

ECON 191: The Economics Behind Our Lives

Fall 2021

Section 01: Mondays, 12:20 - 1:10 PM, Dickinson Hall room 109

Section 02: Mondays, 1:25 - 2:15 PM, Dickinson Hall room 109

Section 03: Wednesdays, 12:20 - 1:10 PM, Dickinson Hall room 112

Section 04: Wednesdays, 1:25 - 2:15 PM, Dickinson Hall room 109

Instructor:

Aaron Medlin, M.A. (he/him/his)
Department of Economics
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Office: 110 Gordon Hall
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday
2:30 - 3:30 PM

Teaching Assistants:

Section 01 - Mondays 12:20 - 1:10 PM
Section 03 - Wednesdays 12:20 - 1:10 PM

Section 02 - Mondays 1:25 - 2:15 PM
Section 04 - Wednesdays 1:25 - 2:15 PM

Rachel Green (she/her/hers)
Major: Legal Studies and History
Email: rachelgreen@umass.edu
Selected Activities: Archery Club President,
Fencing Team Competitor

Makayla Fucile (she/her/hers)
Major: Legal Studies and Psychology
Email: mfucile@umass.edu
Selected Activities: House council, CHAARG

Course Goals

Students will:

1. Make social/interpersonal connections that will enhance their ability to become more productive contributors to their communities, both at UMass and beyond.
2. Develop academic goals and begin to plan individual pathways toward achieving those goals.
3. Understand the values and perspective of an SBS major and the overall structure of UMass.
4. Identify and connect with resources and opportunities around campus, and the UMass areas.
5. Enrich their academic skills.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Demonstrate competence in basic academic skills.
 - How to read a syllabus and understand course requirements.
 - How to use Moodle, and other relevant web resources.
2. Understand SBS basics:
 - Thinking and researching like a social scientist.
 - Majors, Minors, Certificates, Gen Ed Requirements.
 - Developing integrated Pathways to success.
 - Using Reflection and critical thought as tools for learning.
3. Develop personal and academic skills.
 - Time management, reading, note taking, etc.
 - Communication and collaboration.
 - Connecting with faculty and staff.

- Exploring a variety of opportunities, such as study abroad, community service learning, undergraduate research, and internships.
 - Learn about and make use of available resources, such as academic support, non-academic resources, and social opportunities (clubs, sports, events)
4. Begin to think about future plans.
 - Graduate school, professional programs, vocation, etc.
 5. Consider the connection between physical and emotional well-being and college success.

Course Websites and Other Online Resources

Moodle (<https://moodle.umass.edu>): This site includes the syllabus, assignments, and semester overview. Additionally, this is where you will submit most of your work for the semester. Note: Attending class without completing the online assignments OR completing the online assignments without attending class will not be sufficient to pass the class. *You should be in the habit of checking Moodle every day.*

In addition to these course resources, you should be in the habit of checking:

- your UMass email account at least twice a day. This is the way the University communicates with you and you do not want to miss important information about your financial or academic standing, or opportunities to get involved;
- your SPIRE account regularly to look for items on your “To Do” list. An unresolved item on your “To Do” list may hinder you from registering for classes
- Finally, the UMass Amherst website (www.umass.edu) and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences website (www.umass.edu/sbs) are great resources. In particular, the “Sites A-Z” and the “People Finder” tools on the UMass site can help you to find people and information about campus resources very quickly. The SBS website contains information about academic advising, career and professional development activities, scholarships, and forms that you may need.
- You should also regularly reference the academic calendar for important dates like Add/Drop, Registration, Finals, and so on. Link here: <https://www.umass.edu/registrar/calendars/academic-calendar#fall2021>

Other important online platforms include:

- UMass’ Single Stop (<https://www.umass.edu/studentlife/single-stop>) resources are also a great place for support.
- If you ever have any difficulty accessing any of these sites noted above, including accessing your personal UMass account, please do not hesitate to contact the UMass Office of Information Technology (www.umass.edu/it).

