

Economics 349 (L01) (The Economics of Social Problems)

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

Lecture Location: SB 103
Lecture Days/Time: TR 8:00 – 9:15

Office: SS402
Office Hours: TR 10:00–11:00 & by appointment Winter 2022

Course Description:

This course will use economic analysis to develop 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):

- Register, Grimes, and Sharp, *The Economics of Social Issues*, McGraw Hill, 21st edition, 2015. (Older editions may also be used. Copies available at Bound & Copied.)
- Other required readings will be posted on D2L.

Recommended Textbook:

I encourage you to have an introductory microeconomics textbook available to review core concepts. You can purchase a used introductory microeconomics textbook from Bound & Copied.

Books on Reserve:

Schiller, *Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice Hall

Miller, Benjamin and North, *The Economics of Public Issues*, Norton, 2001

Becker & Becker, *The Economics of Life*, McGraw Hill

Blau et al, *Economics of Women, Men & Work*, Prentice Hall

Frank, *Economics & Behavior*, McGraw Hill

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.

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%
	<hr/>
	100%

The official grading system will be used. See <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>.

This course will emphasize writing and analysis.

- Quizzes will use multiple choice and short answer questions to review course topics.
- Policy reports will be one-page written assignments where you will evaluate a given policy using concepts and methods from class. Late policy reports will not be accepted.
- The term project will be a research project on a social problem of your choosing. This will involve a written term paper (5-10 double-spaced pages), a 3–5-minute video presentation, and participation in a peer review process. The term paper and video presentation are due by midnight on April 19th, 2022. Students must receive a passing grade on the term paper to receive a passing grade in the course.
- There will be no final exam.

Given the change to online instruction through February 18th, Quiz 2 will be available on D2L at the beginning of class on February 17 and will be due at the end of class. This assessment will consist of multiple choice questions. If you experience an issue that affects your ability to complete the assessment, which can include (but is not limited to) issues with technology, caregiving responsibilities, or distractions within your test-taking environment, you will need to contact your instructor as soon as possible to arrange an alternate or (in the case of technical issues) extended time to write the assessment.

As per the Writing Across the Curriculum Statement in the Calendar, writing will be a factor in the evaluation of student work. [See https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html](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 term project. 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.

Any student work which remains undistributed after the last day of classes will be available to students through the instructor's office during the instructor's office hours.

The final examination will be comprehensive, scheduled by the Registrar, held in a classroom, and last 2 hours. 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.

Some quizzes will involve multiple choice questions. Programmable calculators, cellphones, textbooks, course notes, and other electronic devices will not be allowed during the writing of quizzes. Students are reminded that simply being able to access their cellphone during an exam is academic misconduct.

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

Reappraisal of Grades:

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; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

Student committing academic misconduct during the final exam will not receive a passing grade for the course.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

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

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure>

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 <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> 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
Website: 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! Drop in at SS102, 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] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

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 the material was covered in class.

RJO

2022-01-19