



Course ECO 3304.501 TECHNIQUES FOR ECO RESEARCH
Instructor Vera Holovchenko
Term Spring 2008
Beginning Date: Monday, January 7, 2008
Ending Date: Monday, April 28, 2008
Meetings Lecture Hours: R 7:00 pm – 9:45 pm in CB 1.114

Course Syllabus

Professor Contact Information

Instructor Vera Holovchenko (also Vira)
Office Phone (972) 883-4913
Email Address verah@utdallas.edu
Office Location GR 2.822
Office Hours Thursdays, 4pm – 6pm or by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

College level statistics course (STAT 1342 or SOCS 3303)

Course Description

This is an introduction to the primary methods used in economic research. Topics include mathematics and statistics for economists, basic regression analysis, information technology, computer software, etc. This course is designed to provide a foundation for other upper level economics courses.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Improve students' capabilities for economic analysis by studying:
 - Elementary calculus
 - Elementary probability theory
 - Introductory Statistics
 - Empirical analysis of economic data.
- Prepare students for more advanced economics courses.
- Introduce students to some of the essential sources of economic information.

Required Textbooks

There is a single required textbook for this course and you may pick it up at either off- or on-campus UTD bookstores. Many of your assignments will be taken from this text, and it is essential for your success in the course.

1. Wim P.M. Vijverberg, James C. Murdoch, and Irving Hoch, **Basic Techniques for Economic Research**, July 2005. (Manuscript is available in the UTD on- and off-campus bookstores.)

Suggested Readings/Texts

For some individuals with weaker math and statistics skills, I strongly recommend the other two texts listed below.

2. Barbara Lee Bleau, **Forgotten Calculus**, 3rd Edition. Barron's educational series. (ISBN: 0764119982, available at the UTD on- and off-campus bookstores.)
3. Douglas Downing & Jeffrey Clark, **Forgotten Statistics**, 1st Edition. Barron's educational series (ISBN: 0812097130, available at the UTD on- and off-campus bookstores.)



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Academic Calendar

January 10 – February 7	Mathematics for Economists (Chapters 1-8)
February 14	Midterm 1 (Chapters 1-8)
February 14 – March 20	Probability Concepts (Chapters 9-14)
March 10 – March 15	Spring Break
March 27	Midterm 2 (Chapters 9-14)
March 27 – April 24	Statistics and Empirical Analysis in Economics (Chapters 16-19)
May 1	Final Exam (Chapters 1-19), cumulative exam

Grading Policy

Attendance (14-15 classes with each class worth 0.7%)	10%
Homework Assignments (4 out of 5, each assignment is worth 4%)	16%
Class Quizzes (4 out of 5, each quiz is worth 4%)	16%
Test 1	16%
Test 2	16%
Final Exam	26%
Total	100%

Throughout the semester you may accumulate up to 100 points (including bonus and extra credit points) for two exams, homework assignments, quizzes, and attendance. I will grade in terms of total points accumulated as follows below. There will be **no rounding!**

A+	97.00 and above	C+	77.00 – 79.99
A	93.00 – 96.99	C	73.00 – 76.99
A-	90.00 – 92.99	C-	70.00 – 72.99
B+	87.00 – 89.99	D+	67.00 – 69.99
B	83.00 – 86.99	D	63.00 – 66.99
B-	80.00 – 82.99	D-	60.00 – 62.99
		F	below 59.99

If questions arise about grading, contact me via email (verah@utdallas.edu). Re-grade requests must be submitted in writing within 1 week after receiving the graded item. This applies to problem sets, quizzes, and exams. Failing to show up to pick up items is **not** an excuse.

Course Policies

Make-up exams

Final exam is cumulative. Hence, it has been assigned more weight in the final grade. **No makeup quizzes, midterms, or final will be offered.** You will be required to present a **written** documentation concerning the excuse, which I will dutifully verify. Students who miss an exam or a quiz without submitting a valid excuse will receive a score of zero. If the university is closed on the day of a scheduled exam, the exam will be given during the next scheduled class period.



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Homework Assignments

Five (5) problem sets will be assigned during the semester. Homework assignments constitute **16%** of the final grade. Although students are highly encouraged to **work with other** classmates on the problem sets, they absolutely **MUST** turn in **their own** work. If a student is caught submitting copied homework, he or she will be assigned **average** group grade for that homework the first time this happens. The grade will turn to **zero** if copied homework sets are turned in more than once. Problem sets are due **at the beginning** of a class meeting and **late** problem sets will **not be accepted**. Since each class meeting starts at 7 p.m., all homework assignments have to be submitted before this time at the appropriate date. The problem set with the lowest grade will be dropped (4 out of 5 assignments will be counted towards the final grade). Thus, students won't be penalized for not turning in one out of five problem sets if they cannot complete an assignment on time for some valid reason. However, **it is strongly encouraged to complete and submit all the assignments**. To receive full credit on homework, students must show all the work. In addition, your work should be legible. Submitted homework assignments have to be **stapled**. Unstapled homework **won't** be accepted. Approximately 40% of the midterm and final material will include similar to assigned homework problems. In addition, homework assignments constitute **20% to 40%** of the final grade.

