

Advanced Macroeconomics II
ECONOMICS EC9614A
Department of Economics
University of Western Ontario

September 2022

General Information:

Instructor: Baxter Robinson
Office: 4063 SSC
Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 89118
E-mail: brobin63@uwo.ca
Office hours: Office hours will be held in my office (4063 SSC):

- Mondays from 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM
- Wednesdays from 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Meeting times: In person

- Mondays from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM in SSC 4032
- Wednesdays from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM in SSC 4032

Course website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

This is an advanced topics course for PhD students. The focus is on topics in macroeconomics, but my goal is to make the course interesting and relevant to applied students studying workers, households, and firms.

Enrollment Restrictions:

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in economics, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course Objectives:

The objective of this course is to aid you in the transition from completing coursework to conducting your own independent research in economics. We will study how the microeconomic behaviour of workers, households, and firms influences aggregate economic outcomes and determines the effect of different policies. The focus will be on the current research frontier and how you can gain the skills necessary to contribute to that frontier. We will examine empirical work, theoretical work, and work that combines both data and theory.

Course Learning Outcomes:

I hope you will learn four main things from this course:

1. The state of the frontier of research on a variety of topics
2. How to generate new research ideas
3. How to critically evaluate research papers
4. How to effectively present research papers

Course Organization:

This course will be run in-person. You are expected to show up to both the Monday and Wednesday lecture each week.

It is my hope is that this course will remain in-person throughout the semester. However, given that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, there is a chance that this course will be moved online. In the event of such a transition, all course content will be delivered online:

- Video lectures will be **synchronous**
- Office hours will be virtual via Zoom
- The grading scheme and the date and times of the assessments will NOT change

In the event of such a transition, additional details will be provided by the instructor.

Communication:

- Please feel free to call me Baxter. I use he/him/his pronouns.
- I will make announcements through email. I expect that you will check your e-mail at least once every 24 hours between Monday and Friday.
- I expect most course-related questions will be asked either during the lecture, or during my office hours.
- For personal concerns that you wish to discuss in private, I am happy to set up a private meeting either virtually or in-person. Please email me to request one.

Assessments and Grading:

Your course grade will be made up of six research idea pitches, one referee report and presentation, one research proposal and presentation, and class participation

- **Research Idea Pitches [30%= 6 x 5%]**
 - Every two weeks you will write up a one-page pitch of a research idea you could pursue. The pitch should clearly specify a research question, the methods that will be used to answer that question, the data set to be used, any necessary model features, and how this paper would contribute to the literature.
 - Pitches are due by 6:00pm ET on the following Fridays:
 - September 23rd, October 7th, October 21st, November 11th, November 25th, December 9th

- **Referee Report:**
 - **Written Report [15%]**
 - **Presentation [15%]**
 You will select one paper that you find interesting to read and critically evaluate. You will then write a 3-5 page referee report providing a brief (1-paragraph) summary and evaluating both the strengths and the weaknesses of the paper. You will then present both an overview of the paper and your critical evaluation in class.
 Written Report Due: 6:00pm ET the Friday following your presentation
- **Research Proposal:**
 - **Written Proposal [15%]**
 - **Presentation [15%]**
 You will write a 3-5 page proposal of a new research idea that you could pursue. The proposal should be an updated version of one of the pitches, which goes into more detail than the pitch, detailing the precise empirical strategy, sketches the model, and what form the results would take.
 Written Proposal Due: 6:00 pm ET December 16th
- **Class Participation [10 %]**
 - The most important part of this course is the papers that we will study. To gain the most out of this course, it is vital that you read the papers and engage in our discussions.

Course Topics:

1. Heterogeneity in Macroeconomics
2. Labour Income Risk
3. Labour Income Inequality
4. Wealth Inequality
5. Consumption Dynamics
6. Housing and Macro
7. Entrepreneurship
8. Firm Dynamics
9. Firm Financial Frictions
10. Long-Run Economic Growth

Depending on student interest, we may focus on a subset of these topics. Please let me know which topics you are most interested in.

Inclusion

Every student, regardless of your personal history, your identity, and your circumstances, is a valued member of this class. Your experiences are valuable and your success in this class is important to me.

- During lectures and office hours, I expect all students to work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of the full range of diversity in our class.

- You have the right to be called by whatever name you wish. I humbly ask you to help me learn how to pronounce your name correctly.
- You have the right to be referred to by whatever pronouns you wish.
- If there are any barriers to your inclusion in the course, please contact me privately so that we can problem solve together.

Mental Health

Graduate school should be an overall enjoyable experience. It is normal to feel stress at times both because of your academic work and because of non-academic parts of your life.

However, if you are experiencing persistent stress or severe emotional distress, mental health resources can assist you in processing your thoughts and emotions.

I encourage you to visit http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ to find out about the resources available to you as a Western student, or try <https://good2talk.ca/>.

Masking Guidelines

Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Department Policies

Policy on Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Health and Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to

Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.