

Economics 496: Undergraduate Thesis Seminar II
Syracuse University
Spring 2023

Instructor: Maria Zhu

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Office Hours: T 4:00-6:00pm

- To make appointment: <https://calendly.com/profzhu>
- Office hours link: <https://syracuseuniversity.zoom.us/j/9052831503>

Class: MW 3:45-5:05PM, Eggers Hall 030

Course Description: The economics distinction program is designed to support undergraduate students who want to conduct original, high-quality research in economics. The distinction program is comprised of two courses: ECN 495 (Economic Thesis I) and ECN 496 (Economic Thesis II), which are scheduled in the fall and spring semesters, respectively. In the first course, students utilize economic theory and statistical principles to formulate a compelling research agenda, which includes a defined empirical strategy and data sources. In the second course, students execute their research plans, present their work-in-progress, and write their theses. Students who do not complete Seminar I satisfactorily will not be given permission to enroll in Seminar II.

Textbook: *Mastering Metrics*, by Angrist and Pischke

Prerequisites: Registration for the course is by invitation only. Students are required to complete the two-semester econometrics sequence, ECN 521 and ECN522, or its equivalent. (ECN422 is not an acceptable equivalent.) Students who have not taken these courses may take them in tandem with the economics distinction program.

Software: Empirical work will be conducted using Stata. I will provide several Stata tutorials in class and can help troubleshoot through complex tasks, but students are expected to write their own code, especially for routine tasks or more complex tasks that have already been discussed in class. To access Stata, students have three options: (1) utilize the computer lab in 030 Eggers Hall, (2) purchase a Stata license for personal use, and (3) use the virtual computers through the Maxwell School.

Course Requirements and Expectations: Students are expected to attend all classes and make consistent, satisfactory progress towards the completion of their projects.

Evaluation: In Thesis Seminar II, students will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Economics Seminar and Podcast (10%):**
 - Seminar (5%): The economics department hosts [three economics seminars](#): applied microeconomics, trade and development, and econometrics. Students are required to attend at least one seminar this semester and submit a short summary of the research for each seminar. While summaries are due at the end of the semester, seminars typically

take place well before the last week of classes. Make sure you plan your seminar attendance in advance so that you can complete this assignment.

- Probable Causation Podcast (5%): Students are required to listen to at least one episode from the [Probable Causation](#) podcast this semester and submit a short summary of the research.
- **Research progress reports (15%):** Students are required to submit three one-page research updates throughout course of the semester. The first part of each writeup will provide an update on what the student has been doing since the last update (or, for the first update, since the start of the semester). The second part of the writeup will provide a discussion of the next steps the student plans to take in the project. The purpose of these reports is to ensure students have a plan for staying on track to complete their final project on time.
- **Class participation and progress (30%):**
 - Attendance and punctuality are mandatory and expected in the course. Please let me know in advance (or as soon as possible) if you need to be absent for a class.
 - Progress will be regularly through the semester through discussion and progress updates in class. Be prepared to provide brief updates to the class on your research periodically throughout the semester. We will do a mix of updates to the whole class and updates with partners.
 - Part of the participation requirement requires you to listen and provide feedback to classmates.
- **Department presentation (10%):** At the end of the semester, students must present their work to the economics department, including faculty, staff, and students. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of the work, quality of the presentation, and the ability to adequately address audience questions, if any.
- **Final project (35%):** At the end of the semester, students must submit a completed research paper. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of the work and the composition of their papers.

University Attendance Policy: Attendance in classes is expected in all courses at Syracuse University. It is a federal requirement that students who do not attend or cease to attend a class to be reported at the time of determination by the faculty that the student never attended or stopped attending the class.

Academic Integrity: Complete academic honesty is expected of all students. Any incidence of academic dishonesty, as defined by the SU Academic Integrity Policy will result in both course sanctions and formal notification of the College of Arts & Sciences. For more information about the policy: <http://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/>. In this course, students are encouraged to study together, but exams must represent the work of the individual student.

Center for Disability Resources: Students with disabilities who desire accommodations are asked to go through the Center for Disability Resources (CDR). To reach CDR, please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu. CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented

Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. CDR policy stipulates that all paperwork associated with academic accommodations due to a disability be completed and returned to their office at least 10 days in advance of the exam date requested. All scheduled exams will be administered in the CDR testing center at 804 University Avenue. You must contact the CDR Service Coordinator at least 2 days prior to the scheduled exam to confirm the date and time of the event. Only students who register with the CDR office in a timely manner will be given accommodations on exams.

Faith Tradition Observance: Syracuse University's religious observance policy (<https://policies.syr.edu/policies/university-governance-ethics-integrity-and-legal-compliance/religious-observances-policy/>) recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Mental Health: Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and resources effectively to navigate stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. There are a range of resources available at the Barnes Center (<https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/>) and I encourage you to seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000.

Important Dates/Deadlines

- Progress report 1: **2/13**
- Progress report 2: **3/8**
- Progress report 3: **4/10**
- Economics seminar summary: **5/4**
- Probable Causation podcast episode summary: **5/4**
- Department presentation: **5/2** (presentations will take place between 12:00-1:30pm)
- Final project: **5/4**
 - Note: If you are interested in submitting a research paper and poster to the [Maxwell School Celebration of Undergraduate Scholarship](#), materials must be submitted by **4/25**. Registration deadline is **3/31**.