In class Quizzes

Students will be given five (5) in-class quizzes that will test their knowledge of the material covered in class. **Missed** quizzes **cannot** be made up. Students are responsible for the date and the material covered in each quiz. Both material and the date will be announced in advance. Quizzes constitute **16%** of the final grade. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Due to the complexity of the material, the objective of these quizzes is to provide students with an opportunity to catch up and fill in the gaps throughout the semester. In-class quizzes are open-book and open-notes quizzes.

Calculator and Computer skills

Since students learn how to implement math and statistics in various economic settings, they are **required** to bring their calculators each week to class. Using calculator setting on cell phones will not be allowed during exams and quizzes and, overall, is discouraged in class. Even though there are no specific requirements for a calculator in this course, having a graphing calculator will present certain advantages. However, during the course of the semester, I will not be teaching about how to use a certain type of calculator.

Also, there are no specific requirements for a computer literacy in this class. However, knowing how to use both Word and Excel software packages will prove itself to be useful. During class time, I will **not** be teaching you how to perform calculations and create graphs in Excel spreadsheet. However, on your own become familiar with a PC that has Microsoft Excel installed. In Excel, search and install the **Data Analysis** package that will be useful for statistical and empirical analysis taught during the latter part of the course. If you do not have a PC, get a computer account at UTD and start going to the lab. Two computer labs in the Green Hall building are located in GR 3.206 and GR 3.602. Students are encouraged to learn the software outside of class time. In case help is needed, please contact your instructor or Math Lab teaching assistants.

Class Attendance

Attendance is **mandatory** and constitutes **10%** of the final grade. Students are expected to be regular in their attendance. Attendance sheet will be circulated each class period at different time. The semester includes 14-15 class sessions (including both midterms but not including final exam). Each missed class represents approximately **0.7%** towards the **final class grade**. If you **miss 1 or no classes**, then you receive



5 extra points on the final exam. Attendance should be understood as attendance for the entire class. Not showing up on time and leaving early can constitute a mark as unattended class or partial attendance. In addition, since the syllabus is tentative and subject to change, students are responsible for any announcements made or information given during the class time. No excuses will be accepted. However, all new information will be regularly posted online in WebCT. If you cannot make it to class, I suggest you contact a classmate to see what you missed. It is your responsibility to monitor the course website for updates. Class participation is not graded, but is essential for students' understanding of the material and for successful and fun in-class discussions and exercises. Come to class prepared to participate.

Office Hours

If regular office hours (posted above) do not work for students, they are encouraged to contact an instructor via regular UTD email (verah@utdallas.edu) or WebCT email to set up an appointment for another time. Students are strongly recommended to come see an instructor throughout the semester to discuss questions about the material, their progress in class, or the economics minor or major. Since an instructor's goal is to help students in their learning, it is expected from students to make a reasonable effort to understand the material on their own before they come to talk to the instructor about it.

Additional Help

This class does not have a teaching assistant assigned to it. You are strongly encouraged to form study groups with other students in class and meet on a regular basis to review the material and work on problem sets, quizzes, etc. However, a Math/Economics Lab with a Teaching Assistant is available to help students in all undergraduate economics courses. During this semester, the lab will be staffed by Twinemanzi Tumubweinee (Twine), GR 2.822. The lab hours are provided below:

Twinemanzi Tumubweinee (Twine)

Office: GR 2.822, Phone: (972) 883-4913, Email: tkt011000@utdallas.edu

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10am - 12pm				
		1pm - 4pm		

For assistance with mathematics only, you may also visit the UTD Math Lab located in McDermott Library in Room MC 2.412, (972) 883-6707. The hours are 11am until 8pm, Monday through Thursday.

Showing Your Work and Partial Credit

On all assignments, quizzes, and tests for this class, it is imperative that students show all the steps (i.e. calculations). To receive credit for an answer, all work must be shown. If you only provide the "final" answer, you will receive only partial credit for the answer. If I cannot read your answer, you will not receive any credit for that answer. Provided you have shown your work, your answer will be considered correct if it is within rounding error of the answer I have calculated on the key. Incorrect answers receive no credit. Partial credit for wrong answers is given only in one case, that of "serial" questions, in which your answer to one questions is used in another. For example, if you get the first answer wrong and the second question is related to the first one, you will get the second answer wrong, too. Showing your work will enable me to see that you only got the second question wrong because of your errors in the first one, and you will receive full credit for that subsequent question.



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Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972-883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see General Catalog for details). This course will use the resources of *turnitin.com*, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.



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Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the **student's** responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements for any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Friday, March 7	Last day to withdraw from a course with WP/WF
Thursday, April 10	Last day to withdraw from a course with auto W

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)



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Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

These syllabus descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.