

Econ472 Senior Honours Essay (Winter 2021)

Instructor: Dr. Barb Bloemhof

Contact via email: bloemhof@uwaterloo.ca

When communicating by email with your instructor, please include Econ472 in the subject line and please always use your UWaterloo account.

I acknowledge that our classes are hosted on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised and given to the Six Nations extending six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Announcements on LEARN

I use the **Announcements** box on the Course Home page during the term to communicate new or changing information regarding due dates, changes in my availability due to illness, and other unexpected information, as needed. It is my expectation that you will **read the announcements** on a regular basis.

To ensure you are viewing the complete list of announcements, you may need to click Show All Announcements.

Discussions

The senior honours essay is a collaborative project and your participation in discussion is expected. In addition to real time discussions with your supervisor (using MSTeams or WebEx), there are a number of places for classroom discussions within LEARN, including a **General Discussion** topic for class-wide discussions and an Ask the Instructor discussion forum. Use the **Ask the Instructor** discussion forum when you have a question that may benefit the whole class. Also, check this forum to see if your question has already been answered before adding your post.

Contacts

Who and Why	Contact Details
<p>Instructor (two ways)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the Ask The Instructor discussion topic for course-related questions (e.g., course content, deadlines, assignments, etc.) • use personal email for questions of a personal nature 	<p>Post your course-related questions to the Ask the Instructor discussion topic on LEARN.* This allows other students to benefit from your question as well.</p> <p>Questions of a personal nature can be directed to your instructor. bloemhof@uwaterloo.ca</p> <p>I check email and the Ask the Instructor discussion topic frequently and will make every effort to reply to your questions within 24 hours, Monday to Friday. When emailing me, please write “Econ472” somewhere in the subject line so your message gets past my spam filter – thanks!</p> <p>*To access Discussion topics on LEARN go to Connect tab then choose Discussions and add your question to the appropriate conversation</p>
<p>Supervisor</p>	<p>Regular (weekly) meetings using MTeams or WebEx, or another platform as arranged with supervisor (for project guidance and feedback)</p>
<p>Librarian</p>	<p>Post general library research questions to the Ask the Librarian discussion topic on LEARN.*</p> <p>Economics Librarian: Sandra Keys skeys@uwaterloo.ca</p>

Who and Why	Contact Details
Writing Support	Writing and Communication Centre
Technical Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for any technical problems with Waterloo LEARN 	learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca Include your full name, WatIAM user ID, student number, and course name and number. Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time). LEARN Help Student Documentation
Student Resources	Student Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic advice Student success WatCards Library services and more

Course Description

(from the calendar) “Students are required to identify a research topic, conduct research independently, write a research paper, and attend class meetings. Each student is supervised by a member of the Economics faculty. Class meetings cover topics such as a general overview of research methods in economics, research ethics, finding reference material, citing practices, and effective writing and presentation.” This course helps students learn the skills of scholarly research and communication needed for the workplace or graduate schools in social science disciplines. Unlike the traditional lecture format, this course provides students with an interactive classroom environment to develop critical thinking skills, research methodology, economic analysis, library tools, data handling, peer review, interpersonal

communication, and a productive work ethic. Previous experience in writing term papers is not required. Students must find a faculty supervisor who agrees to work with them on a research topic of mutual interest.

Learning Outcomes

The main course goal is research experience, signified by the completion of a senior honours essay, which is due on LEARN at the end of the term (April 14, 2021 at 11:59pm). The senior honours essay evolves out of research experience, fostered by a supervisor as the student works consistently over the term on a topic of mutual interest. Students have the rare opportunity to receive individualized guidance and assistance from their supervisor; additionally, students will receive feedback from other students and the course instructor as they complete and turn in work in progress over the term. An important related goal is effective project and self-management skills development, encompassing the skills of time management, collaboration and peer support. These latter aspects of the research process support and enhance the main goal over the course.

IMPORTANT: An essay submitted without regular and effective consultation with your individual faculty supervisor, regular participation in classroom activities, and regular submission of work in progress to the supervisor for feedback and to the instructor for grading (in the case of assignments) will not be accepted, and will result in a failing grade in the course.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Carry a research experience to completion through
 - Making effective and intelligent use of supervisor, instructor and peer feedback
 - Using the rhetoric of economics to create knowledge about a research question of mutual interest to the student and the supervisor
- B. Collaborate with an economist on a research project through
 - Maintaining a consistent and mutually agreeable meeting schedule with a research supervisor outside of class
 - Participating in the online environment in activities that hone the skills of collaboration
- C. Write a research paper utilizing the rhetoric of economics through
 - Finding and appraising contributions to the literature around your topic area

- Integrating the scholarly literature into a review of what is known so far about your topic area, clearly indicating the limits of knowledge in the discipline and the contribution your project makes to that knowledge
- D. Communicate the process of research to a diversity of audiences through
- Reporting final results in a “4 Minute Thesis” video presentation
 - Participating in all formal and informal conversations about your individual research process that happen from time to time over the term.

