

**California State University, Sacramento**  
**ECON 145: Economic Research Methods**  
**Spring 2020**  
**Syllabus**

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30AM-11:50AM or by appointment  
Office: Tahoe Hall 3017  
email: [kaplanj@csus.edu](mailto:kaplanj@csus.edu)

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***Course Description***

This course covers the basics of conducting applied economic research: selecting a topic, surveying the literature, selecting research methods, exploring the data, identifying and testing hypotheses using statistical analysis, interpreting results, and formulating conclusions. It is designed to enhance the students' ability to integrate economic theory, quantitative research skills, and research.

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***Prerequisites***

ECON 100A, ECON 100B, ECON 140 with a minimum "C" grade; GWAR certification before Fall 09, WPJ score of 70+, or at least a C- in ENGL 109.

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***Learning Objectives***

This course will give you the opportunity to apply your training in economic theory by conducting an applied economic research project. We will identify current research topics in economics, explore the tools that economists use to conduct empirical research, and apply these tools. You will learn the steps involved in conducting economic research.

Accordingly, the course goals are:

- To apply economic theory to real world situations and to utilize economic theory to frame analysis of research questions.
  - To recognize the vast array of information available to economists over the Internet and in the library, and to learn where resources and data can be found.
  - To use statistical analysis to help understand real world situations.
  - To gain an appreciation for the value of economic reasoning and research, but to also recognize the limitations of its application.
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***Grading***

There are no exams in this course. Your grade will be based on an on-line data exercise (2%), seven in-class interim presentations (7%), six interim writing assignments (72%), a final research paper (12%), and a final in-class presentation (7%).

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***Work Journal***

I highly recommend keeping a work journal. An excel workbook can serve as an excellent journal location. The spreadsheets can store information you gather and thoughts you consider throughout the research process. It might include data searches, data summaries, literature searches, annotated bibliography, glossary of terms, fact sheets, compilation of web-based resources, daily reflections on insights, discoveries, and explorations, and any other material that you think will be useful to you as you develop your project, your assignments, and your research methods.

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***In-Class Presentations***

Attendance and participation are crucial for success in this class. I encourage you to participate in class discussions and ask questions if topics are unclear. One of the best ways to solidify your understanding of your research is by explaining it to others. You will get this opportunity through various in-class presentations.

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### ***Interim Writing Assignments***

Assignments will be due at 12:00PM on the due date. Assignments submitted after 12:00PM on the due date receive a 50% reduction in points. Assignments submitted any later lose all points. All assignment guidelines will be posted on Canvas.

- Assignment 1: Critical Reading. Due Date 01/28/2020
- Assignment 2: Research Prospectus. Due Date 02/06/2020
- Assignment 3: Literature Review. Due Date 02/20/2020
- Assignment 4: Economic Framework. Due Date 03/10/2020
- Assignment 5: Data Exploration. Due Date 03/24/2020
- Assignment 6: Empirical Analysis. Due Date 04/21/2020

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### ***Final Paper and Presentation***

The course culminates with written and oral presentation of your research. The final paper **will** have the following sections:

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
- III. Literature Review
- IV. Economic Framework
- V. Data Exploration
- VI. Empirical Analysis
- VII. Conclusion
- VIII. References

Oral presentations are scheduled for **May 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>**. You will be allocated approximately 7-10 minutes for your presentation, depending on the number of final presentations.

**Your final paper is due on May 7, 2020 at 11:59PM.**

More details on the paper sections and the presentation will follow as we move through the interim assignments.

**Note: your grade on the final paper and presentation will depend on how well you revise your interim writing assignments and presentations given feedback from your classmates and me.**

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### ***Advice***

- Writing style matters. Please ensure that your paper is grammatically correct and written in an academic style. If for any reason you need assistance with your writing, I highly recommend you visit the writing center on campus (<http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>).
- Be ahead of the game. You should begin the research process today. The sooner you get started the sooner we can figure out how to handle the problems that will arise.
- Although you will be working on the project “on your own,” you are **strongly encouraged** to email or stop by during office hours to discuss any aspect of your project.
- Your project involves extending past research. You should be well aware of the university guidelines on academic honesty and plagiarism ([www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm](http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm) and [www.library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353](http://www.library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353)). Any violation of the academic honesty policy will result in an “F” grade for the entire course. The student will also be reported to Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism and the appropriate way to credit sources, review university guidelines or confer with me or tutors in the Writing Center.

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**Course Outline**

The following timeline is a tentative subject guide for the semester and may be altered as we move forward.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Writing Assignment</b>
1	Intro/Literature Review	
1	Library	
2	Presentations	WA1
2	Lab	
3	Lab	
3	Presentations	WA2
4	Economic Framework	
4	Lab	
5	Lab	
5	Presentations	WA3
6	Data Exploration	
6	Lab	
7	Lab	
7	On-line Data Exercise	
8	Presentations	WA4
8	Lab	
9	Lab	
9	Econometrics	
10	Presentations	WA5
10	No Class	
11	Spring Break	
11	Spring Break	
12	Lab	
12	Lab	
13	Lab	
13	Lab	
14	Presentations	WA6
14	Lab	
15	Practice Presentations	
15	Practice Presentations	
16	Presentations	
16	Presentations	Final Paper Due