

Econ 448 Course Syllabus

Instructor

Dr. Melissa Knox

Email: Message me via Canvas (preferred) or knoxm@uw.edu

Live Meetings: HRC 155 Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30-3:20pm or via Panopto Live Stream (lectures also recorded)

Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm (Zoom)

COVID-Related Details

In ECON 448, lectures will be offered in-person and via live stream. They will be recorded and made available for remote viewing. Office hours will be offered on Zoom. Assignments must be submitted via Canvas. There are no exams. Students will be able to complete the class remotely, if needed.

Please stay home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 and check these links frequently to find the most up to date guidance

CDC Guidelines for Quarantine and Isolation: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html> (Links to an external site.)

UW Face Covering Policy: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-requirements> (Links to an external site.)

UW Quarantine and Isolation Guidance: <https://ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/quarantine-and-isolation-guidance>

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the subject of international economic development, with a focus on population issues. Since I am an economist, we will be focusing on the topics and tools of economics, and the body of knowledge so far, as created by economists. Topics include demography, poverty and income inequality, fertility choice, sex selection, marriage choice and the role of women, parental investments in child health and education, including discrimination against girls.

The goals of the course are as follows: 1) Students should be able to identify and discuss the issues surrounding the topics listed above; 2) Students should be able to analyze economic models relevant to these issues; and 3) Students should be able to comment on articles in the popular press and review articles in economic journals dealing with population and development, explaining and expanding upon the economic analysis they contain.

Course Organization

This course will combine lecturing on traditional microeconomic theory with in-depth discussion of real-world issues. This is not an easy course in terms of the reading and writing required. Please be prepared to spend a lot of time reading, and writing about, difficult material.

Text

There is no text for this topic. Lectures will be based on textbook excerpts, journal and newspaper and magazine articles, and my own knowledge of the subject. All readings will be available as PDFs in Hypothesis (integrated with Canvas). If you need more accessible options, please let me know. It's a goal of mine to make all course readings accessible, but I'm not there yet, unfortunately.

Prerequisites

The explicit prerequisite for this course is a grade of 2.0 or higher in Econ 300. However, we will be reading papers from economic journals, and while we will be reviewing the concepts of regression analysis and interpretation, some familiarity with data analysis is strongly recommended. Please discuss your background with me if you are not sure about your preparation.

*Note: I am re-designing this course to be part of the CAS data science minor and as such, we will have a few assignments in the R statistical programming language this quarter.

Evaluation

You will be graded on 4 problem sets, 2 data analysis problem sets, Hypothesis comments, and one 5-page theoretical paper and one 5-page research paper. All students who pass the course will receive W credit.

Class grades will be calculated as follows:

Problem sets (4 - will randomly choose 2-3 problems to grade for each) – 20%

Data analysis problem sets (2) - 10%

Hypothesis postings (drop lowest 25%) – 20%

Papers (includes all intermediate steps for full credit) – 50%

I expect the class median to be approximately 3.3 and will curve grades as needed.

Problem Sets

It's nearly impossible to learn the tools of economics without working problems. I will assign a problem set for each of the five modules. They will be due about a week after we complete the module. You may work with other students, but please submit your own work. I will randomly select two to three problems to grade from each assignment.

Papers/Projects

We will discuss the paper requirements in depth in the second week of classes. We will work together as a class to brainstorm ideas for our first papers.

Due Dates

I will post due dates for problem sets and papers for the sake of timely grading, but I intend to be flexible given the challenges we are all facing this quarter. Please talk to me if you are struggling to keep up.

Accommodations

Students receiving accommodations from Disability Resources for Students (DRS) should contact me about any needed disability accommodations as soon as possible. Students with a disability who do not yet have a DRS plan should contact them immediately at disability.uw.edu.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy \(https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (Links to an external site.). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form \(https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (Links to an external site.).

Course Outline

1. Introduction to Population (Weeks 1-2)
 1. Population growth and development
 2. Poverty
 3. Empirical tools
2. Fertility (Week 3-4)
 1. Development and fertility
 2. Contraception & sex selection
3. Family Formation (Weeks 4-6)
 1. The economics of marriage
 2. Intra-household decision-making

4. Mortality and Health (Week 6-7)
 1. The decline of mortality
 2. Hunger, health and productivity
5. Investing in Children (Week 8-10)
 1. Parents and child health
 2. Child health, schooling, and future outcomes
 3. Child labor