University of Toronto
St. George Campus
Department of Economics

ECO331 – Behavioral and Experimental Economics

Course Outline: Fall 2019
Version 1.0

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Course Website on Quercus (https://q.utoronto.ca/)

Note: This syllabus will periodically be updated as more information becomes available, and reuploaded to the course website when updated. If you have questions about the content of the syllabus, please first check that you are referring to the most current version.

About the course:

This course is a semester-long field course intended to introduce you to the worlds of behavioral and experimental economics. Behavioral economics is a field of economics that aims to enrich traditional economics to understand behavior that is not well-described by more traditional economics models, and explain those persistent phenomena that "shouldn't" happen from the traditional perspective, but nevertheless do. Accordingly, behavioral economics covers a wide range of topics, from temptation to cooperation and punishment. This means that what we will cover this semester can only be a part of the bigger picture – there's more to explore out there! Experimental economics is a methodology that uses controlled experiments on human subjects to study a wide range of economic phenomena, and is an integral part of behavioral economics. Experimental economics is used in wide range of economic fields, but in this course we will focus on the applications to behavioral economics research.

Course Goals:

There are three primary goals for ECO331:

- Understand a set of the key insights from behavioral economics, and how those insights enhance economists' ability to predict and explain observed behavior.
- Understand the methods of modern experimental economics, and how to assess the results of experiments involving humans as subjects.
- Develop your ability to critically analyze economic research, and further your understanding of how modern economic is conducted.

Course Format:

Lecture Times:

Class Section 0101: Tuesday, 10:00-1:00, SS 1085
Class Section 0201: Tuesday, 2:00-5:00, SS 1085

Lecture Content:

Lecture is the primary use of course time, and is where we will discuss the materials and ideas from that week's content.

You are expected to be prepared for lecture by having done the required readings!

In order to get the most out of lecture, you are expected to have done the readings for that week. Lecture content will presume that you have read the assigned readings, so if you have not done the readings it will be difficult to keep up with what we are discussing in class!

During lecture, we will be using lecture slides, which will be posted to the course website prior to class. I would encourage you to print the slides and bring them with you, so that you can annotate them during class. You will notice that the slides are deliberately incomplete – the expectation is that you will have them with you and will be filling them in as we go along, as we will be doing on the board. We will not be posting the annotated versions, so come to class!

Communication Protocols:

In order to make communication as effective as possible, please adhere to the following protocols:

- Use either the message feature on Quercus, or your utoronto.ca email address. Messages from other kinds of emails typically get flagged as spam.
- Include "ECO331" in the subject line of your email, and include your student number in your message.
- If you are responding to an email that was sent to the course, it is better to start a new email rather than replying to the original mass email, as those often get flagged as read when they have not been.
- Before emailing me regarding administrative details, first check the course website. Pertinent information about the course will be posted to the website, so that should be your first resource for administrative information.
- Questions regarding content are best asked during office hours – that is the purpose of holding office hours, and in many cases it is simply impractical to respond fully to questions via text in email. If you are unable to attend office hours because you have a scheduling conflict, then please contact me about scheduling an appointment to discuss your questions.

Office Hours:

My office hours will be Wednesdays, 4:00-5:14 in my office at 328 Gluskin, unless otherwise specified.

Course Website:

In ECO331, we will be using Quercus as one of the primary means of distributing both content and information, so it is important that you check Quercus regularly for new content. This will include course announcements, lecture slides, links to the readings, and further information regarding assignments. Because we will be using Quercus as a mode of communication, it is important that you configure your Quercus to alert you to the messages and announcements posted on the course website.

Required Materials:

- **MobLab:** http://www.moblab.com Registration for MobLab costs $25 for the semester. Instructions for registering can be found on Quercus.
- **Readings:** There is no assigned textbook for ECO331. Instead, we will primarily be reading a number of economics journal articles. The information about these readings will be posted to Quercus.

Assessments and Dates:

The marks for this course will be assessed as follows:

In-class assignments	All Semester	8%
Midterm Test	October 15	26%
Term Paper	November 29	26%
Final Exam	To be assigned	40%

Missed Tests:

You should make every effort not to miss the term test. If you find that you *must* miss the midterm, you will be permitted to take a makeup version of the midterm *only* if you:
- email me prior to the start of the midterm test with the subject line "Makeup test request: Student Number XXX", where XXX is your student number
- Provide me with documentation that you were too ill to take the test, in person (at office hours or lecture), to me, within one week of the test date. The appropriate documentation of such an illness can be found at: www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca

Midterms that are missed without meeting the above requirements will receive a mark of zero.

