CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

ECON 145 – Economic Research Methods
SPRING 2010

Instructor:	Kristin Van Gaasbeck		Office:	Tahoe 3015
e-mail:	kavan@csus.edu		Office phone:	278-6194
			Office Hours:	Mon. 10-11:30a.m., Wed. 3:30-5p.m. or by appointment

Course web page: http://www.csus.edu/indiv/v/vangaasbeckk/courses/145/

General Information

Lecture:	W 5:30-8:20pm	Prerequisites:	ECON 100A , ECON 100B,
Call Number:	36554		ECON 140, **and** 70+ on WPJ
Section:	04		or at least a C- in ENGL 109.

Catalog Description

Covers the basics of conducting applied economic research: the selection of topic, literature survey, choice of research method, formulation of hypothesis, testing of hypothesis using empirical analysis, and summary and conclusions. Designed to enhance the student's ability to integrate economic theory, quantitative research skills, and research. **Open to graduating seniors only.**

Scope and Objectives

This course will give you the opportunity to apply your training in economic theory to applied economic research. We will explore current research topics in economics, develop the tools that economists use to explore those topics, and apply these tools to new research. You will learn the steps involved in conducting economic research. You will select a research question, formulate a hypothesis, apply an economic model, and collect and analyze data.

The goals for this course are for students to be able to :
- Apply economic theory to real world situations, and to utilize economic theory to frame analysis of research questions.
- 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.
- Use statistical analysis to test economic theory and address policy issues.
- Gain an appreciation for the value of economic reasoning and research, but to also recognize the limitations of its application.

You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in class discussions; some of your assignments will be conducted in class. Completion of required readings prior to class meetings is crucial to your understanding of the material, and necessary for your contribution to the learning environment.

Grading

Assignments	60% (oral and written)
Class Participation/Assignments	15% (includes work completed during class time)
Final Project	25% (15% for paper, 10% for presentation)

| **Course Resources** | ▪ Koop, G., *Analysis of Economic Data,* 3rd ed., Wiley. (Required) |

▪ *EViews 6.1,* Full Version, QMS Software (Optional)
   o We will be conducting regression analysis in this course using the EViews. This software package is available during class time and the SSIS computer lab (Amador 220) open hours. If you want to work on your project at home, you will need to purchase your own copy of EViews through QMS.
   o The EViews *User's Guide* and *Command and Programming Reference* provide a good overview of the statistical inference/regression analysis. Each provides a detailed account of the mechanics of performing these functions in EViews. These documents can be downloaded from the QMS home page:
   http://www.eviews.com/download/download.html
   (Select EViews Documentation in PDF to open a zip file with the manuals)
   o Please note, the Student Version does not have many of the features you may need in the Full Version.

▪ Studenmund, A.H., *Using Econometrics: A Practical Guide,* 5th Ed., Addison-Wesley (Optional)
   This is an excellent econometrics reference that you may have used in econometrics. While we will be covering an introduction to regression analysis in class, you may find it useful to have a textbook for reference. If you used another econometrics textbook, then that one should be sufficient.

Final Paper and Presentation

The final paper is worth 15% of your course grade and includes (some of these sections may be combined):

- an abstract of your paper (Assignment #9),
- an introduction that motivates your research topic (to be written when you submit the first draft of your final paper),
- a literature review presents the work of others and unresolved issues in the field (Assignment #3),
- a description of the economic model used and the empirical methodology used to test your hypothesis (Assignment #5),
- a section reporting your statistical findings (including regression analysis) using graphs, tables, etc., plus an economic analysis of these results (Assignment #6 and Assignment #8),
- a conclusion that summarizes your findings, how they compare with earlier literature, and addresses policy implications and unresolved issues (to be written when you submit the first draft of your final paper).

The final presentation is worth 10% of your grade and will be given in front of the class and economics faculty during the last week of classes. This presentation will be 6-8 minutes (depending on class enrollment) during which you are to motivate and summarize your research project. You are expected to use Power Point to present your work. Your attendance at the presentations of others is part of your presentation grade.

Assignments	You will complete both oral and written assignments, most of them directly connected to your final paper. It is important that you complete your assignments in a timely manner to prevent falling behind early on. Most of these assignments require multiple drafts. If you fail to turn them in on time, you will not receive the feedback necessary for satisfactory completion of your final research paper.

The assignment details are as follows
(weight given in parentheses, 60% of your course grade)

Assignment #1 (4%)   Summary of a research article (draft required)

Assignment #2 (6%)[†]   Prospectus for your research project

Assignment #3 (10%)[*†]   Literature review

Assignment #4 (4%)   Problem set #1: Statistical inference and hypothesis testing

Assignment #5 (6%)[†]   Economic model and empirical methodology.

Assignment #6 (10%)[*†]   Preliminary data analysis.

Assignment #7 (4%)   Problem set #2: Regression analysis

Assignment #8 (10%)[*†]   Regression analysis (results and interpretation)

Assignment #9 (4%)[†]   Abstract

[*]*Assignments that include oral presentation in class.*
[†]*Assignments that are components of your final paper. These assignments require multiple drafts. The second draft is typically due one week after the first draft is returned to you with comments.*

You will have several class presentations so that you feel at ease presenting in front of a group, and so you will learn how to report economic questions, theory, and results.

