TENTATIVE, INFORMATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Course Outline
ECON 490.013: Applied Economics – Origins and Consequences of Inequality
Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia
TERM 1, 2019

Instructor: Felipe Valencia Caicedo

Instructor Email: felipe.valencia@ubc.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Location: IONA 114

Lecture Day(s) and Time(s): Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00 to 13:30
Lecture Location: Hennings, 304

Prerequisites: This course is restricted fourth year students with in a declared BA major Economics. Students must have successfully completed all of ECON 325 and ECON 326 and one of ECON 301 / 304 and ECON 302/ 305. This is the capstone research course in economics.

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DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Description/Objective: In this course, students will familiarize themselves with the study of economic inequality from the perspective of applied economics, development and economic history. Among other things, they will get to know about relevant dimensions of inequality and explore how inequality changes along different stages of development of a country. We will look at the impact of inequality on both developing and developed countries, as well as the intrinsic and functional aspects of this phenomenon. An important part of the course will be devoted to uncover the historical origins of inequality. Next to developing their understanding of econometric tools, students are expected to learn how to measure inequality in the data and compare the degree of economic inequality across countries and time. Most importantly, they will look at the drivers and multifaceted consequences of inequality. The ultimate goal of this project module is to give students a solid foundation for selecting their own research topic in this area.

Approach to learning: This is a topics-based (inequality) research course in economics. This research course should culminate your economics training at UBC. This does not mean that this will be the last economics course you take, but one where all of what you have learned so far comes into play. It should challenge you, as all research courses do, but hopefully also reward you, and entice you to take more advanced economics research courses in the future.

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RECOMMENDED MATERIALS: Access to STATA®, provided in the university libraries.

REQUIRED READINGS: I will assign book chapters and suggested articles as we go along, detailed in the course outline. We will focus on Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the XXIst Century* and Branco Milanovic’s *Global Inequality*.

ASSESSMENT METHODS:

The final course grade will be determined according to the following weighting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper + Outline</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Exercises</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Research Paper Description: This is the most important part and goal of this course. There are no final exams or midterms in this course. Your goal is to submit a written research piece. This would entail a process of narrowing down and finding a research topic. Covering the necessary bibliography and reviewing the literature appropriately. Formulating a hypothesis, finding the appropriate data to test it. Analyzing the data, generating results, and discussing your findings. The accompanying exercises are all aimed at helping you during this challenging process. For instance, you will hand in an outline (10%) before your research paper, again to have feedback on your research progress.

Research Exercises Description: These research exercises are designed to help you to think like a researcher. They will include writing a good bibliography. Thinking about how best to organize a research presentation. Using a statistical software to analyze inequality data.

Class Presentation Description: You will be graded on the successful delivery of your research project. This is also an opportunity to get feedback about your work, from the instructor and fellow classmates.

Class Participation Description: Based on attendance, and active participation, throughout the class.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: Attendance is mandatory and participation is encouraged, as it counts for part of your grade.

PENALTY FOR LATE /UNSUBMITTED WORK: In general, I will penalize late submissions, except in extreme personal or academic circumstances.

COURSE SCHEDULE: This schedule is still tentative and subject to change as we progress through the term. We will not meet regularly, as some classes will be replaced with one-to-one meetings with students.

- September: Introduction to inequality
- October: Lectures, individual meetings / research exercises
- November: In class presentations, hand in outline
- December: Submission of research paper

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STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY: It is the policy of the Vancouver School of Economics to report all violations of UBC’s standards for academic honesty to the office of the Dean of Arts. Those standards can be found here. In addition to the explicitly stated violations in that document (for example, plagiarism), any student who hires a tutor/editor to help with any portion of their work will be given an automatic grade of zero on their final paper. Additionally, students who falsify their references, or act in any such dishonest manner, will also be given a grade of zero on their final paper. Further penalties may be levied by the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Those further penalties could include a notation on your transcript indicating that you have committed an academic offence, failure of the course, a grade of zero in the course and/or suspension from the university. Speak to your instructor in person if you have any questions regarding the standard for academic honesty at UBC.

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