

Econ 881- Labor Economics
Course Syllabus
Fall 2023

Class Time: Mondays 9:30am to 12:20pm ; no class on October 9, class is instead scheduled for Tuesday October 10 at 9:30am to 12:20pm

Class Location: WMC 3611

Instructor: Serena Canaan

Email: scanaan@sfu.ca

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30 to 3pm

Office Location: WMC 2680

Course description:

Econ 881 serves as an introduction to graduate level labor economics. The aim of this course is to introduce students to empirical methods used in applied labor economics, cover topics studied by labor economists in a variety of research areas and familiarize students with how to conduct research in labor economics.

Course prerequisites:

Students enrolled in this course should have taken Econ 835 (Econometrics) or its equivalent.

Course Resources:

The main web support for the course will be Canvas. Students need to make sure that they have access to Canvas' Econ 881 course page, and should constantly check their Canvas account for all information related to the course.

You can log into Canvas via the following link:

<https://canvas.sfu.ca>

More information about Canvas:

<https://www.sfu.ca/information-systems/services/canvas.html>

Grading:

In-class participation + research question presentation: 15%

In-class presentation: 25%

Referee report: 25%

Research proposal: 35%

Research question presentation: Students will present original research questions that they are interested in pursuing in their PhD or MA thesis. Students will pitch their research questions on three separate occasions (see course schedule). During each presentation (around 10 minutes), students will present a research question, their motivation for looking at that question, a short literature review and potential empirical methods that can be used to address that question. One of these research questions will form the basis of the research proposal.

In-class presentation: You will be expected to present a paper that is already published in an economics journal. In this role, you are expected to think more deeply than usual about the identification strategy used in the paper and any problems not addressed in a convincing way and suggest improvements.

Referee report: You will write a 2-3 page referee report. You will choose an applied labor economics working paper (that has not been published yet) and provide comments/critiques of that paper.

Research proposal: The research proposal is meant to provide a detailed written plan of how you will conduct a research study. You will develop a proposal using one of your original research questions that you presented in class. The research proposal must include a motivation, a clear research question, a detailed literature review and how your research will contribute to the literature, a discussion of potential data sources and estimation strategies, and should be in an area that has the 'potential' to be expanded into a thesis paper.

Textbook:

Recommended textbook:

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

I will be mostly using slides which I will post on Canvas. The textbook is not required but it is highly recommended for students wishing to learn more about empirical methods.

Tentative Course Schedule (Some topics may be added/removed):

Week 1 (September 11):

Introduction and Causality

Week 2 (September 18):

Randomized Experiments

Week 3 (September 25):

Panel Data and Fixed Effects

Week 4 (October 2) :

No classes

Week 5 (October 10 instead of October 9) :

Difference-in-Difference

Week 6 (October 16):

Instrumental Variables

Week 7 (October 23):

Regression Discontinuity Design

Week 8 (October 30):

Research question presentations

Week 9 (November 6):

Applications of RCT and DID

Week 10 (November 13):

No classes

Week 11 (November 20):

Applications of Regression Discontinuity Designs

Week 12 (November 27):

Research question presentations

Week 13 (December 4):

In-class presentations

December 11: Referee report due

December 18: Research proposal due

Course Policy:

1. Lecture attendance is mandatory. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to take class notes from another student.
2. Cheating policy: Students are expected NOT to cheat on any assignments. If a student cheats according to the cheating criteria set by SFU, the name of the student will be given to the Disciplinary Committee for action.

3. The Department of Economics seeks to promote the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in relation to our undergraduate and graduate students, administrative staff, sessional instructors, and faculty members. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of ethnicity/race, culture, religion, ability status, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, gender diversity, citizenship, and national origin. We commit to fostering a departmental climate that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive as well as ensuring that departmental policies and practices are fair.