

**Economics 100C Honors
Spring 2009**

Tuesday 2:00-2:50pm in SEQUO 244

Professor:

Julie Cullen

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Office: ECON 213

OH: M 10:00-11:00am

Course content:

This honors course is meant to accompany Econ 100C. The goal is to expose you to economic research so that you can see some of the microeconomic principles that you have learned in action and being tested. It is intended for advanced students and should challenge you.

Structure of the course:

The first several meetings of this course (4/7, 4/14, 4/21) will be run as a seminar. I expect that each of you will do the required reading each week. The articles will provide an introduction to empirical methods for identifying causal effects, and are available through the course website (<http://dss.ucsd.edu/~jbcullen/econ100ch/econ100ch.html>). In class, we will review how the methods work and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. You should come prepared with questions and thoughts. Read the articles carefully to extract the intuition behind the techniques. I do not expect you to understand all of the technical details.

Independently, you will each choose an academic paper on a microeconomic topic that you find interesting. Ideally the article will have a theory section as well as a section that uses data to test the theory. You will be asked to digest the article and then to explain the question it is asking, how it relates to themes in your intermediate microeconomic courses, and the method that is used to answer the question. You will also be asked to provide a brief critique.

The following are the formal requirements for this component of the course:

1. Chosen articles should be approved as soon as possible, and no later than April 28.
2. A preliminary draft of the written review is due on May 12.
3. Each student will make a five minute presentation to the class reviewing his or her chosen article, with a minute or two for questions, during one of the last three weeks (May 19, 26 or June 2).
4. The final draft (5-10 pages) of the written review is due by 5pm on June 5.

I will hold office hours during the scheduled class time during the weeks when we do not meet as a group. I encourage you to meet with me as you are preparing your drafts and presentation. You can use my office hours, or we can set up an alternative time.

Your grade for the course will be determined by class participation (15%), effort (15%), class presentation (20%), and the final paper (50%). My expectation is that you do not miss class. If you need to miss a class meeting for any reason, please email me ahead of time with your explanation as to why you will not be attending class.

Where to find suitable articles:

Four of the leading economics journals are the American Economic Review, the Journal of Political Economy, the Quarterly Journal of Economics, and the Review of Economics and Statistics. If you are particularly interested in how firms compete with each other then the RAND Journal is another useful publication. You can find recent copies of these in the Geisel Library. Alternatively, if you are logging in from a UCSD site (or through the UCSD dial-in service), you can get access to JSTOR (www.jstor.org), which contains every article ever published in these and other leading journals, up to about 4-5 years ago. (The Browse function is particularly good for looking through article titles.) Another place you can look, this time for more recent unpublished work, is the National Bureau of Economic Research (www.nber.org). As long as you are logging in through the UCSD network you can download working papers from this site at no cost.

Schedule

Dates	Topics
3/31	Introductory meeting
4/7	(1) Heckman and Smith (1995): “Assessing the Case for Social Experiments”
4/14	(2) Duflo, Glennerster and Kremer (2006): “Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit” (pp.4-17) (3) Van der Klaauw (2002): “Estimating the Effect of Financial Aid Offers on College Enrollment: A Regression Discontinuity Approach”
4/21	(4) Gruber (1994): “The Incidence of Mandated Maternity Benefits”
4/28	No class (OH in ECON 213) Due: Topic approval
5/5	No class (OH in ECON 213)
5/12	No class (OH in ECON 213) Due: Preliminary draft
5/19	Student Presentations
5/26	Student Presentations
6/2	Student Presentations
6/4 (Friday)	Due: Final draft by 5pm