If you find miss the midterm and meet the above requirements, you will be permitted to take the makeup midterm. *This midterm will take place on the morning of Friday, October 25th, and will consist of a one-on-one oral test with Prof. McNeill, lasting approximately 30 minutes.*

Appeal of Test Grades:

If you believe a serious error has been made in the grading of your test, you may submit to me a written request for your test to be regraded.

- This request must be submitted on paper – email regrade requests will not be reviewed. This is to make sure I get to your request, and it doesn't get buried under other emails!
- This request must detail, *specifically*, why you think you deserve a higher mark, not just a general appeal for a higher mark.
- This request should be handed in to me in my office hours – if you are unable to attend my office hours due to scheduling conflicts with other courses, please contact me to make other arrangements.
- This request must be made within one week of the date on which your test was returned.
- The section you identify, as well as potentially other sections of the test, will be reviewed. This review may increase or decrease your overall score – it is **not** the case that your score will necessarily increase, or even remain constant.

In-class assignments:

In each of the 10 lectures after the first class, we will be doing an in-class assignment. The structure of these in-class assignments will vary from week to week, and will include:

Writing Prompts: A prompt requiring a written answer, that may be either quantitative (problem-solving) or qualitative (descriptive response) in nature. Responses to writing prompts will be marked on a 1 to 5 point scale.

Experiment Participation: In this course, you will have a chance to experience firsthand a series of experiments. Generally, this will be done using MobLab. Marks for the experiments are based on participation.

Your course marks from the in-class assignments will be based on your best 8 of these 10 assignments. Every week your marks will be scaled so that earning full marks for that week is equivalent to earning 1 mark towards your final grade. *Note: it is not possible to makeup these in-class assignments. That is the purpose of taking the best 8 of your 10, to allow for the possibility that you miss class for legitimate reasons. It is in your best interest to always go to class, in case you get sick later in the semester!*

Writing Assignments:

Writing is one of the fundamental skills that students should develop during their university education. Full information and instructions for the term-paper will be provided later in the semester, but be aware that this course will require you to write a short essay of around 1,000 words, using the tools and results we have discussed in the course to address the prompt. The final version of the term paper will be due on November 29th, and you will have a chance to get feedback from us prior to the final submission.

Please be aware that no extensions will be granted for writing assignments – assignments not submitted by the relevant deadline will receive a score of zero.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. For written assignments, we will be utilizing the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin (TI). This software is intended to detect instances of academic plagiarism in written assignments. As described by the University:

"Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site".

English Language Learners:

The University of Toronto has resources available to assist students who are learning English through the English Language Learning (ELL) Program. More information about this program and the services they provide can be found at:

http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell

Cell phones and laptop usage

Technology can support student learning, but it can also become a distraction. Research indicates that multi-tasking (texting, surfing the Internet, using social networks) during class time can have a negative impact on learning (Clapp, Rubens, Sabharwal & Gazzaley, 2011; Ellis, Daniels, Jauregui, 2010; Hembrooke & Gay, 2003). Out of respect for your fellow learners in this class, please refrain from using laptops or mobile phones for entertainment during class and do not display any material on a laptop which may be distracting or offensive to your fellow students. Laptops may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading course information from Portal, or working on an assigned in-class exercise. Checking social media, email, texting, games, and surfing the Web are not legitimate classroom purposes. Such inappropriate laptop and mobile phone use is distracting to those seated around you and is unprofessional.

Ongoing Learning Disability or Accommodation Requirement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (accessibility.utoronto.ca) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Academic Integrity:

As a member of the University of Toronto, you will be held to the standards of academic integrity established by the University. The University is committed to upholding these standards, and accordingly takes these policies very seriously – be aware that violation of these standards will result in disciplinary action taken in accordance with university policy.

All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, citing and using source material appropriately, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism, representing someone else's words as your own, or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. Also, see the U of T writing support website at www.utoronto.ca/writing. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations.

More information on the University of Toronto's policy on academic integrity can be found at:

 http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/what-is-academic-misconduct

Common forms of academic misconduct include:

- Use of inappropriate electronics during exams – the ECO331 midterm and final exam allow only for the use of non-programmable, non-graphing calculators. It would be a good idea to make sure that you have access to such a calculator in advance. Other forms of electronics (mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) are prohibited.
- Continuing to write in exams after the time has been called – the only fair way to approach this issue is to be strict that writing must cease when time is called, and continuing to write after the exam has ended will expose you to academic sanctions.
- Plagiarism on writing assignments. Plagiarism is a serious instance of academic misconduct, and university policy explicitly stipulates that ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable defense.