Attendance and Participation

- Students are expected to attend all classes. If it is necessary to miss a class, please notify the instructor as far in advance as possible.
- Students will be allowed ONE “no questions asked” absence because things come up. After this absence, the instructor will deduct 1 point per absence from the overall points total.
- As a part of the College’s commitment to you and your well-being, the instructor may contact the Dean of Students Office if you have more than two unexcused absences in a row.

- Students are expected to think critically and to engage with the instructor and the other students in a mutually respectful manner.
- Students should expect that the instructor will:
- be prepared for class, read and return your work in a timely manner, and be interested and engaged in your work;
- remember that all students bring a different background, experience, and perspective to this course;
- be open to learning from you;
- meet with you individually upon request, be available in person, by Zoom, and by e-mail.

Expectations for Classroom Behavior

Learning and the exchange of ideas may take place in many settings, including the formal classroom. When students and faculty come together, the expectation is always that mutual respect and civility will prevail to ensure that every student has the optimal opportunity to learn and that each faculty member has the best opportunity to teach. Disruptions of any kind affect the atmosphere of civility that is expected and interfere with the opportunity for learning and growth to which both faculty and students are entitled.

Differences of opinions or concerns related to the class are welcomed if presented in a mutually respectful manner. The challenging of viewpoints is part of the academic experience but should occur in a manner that opens up dialogue that does not dominate the discussion or threaten any member of the learning community.

Faculty members are responsible for the classroom environment, which includes creating a safe and open exchange of ideas by all students. Each student is responsible for ensuring that his or her or their own behavior promotes these goals. Disruption of the learning process will not be tolerated and may lead to disenrollment or disciplinary action.

Health and Safety Policy

For the health and safety of all members of our campus community, students are expected to follow all COVID-related policies on campus. At the start of the Fall 2021 semester, there are two policies in effect that deserve special mention. First, students are required to follow the COVID-19 Daily Self-checklist: https://my.umass.edu/on_campus/emerg_response/_/self_checklist. Students who are ill must not attend class, and they will be offered reasonable accommodations for missed work. Second, students must follow the masking policy while it remains in effect. Your instructor will remind you to wear a mask that securely covers your nose and mouth, and direct you to a nearby mask station if you do not have one. *If you are unwilling to mask, you will be asked to leave the class.* If you do not leave the class, the instructor will end the class, and the Dean of Students office will be informed that you have disrupted class and violated the Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect: https://www.umass.edu/dean_students/campus-policies/classroom. Anyone with a mask exemption must provide prior written notice to the instructor and must maintain at least six feet of distance from faculty and other students at all times.

Access

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), you may be eligible for

reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements early in the semester. *Please note regardless of documented disability, any student is welcome to ask for reasonable accommodations that will help them learn more effectively.*

Academic Honesty

The Academic Honesty Policy at the University of Massachusetts includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and facilitating dishonesty. Instances of academic dishonesty will be resolved at the instructor’s discretion either formally or informally. A complete overview of the policy can be found here: <http://www.umass.edu/honesty>. Any form of dishonesty in this class will be taken very seriously. If for whatever reason a student is struggling to complete an assignment or otherwise meet the expectations of the class, it is in their best interest to bring the issue to the instructor.

Further breakdown of dishonesty:

- Cheating - intentional use or attempted use of trickery or deception in one's academic work
- Fabrication - intentional falsification and/or invention of any information or citation
- Plagiarism - knowingly representing the *words* or *ideas* of another as one's own work
- Facilitating dishonesty - knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty

Assessment

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following weighting:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Attendance and Participation | 20% |
| Assignments | 60% |
| Final presentation | 20% |
| Total | 100% |

Your letter grade will be assigned using the following scale:

| | | | |
|----------|----|--------------|----|
| 93 - 100 | A | 73 - 76 | C |
| 90 - 92 | A- | 70 - 72 | C- |
| 87 - 89 | B+ | 67 - 69 | D+ |
| 83 - 86 | B | 63 - 66 | D |
| 80 - 82 | B- | 62 and below | F |
| 77 - 79 | C+ | | |

Assignments

You will be expected to complete an assignment related to what we have discussed in class each week.

