

Economics 191: Topics in Economic Research

Spring 2012
Tuesdays, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
105 North Gate

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Syllabus and Reading List

This course discusses recent research and policy developments. The objective is to expose students to different aspects of research in economics and how it influences policy. The course is taught jointly by a number of faculty members in the Economics Department and by two acting instructors. This spring the course discusses labor economics, macroeconomics, the economics of corruption, the economics of online markets, and several other topics. The course consists of 42 hours of lectures, one 20-page paper, and required weekly readings.

Learning Goals. Each student, depending on their interests and approach, will hit a number of learning goals, as set forth by the undergraduate Student Learning Initiative (USLI). For instance, some students might decide to write empirical papers that require use of data and use it appropriately (QT3-4, LL2) while other papers will be more theoretical and concentrate more on PS1-2. At the very least, through the writing assignment, students will get exposed to CS1-2, CT3-4, and QT1-2. For details on learning goals see http://emlab.berkeley.edu/econ/ugrad/ugrad_goals.shtml.

Announcements. All announcements about the course (changes in schedule, availability of posted material, links to additional readings, deadlines for assignments) will be sent by Twitter. It is students' responsibility to sign up for the course Twitter feed: [Economics191@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/Economics191).

Office Hours. The instructor's office hours are on Tuesday 1:00-3:00 p.m. in 603 Evans Hall. Please make an appointment by emailing Cheryl Applewood at capplewood@berkeley.edu or calling 643-9044.

Acting Instructors.

Dawn Powers: kdpowers.gsi@gmail.com
Office hours: Wednesday 3-5 p.m. (subject to change), location TBA

Issi Romem: iromem@econ.berkeley.edu
Office hours: Friday 8-10 a.m., location TBA

Admission. The instructor and GSIs do not have the power to admit students (or to readmit you if you are dropped). Students seeking admission should consult the following website for instructions: <http://emlab.berkeley.edu/econ/ugrad/enrollmentproc.shtml>. Economics Department policies and not your instructor and GSIs determine admissions priorities. Please don't ask your instructor and GSIs to admit you, as this is not in their power. Ask the Economics Department's undergraduate advisor Christina Yasi (cyasi@econ.berkeley.edu) or head GSI Mike Urbancic (headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu).

Course Materials and Readings. This syllabus, midterms, and the final are the only materials that will be distributed in class. All other materials will be available exclusively on the Economics 191 web page: http://emlab.berkeley.edu/users/webfac/eichengreen/e191_sp12/e191.shtml.

All readings in this syllabus have web links that should be accessible by linking to the UC Library. To link to the UC Library off-campus, you must configure your web browser to communicate with the UC-Berkeley proxy server; instructions are located at: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/proxy.html>. A Calnet ID is required for this process.

Electronic Devices. This course has a no-electronic-devices-during-lecture policy. Laptops should be closed. Phones, pads, pods and other devices should be turned off and stowed in your pack/briefcase or under your chair.

Attendance and Participation. Students are required to attend lectures, and active participation is encouraged. Faithful attendance will be reflected in grading, based on attendance sheets passed around in every lecture.

Term Papers. Each student will write one term paper (20-25 pages) addressing a well-formulated research question. The paper should be formatted as:

- 12-point Times New Roman or Arial
- 1-inch margins
- Double spacing

Students are required to discuss their research question with at least one GSI no later than lecture time on February 21 and are encouraged to meet with a GSI sooner. A sign-up sheet for appointments during the weeks before February 21 is available at [Google spreadsheet link to be added, pending the number of students]. Except for the first mandatory meeting with a GSI, other GSI office hours will not require appointments ahead of time.

When submitting your paper, you will need to (a) drop a hard copy in the mailbox of Issi Romem, located in 612 Evans, and (b) email an electronic copy to both Dawn Powers and Issi Romem.

Here are two important resources to help you write your paper. Both can be found on the course web site (http://emlab.berkeley.edu/users/webfac/eichengreen/e191_sp12/e191.shtml) under “Lecture Notes, Handouts and Readings”:

- Guidelines for writing an economics research paper
- Data sources for empirical work.

READING LIST

January 17. Introductory Meeting

- Course mechanics
- Jim Church, International Documents Librarian with Doe Library's Research and Collections unit, describes library resources.
- Tutorial on writing research papers in economics.

January 24. Dawn Powers

- Tutorial on framing hypotheses/questions.
- Background material for January 31.

January 31. Barry Eichengreen, "The Chinese Economy: Growth and Slowdown"

Gregory C. Chow, "How and Why China Succeeded in Her Economic Reform," *China Economic Review* (1993), pp. 117-128.

<http://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/chieco/v4y1993i2p117-128.html>

Yiping Huang and Bijun Wang, "Rebalancing China's Economic Structure," in Ross Garnaut, Jane Golley and Ligang Song (eds), *China: The Next 20 Years of Reform and Development* (Brookings Institution Press for Australian National University 2010), pp. 293-312.

http://epress.anu.edu.au/china_update2010/pdf/whole.pdf

Barry Eichengreen, Donghyun Park and Kwanho Shin, "When Fast Growing Economies Slow Down: International Evidence and Implications for China," NBER Working Paper w16919 (2011).

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w16919>

February 7. Issi Romem

- Tutorial on writing a literature review.
- Background material for February 14.

February 14. Professor David Card: (topic & readings TBD)

- Deadline to meet with GSIs about paper topic.

February 21. Issi Romem

- Tutorial on building models.
- Background material for February 28.
- Two-page statement of hypothesis/research question (and why it is important) due at the beginning of class.

February 28. Professor John Morgan: The Economics of Platform Competition and Online Markets

March 6. Dawn Powers

- Tutorial on finding and using data.
- Background material for March 13.
- Five-page review of literature relevant to research-paper topic due at the beginning of class.

March 13. Professor Fred Finan: The Economics of Corruption

March 20. Issi Romem

- Tutorial on obtaining and presenting results.
- Background material for April 3.
- Five-page description of model or data to be used in research paper due at the beginning of class.

March 27. Spring break

April 3. Professor David Romer: (topic & readings TBD)

April 10. Dawn Powers

- Background material for April 17.
- Open office hours after class.
- Five-page summary of research paper results due at the beginning of class.

April 17. Professor Brad DeLong: (topic & readings TBD)

April 24. Professor Barry Eichengreen: Review of semester's themes

May 1. Research paper due before 5:00 p.m. Remember to (a) drop a hard copy in the mailbox of Issi Romem, located in 612 Evans, and (b) email an electronic copy to both Dawn Powers and Issi Romem.