Written assignments are graded both on content AND quality of writing. To keep track of the revisions you complete, you will keep all drafts of the assignments that are components of your final grade in a portfolio. The portfolio is to be handed in (with all previous drafts of your work) each time you submit one of these assignments. Notice, this means your work will be revised a minimum of three times – possibly more depending on the quality of work you submit in your first drafts. Again, if you miss out on these drafts, you run the risk of not completing a satisfactory project.

The in-class assignments are not included in the list above. In-class assignments will be given throughout the semester and are included in your participation grade. Part of your participation grade in the course depends on the quality of the feedback you give to your classmates on their written assignments and presentations. Students who put more time and thought into their feedback will receive more credit.

Assignments are to be submitted to me **both in hard copy** (with your portfolio) **AND via e-mail in Microsoft Word format by 5p.m. on the due date.** The problem sets (Assignments #4 and #7) are exceptions. These assignments may be handed in (hard copy) without your portfolio.

Policies

1. **Academic honesty is expected.** All students must adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct outlined in the *CSUS University Policy Manual*. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism and the appropriate way to credit sources, review the *Policy Manual,* or confer with the instructor or tutors in the Writing Center. Plagiarism on any assignments will result in a failing grade for the entire course AND the student being reported to Judicial Affairs for misconduct.

2. Late assignments will receive a letter grade reduction in the maximum possible score for each business day they are late (beginning from 5pm on the due date/time).

3. E-mail submission of assignments must have the following format. This is very important, in order for me to keep track of your assignments and award you credit when they are submitted. Electronic files will be printed and returned with your portfolio.

    File name (attached): LastName_AS#.docx   (ex. Van Gaasbeck_AS#3)
    E-mail subject line: ECON 145: LastName_AS#.docx (ex. Van Gaasbeck _AS#3.doc)

4. All written work must be proofread. You are responsible for editing your written work before submitted it for a grade. When reviewing your work, if I find several grammatical errors (e.g., more than two on a page), then I will return your work and you will not receive full credit for the assignment. The policy on submitting work on time (see above) still applies here.

5. Attendance is expected. Come to class on time. If you do not attend regularly, you risk receiving a failing grade. The class participation grade includes completion of in-class assignments.

6. All material is available on the class web page. If you miss a class meeting, please check the web site to see what you've missed.

7. You must provide an **acceptable written excuse** for an assignment that you are unable to complete on time (e.g., a doctor's note or legal documentation).

8. **Please be respectful of your classmates during presentations**. Do not use computers, mobile phones, or other electronic devices during class presentations by myself or other students. Failure to do so will result in a penalty for your participation grade.

9. If you plan to drop the class after the drop deadline, you are responsible for completing the necessary paperwork. If you do not complete the course, you will receive a failing grade (F). **Neither the "WU" grade, nor the "I" grade will be assigned under any circumstances.**

10. If you have a learning disability or a physical disability that requires accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. All needs that have been verified through the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) will be accommodated.

Course Outline

	Dates	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Wed., Jan. 27th	Introduction to economic research methods Overview of the research process Writing a research proposal	
Week 2	Wed., Feb. 3rd	Conducting a comprehensive literature review Library resources	AS #1 (draft)
Week 3	Wed., Feb. 10th	Reading published research Writing an annotated bibliography	AS #1 AS #2[†] (draft)
Week 4	Wed., Feb. 17th	Writing style and guidelines	AS #2[†]
Week 5	Wed., Feb. 24th	Presentation of proposals	AS #3[†] (draft)
Week 6	Wed., Mar. 3rd	Economic modeling Dataset construction/organization	AS #3[*†]
Week 7	Wed., Mar. 10th	Dataset manipulation Statistical inference Empirical methodology	AS #5[†] (draft)
Week 8	Wed., Mar. 17th	Preliminary data analysis How to interpret/present data analysis	AS #4
Week 9	Wed., Mar. 24th	Presentations of preliminary data analysis	AS #5[†] AS #6[*†] (draft)
Week 10	Wed., Mar. 31st	**Spring Recess**, March 26th -April 2nd (No classes)	
Week 11	Wed., Apr. 7th	Multivariate regression	AS #6[*†]
Week 12	Wed., Apr. 14th	How to interpret/present regression results	AS #7
Week 13	Wed., Apr. 21st	**W**ork on individual projects	
Week 14	Wed., Apr. 28th	Presentation of regression results	AS #8[*†] (draft) AS #9[*†]
Week 15	Wed., May 5th	Common problems in regression analysis	AS #8[*†]
Week 16	Wed., May 12th	Presentations (5:30-8:20p.m.)	Final paper (Fri., May 13th)

NOTE ON FURLOUGHS:
Faculty are required to take a total of 9 furlough days during the semester during the 2009-2010 academic year. One of these days is a campus-wide furlough day, designated by the President (Monday, February 15). The remaining eight days are selected by the individual faculty and subject to approval by the dean.
My furlough days are as follows: Jan. 26, Feb. 12, Feb. 15, Mar. 12, Mar. 16, Apr. 9, Apr. 15, May 7, May 19.