- Assignments are due BEFORE your scheduled class unless otherwise specified on Moodle.
- There are 8 assignments and each one is worth 10 points.

- Students are expected to devote adequate time outside of class to complete readings and assignments on time. Without prior request for a reasonable extension, late assignments will be subjected to a 2-point deduction per 24 hours.

Final Presentation

You will select an economics research question that interests you and prepare a 5-minute slideshow on your topic to present to the class in Week 14 or 15. You will need to search the library databases for at least 3 peer reviewed articles on your research topic, present the major themes or findings in the literature, and provide areas for future research of interest.

Late Assignment Policy

All due dates are firm. This is a fast-paced course and late submission on any assignment without an extension granted prior to the due date will result in a zero. Remember, I will be most readily available via email during business hours so plan accordingly. If you have a University sanctioned reason for late work, please notify me as soon as possible.

Grace Day Policy

You will have two grace days for the semester. You may email me saying you need a grace day on any singular assignment twice throughout the semester and you will receive a 72-hour extension. This is a “no questions asked” extension. No context is needed for why you are asking for the extension; however, you must email me asking for the extension BEFORE the due date of the assignment. You do not need to have received a response from me before the due date; as long as you have not used your two grace days, then the extension will be granted.

You may NOT use a grace day on the final presentation.

Note on Extenuating Circumstances

If you have extenuating circumstances, I would like for you to communicate your individual situation to me as soon as possible and remain in communication with me as the semester continues. Alerting me to your extenuating circumstances as early as possible gives me the most time to assist you in navigating the expectations of my course. Should you decide you need to communicate extenuating circumstances with me, my follow up questions will be centered around how I can make the class accessible to you and not the details of how your situation is extenuating.

Weekly Schedule

Unless noted otherwise, all assignments are available on Moodle. I may make changes to assignments and due dates in response to the needs of the class. The schedule below is also subject to change.

| Dates | Topic | Assignment(s) Due |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Week 1-2 - Sep 1, 8 Sep 6 - Labor Day (no class) Sep 8 - Follow Monday schedule; last day to add/drop classes | Welcome and Introduction | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Week 3 - Sep 13, 15 | Time Management and Priorities | A1 - Introduction Email to Instructor (submit on Moodle) |
| Week 4 - Sept 20, 22 | Campus Resources and Hot Topics in Economics | A2 - Time Tracker |
| Week 5 - Sept 27, 29 | Career Resources | A3 - Exploration Activity I |
| Week 6 - Oct 4, 6 | Data visualization basics | A4 - Cover Letter and Resume |
| Week 7 - Oct 11, 13 - NO CLASS THIS WEEK Oct 11 - Columbus Day | | |
| Week 8 - Oct 18, 20 | Econ Advising Visit | A5 - Constructing graphs practice |
| Week 9 - Oct 25, 27 Oct 28 - Last day to withdraw or select Pass/Fail | Academic Reading and Writing | Class Registration Preparation |
| Week 10 - Nov 1, 3 | Library Visit and Academic Research (confirmed) | A6 - Annotated Article |
| Week 11 - Nov 8, 10 Nov 8 - Registration begins for Spring 2022 Nov 11 - Veterans' Day (no class) | Career Overview Presentation by Odessa Burkett | A7 - Annotated Bibliography |
| Week 12 - Nov 15, 17 | Registration and Finishing Up | A8 - Exploration Activity II |
| Week 13 - Nov 22, 24 - NO CLASS THIS WEEK Nov 23 - 28 - Thanksgiving recess, classes resume Nov 29 | | |
| Week 14 - Nov 29, Dec 1 | Final Presentations | Final Presentations |
| Week 15 - Dec 6, 8 Dec 22 - Final grades will be posted in Spire | Final Presentations | Final Presentations |

Subject to change at instructor's discretion. Last update August 31, 2021.