

ECONOMICS 590
SYLLABUS, Spring 2012
TTH 9:30 to 10:45 am Strong 305

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Web Sites: Economics Department - <http://www.missouristate.edu/econ/>
Dr. Olsen's course material - <http://courses.missouristate.edu/ReedOlsen/courses/courses.htm>
Office Hours: TTH 12:15 to 2 pm; TH 10:45 to 12 pm; and by appointment
Textbooks: Steven Greenlaw, Doing Economics.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

1. Purpose of the course: There will be 8 assignments throughout the course of the semester that will result in either a written or oral report from the student. These assignments will help develop skills useful to economists in a variety of different areas:
 1. Gaining access to existing knowledge – these assignments will teach students how to find economic data and economic research.
 2. Exhibiting the ability to understand and summarize existing knowledge – assignments that teach students how to read, summarize, and write or give oral reports regarding existing economic research or data.
 3. Developing the ability to think analytically, especially from an economic concept – these assignments will require that students read and economically analyze the content of news articles, public policy debates, and so forth.
 4. Learning to do original research and report that research in a written paper – this will consist of a single assignment resulting in a paper of 15 to 25 pages of in-depth economic analysis on an original topic chosen by the student. The assignment will require the student to analyze the topic both theoretically and empirically.
2. The student will be required to take a general economics examination designed to assess both the student's general economics knowledge and economics program accomplishments in adding to the student's economic knowledge.
3. The grading for the course will be as follows:

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE</u>
General Economics Exam	5 percent
6 written assignments	30 percent
Final Project	50 percent
Oral Presentation of Final Project	15 percent

Letter grades will be assigned based upon the total points and the best judgment of the instructor. **I will use the new +/- grading system.** Students will be informed of their current grade after each assignment. In general, I will follow the following grading scale, although this can be adjusted at my discretion:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
> 93.5	90-93.5	87-90	83.5-87	80-83.5	77-80	73.5-77	70-73.5	67-70	60-67	< 60

4. Two of the assignments will have to do with the use of the statistical program SAS. Assignments 2 and 3 along with a handout will help students learn how to use SAS. Any statistical program can be used for later assignments, unless specifically noted otherwise. MSU has a site license for PC SAS and students can obtain their own personal copy of SAS by taking 3 blank DVD –R discs to one of the open labs (Cheek, Glass, or the library) and asking for a copy of SAS 9.2. The economics student lab will have both Eviews and SAS installed on some of its computers.

5. Course policies are as follows:

There will be **no extra credit nor will you be allowed to turn in late assignments**. You are responsible for making sure that you turn in the assignments at appropriate times. Attendance will not be taken at other times, though regular attendance will have a positive impact on your grade. You should note that attendance is especially important for this class, where classroom participation will be expected. Periodically, we will not hold class in order to give students time to complete assignments. These will be announced the week before in class.

6. COURSE CALENDAR. I will place all assignments on the web, with their due date. I plan on spending about the last 5 or 6 weeks giving students the ability to do their final project, the last 2 weeks are also for oral presentations of the final project. The additional 6 assignments will be given approximately every week or so. I also plan on meeting individually with each student about their final project in the weeks after assignment 6 has been completed. The following calendar is tentative.

January 17	Assignment 1 passed out.
January 26	Assignment 1 due, Assignment 2 (SAS) in class exercise.
February 2	Assignment 2 due, Assignment 3 (SAS) in class exercise.
February 9	Assignment 3 due; Assignment 4 passed out.
February 23	Assignment 4 due, Assignment 5 passed out.
March 8	Assignment 5 due, Assignment 6, passed out.
March 29	Assignment 6 due, Assignment 7 and 8 passed out.
Week of May 1	Oral Presentations (Assignment 7)
Week of May 8	Oral Presentations (Assignment 7)
May 10	Assignment 8 due
May 15	Final Exam; 8:45 to 10:45 am, Strong 305, TUCE exams taken.

7. READING LIST. The following reading list is associated with the 8 assignments mentioned above. The book is used to help students understand how to complete the given assignment. Numbers in the reading list refer to chapters from the textbook.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Chapter</u>
1. Data	8, 9
2. SAS Basics	In Class/Handout
3. SAS Regression	In Class/Handout
4. Finding and Understanding Published Research	3, 6
5. Choosing a Topic	Handout
6. Industry Report	Handout, 4
7. Presentation of Final Project	Handout
8. Final Project	Handout
The role of Economic Theory in Original Research	2, 7, 10
The role of Empirical Analysis in Original Research	5, 11
Writing Original Research	4, 12