:

Schiller, *Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice Hall
Miller, Benjamin and North, *The Economics of Public Issues*, Norton, 2001
Sharp, et al., *Economics of Social Issues*, Irwin/McGraw Hill, latest edition
Becker & Becker, *The Economics of Life*, McGraw Hill
Lowenstein & Elster, *Choice over Time*, Sage, 1992
Aaron, *Behavioral Dimension of Retirement Economics*, Russell Sage, 2000
Elster, *Addiction: Entries & Exits*, Russell Sage
Blau et al, *Economics of Women, Men & Work*, Prentice Hall
Frank, *Economics & Behavior*, McGraw Hill

Online Delivery:

This course will be delivered online. Students are expected to be able to participate online in accordance with this Course Outline. Lectures, assignments, office hours, exams, readings and other course material, etc. all require online access, and this access is the responsibility of the student.

In order to remotely participate in online courses, students will need to have a computer with a current and updated operating system (macOS or Windows will work with all university-supported online learning technologies), a current and updated web browser installed – the latest versions of Firefox, Safari, Chrome or Edge will help to avoid compatibility issues, secure and reliable internet, microphone / headphones, webcam (optional), scanner (or camera to scan your work).

Desire2Learn:

This course will make use of the Desire2Learn (D2L) platform. Students who are registered in the course can log on at <http://d2l.ucalgary.ca> through their student centre. Please note that D2L features a class e-mail list that may be used to distribute course-related information. These e-mails go to your University of Calgary e-mail addresses only.

Lectures:

Lectures will be delivered online at the Registrar scheduled times and delivered using ZOOM. Lectures will be recorded and posted to D2L.

Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

Final grades will be based on three quizzes (worth 10% each), five one-page “policy reports” (5% each), and a term project. Late work will not be accepted.

Quizzes (3)	30%
Policy Reports (5)	25%
Term Project (written)	25%
Term Project (video)	15%
Term Project (peer review)	5%
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	100%

This course will emphasize your writing, analysis, and professional skills. Quizzes are multiple choice and short answer questions reviewing course topics. In the policy reports, you will be asked to evaluate a given policy currently in the news using the methods from class. The term project will be a research project on a social problem of your choosing. This will involve a term written project, a video presentation, and participation in a peer review process. Note there is no final exam.

The official grading system will be used. See <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>. A passing grade on at least 50% of course work is required for a student to pass the course as a whole.

As per the Writing Across the Curriculum Statement in the Calendar, writing and grading will be a factor in the evaluation of student work. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>.

Course material dealing with a particular assignment will typically be covered in class at least 3 days before the assignment is due; thus, assignments can be completed at any time up to and including the due date. Given these factors, only situations where someone can document illness or domestic affliction for an extended period (i.e., the entire 3 days prior to the due date) would possibly warrant shifting the assignment weight to the final exam. Furthermore, technical problems can be expected to occur with computer systems (and internet availability) so it may be a good idea to not wait until the last minute to submit your assignment.

The quizzes are take-home exams designed and intended to be completed in 50 minutes and are open book. Quizzes will be available on D2L. Student will download the exam from D2L, complete the exam, scan it, and submit using Dropbox in D2L. Student will have a 50%-time extension to complete the exam, at a time of your choosing, within a 24-hour period determined by the instructor.

Date of quizzes and 24-hour period will be announced at least one week in advance.

All other course components will also be accessed, submitted, and returned through D2L.

If a student cannot write their final exam on the date assigned by the Registrar’s Office, they need to apply for a deferred exam <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>. Under no circumstance will this be accommodated by the Department.

The quizzes will be multiple-choice completed online in D2L. Student will have 24 hours to complete the quiz, at a time of their choosing, within a 24-hour period determined by the instructor.

THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP OR DEFERRED QUIZZES/TESTS/EXAMS under any circumstances, nor may the quizzes/tests/exams be written early. Students unable to write the quizzes/tests/exams because of documented illness, family emergency, religious observance, or university-sanctioned event will have the weight shifted to the final examination; otherwise a grade of zero will be assigned.

Reappraisal of Grades and Intellectual Honesty:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

Academic Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/files/legalservices/faq-students.pdf> and http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/files/legalservices/faq-faculty_0.pdf.

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>. Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Student Organizations:

Faculty of Arts Students' Association (F.A.S.A.):

Economics Department Representative

E-mail: econrep@fasaucalgary.ca and Web: www.fasaucalgary.ca.

Society of Undergraduates in Economics:

<https://www.ucalgarysue.com/>.

Society of Undergraduates in Economics is a student run organization whose main purpose is to assist undergraduate economics students to succeed both academically and socially at the University of Calgary. Services include access to the exam bank, career events such as Industry Night and information sessions, mentorship programs, and social events for members. They invite you to join by contacting SUE at societyofundergradsineconomics@gmail.com.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625].

Student Support and Resources:

- See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on campus mental health resources, the Student Ombuds' Office, Student Success Centre, Safewalk, and Emergency Evacuation and Assembly.
- Online writing resources are available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>.

Notes:

1. Students are responsible for all assigned material, e.g., supplementary material posted on D2L, regardless of whether or not the material was covered in class.

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2020-12-07