Assessments and Grade Breakdown

Activities and Assignments	Due Date	Weight (%)
Introduce Yourself	Jan 13	Ungraded
Email Module	Jan 15	Ungraded
Topic check-in	Jan 22	Ungraded
Library Modules	Jan 25	Ungraded
Supervisor Signature Form	Jan 29	Ungraded
Assignment 1	Feb 5	3%
Assignment 2	Feb 12	3%
Assignment 3: Literature review	Mar 5	10%
Assignment 4	Mar 12	3%
Assignment 5	Mar 23	3%
Assignment 6	Mar 30	3%
Presentation (4MT)	April 5	10%
Participation (comprising discussion posts, peer discussions and feedback, introduction to library worksheet, and other activities)	Throughout term	15%

Activities and Assignments	Due Date	Weight (%)
Individual Essay	April 14	25% + 25% (instructor & supervisor)

NOTE: Due to the pandemic, this term's schedule includes a number of slack days. Please consult the start date on each LEARN week; further information is [here](#). Please note that because Friday has no special significance from a timing perspective, April 2 will simply be added to the slack days and Week 12 will start on April 8. From time to time, changes may need to be made to this syllabus and these scheduled, graded activities. If that should happen, the change will be announced on LEARN.

About Your Instructor

I have been teaching courses that build undergraduate research capability like this one for nearly two decades, and I have taught Econ472 at University of Waterloo for three years now. My research area is institutional economics, typically in microeconomic applications like energy economics, regulation and international economics. Institutional economics looks at how the explicit and implicit rules that govern economic interaction create and dispense benefits to the people involved.

The courses I teach foreground self-directed learning (problem-based learning, case-based learning, and inquiry learning). A lot of students are nervous about self-directed learning, even in a person-to-person or in-class learning environment: students who have done really well with traditional tests sometimes don't know how they will do if there are no tests and they have more autonomy in their learning. My experience is, however, that students do just as well if not better when they decide what to learn, because curiosity is a powerful motivator. Certainly, research shows that students retain more with the sort of learning that gives them a high degree of control and decision-making power.

A key outcome of this course is the development of career skills in research and collaboration. It will be different than a typical course, because you will have a great deal of choice in what to study. At the end of the course, you will have a nice piece of evidence of your proficiencies to show to future employers and the satisfaction of carrying a project through from start to finish, with lots of expert

help along the way. This course has been refined over the years, with the input of too many faculty members to name, and the online version has been developed with the help of an upper-year Economics student and refined with the help of an upper-year Engineering student.

I live in Hamilton, where I love to hike, volunteer, and read biographies.

Materials and Resources

Students are required to check into the classroom e-space on LEARN at least twice weekly in order to access and prepare the required activities, resources, and submissions that will be posted there for use to complete the course.

There is no required text for this course. Your main resource for this course is the University Library. Required readings are all accessible from the “Library Resources” link to library reserves at the bottom left-hand corner of the University of Waterloo [LEARN](#) home page; additional readings and resources are posted from time to time through the LEARN classroom space. Connecting regularly will help you to ensure that you are up to date.

As you engage in academic writing, you will want to be sure that your approach to using information created by others conforms with [academic integrity policies](#) at the University of Waterloo. The Library has excellent resources on academic integrity available [online](#).

Other Materials

You will be expected to purchase and maintain a notebook to keep weekly personal, reflective and generative writing for this course. The W Store has a wide selection of [notebooks](#) but there are many other places that have such notebooks. Expect to need 30 to 50 pages of at least 5”x7” lined paper of high enough quality to make writing a pleasure.

Supports for Writing and Research

The [Writing and Communications Centre](#) is a great place to find resources and support for your assignments and writing for this course. The WCC works with

students to help you consider your audience, clarify your ideas, develop your “voice” as a writer, and write in the style appropriate to your subject. They offer one-on-one support for writing papers, delivering presentations, integrating research, and revising for clarity and coherence. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

All WCC services are available virtually: booked appointments, drop-in sessions, [resources](#), and writing groups. There are many ways to interact with the WCC, including open online forums and online Q&As. You can get one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations, and revising for clarity and coherence – all from writing and communication specialists. These are great skills to learn, and it’s never too late, or too early, get in touch or attend an e-writing café.

Please know that communication specialists will guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you writing skills and strategies, but they will not change or correct your work for you. Please bring your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.

The [Dana Porter research library](#) at UWaterloo has a large number of resources to help you with your research and writing for this course, including resources on how to practice [academic integrity](#) in writing. Keep informed at [Library COVID-19: Updates on library services and operations](#).

Course Policies

Assignments must be submitted on time according to the due date published here in the course syllabus. Up to 3 slip days will be available for you to use if needed to extend deadlines for any individual graded assignment in this course. Group or team graded assignments are not eligible for slip days.

A slip day is a 24-hour grace period. One slip day is applied for an automatic extension of up to 24 hours; it cannot be divided into partial days. You decide how to best use your bank of three slip days (e.g., use all on the same assignment to extend the deadline three days at a particularly busy time, or use one slip day for each of three assignments, or use only some or none of the days in your bank). If

you submit your assignment after the posted deadline, please indicate in the drop box submission comments if you are using slip days and if so, how many days.

University Policies

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the

impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit alternate assignment.

June 15, 2009 (updated March 2018)

Coronavirus Information

[Coronavirus Information for Students](#)

This resource provides updated information on COVID-19 and guidance for accommodations due to COVID-19.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system, and everyone needs a bit of extra help from time to time. At University of Waterloo, confidential help is available when you need it, by reaching out to [Campus Wellness and Counselling Services](#).

Sometimes, circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. [Good2Talk](#) is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

