ECONOMICS 498: SEMINAR IN ECONOMICS

Fall 2020
TR 2pm – 3:15pm
117 Bryan Building

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Dora Gicheva
Office: 459 Bryan Building
E-mail: d_gichev@uncg.edu
Virtual Office Hours: Thursday 10am – 12pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines public policy issues using microeconomic theory and data. It provides students with the opportunity to apply economic reasoning to analyze a government policy of their choice. This is a designated speaking- and writing-intensive course whose purpose is to help students improve their ability to engage in independent economic policy research and communicate the results of that research in a professional manner.

COURSE MATERIALS:
  Make sure that you buy the 4th edition. You can purchase it through the UNCG Bookstore.
- Intermediate microeconomic theory textbook. You can use your ECO 301 text.
- Supplemental materials on the Canvas website for the course. You must have an active UNCG email account to access UNCG Canvas.
- Materials specific to your project. Both Steve Cramer, the reference librarian specializing in economics and business, and I will be available to help you find these materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course students should be able to use their knowledge of economics to conduct policy analysis and should know how to communicate their findings orally and in writing in a clear, coherent, professional, and informative manner. Successful completion of the course includes:

- Producing a major paper and a presentation on a public policy of the student’s choice.
- Learning how to formulate economic policy questions.
- Knowing how to find and use appropriate data to address economic policy questions.
- Knowing how to find, read, and cite properly scholarly works related to a given policy issue.
- Understanding the difference between correlation and causation.
- Being able to construct an economic theory that addresses a given economic policy question.
**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:** The structure of this course is unlike that of a typical course. While there will be some lectures, student participation is not only required by the University by virtue of the course being a writing- and speaking-intensive course, it is absolutely crucial for success. The emphasis of the course is on in-class discussions and presentations in which students and I will work together to develop economic research and communication skills. As required of all University writing- and speaking-intensive courses, this course will have both informally and formally graded writing and speaking assignments.

Over the course of the semester, students are expected to:

- Attend class regularly and arrive on time. Especially since there is no textbook for this class, it is very important that students attend all lectures. Students will receive a score of 0 for all assignments that they miss due to being late or absent.
- Use instructor-provided feedback about their writing and speaking assignments to improve later writing and speaking assignments.
- Read assigned material ahead of time, be willing to share their thinking and work – however incomplete – with the class, and be willing to support fellow students through both praise and criticism of their work.
- Not use cell phones during class. Students may use a tablet device to download reading materials. Unless otherwise specified or used to attend lecture remotely, laptops are not allowed. I will ask students to leave class if I find that they are violating the policy outlined here.
- Approach me sooner rather than later with any concerns they have about the class.

**GRADES:** The final course grade will be based on the following components:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Major paper and presentation</strong></th>
<th>70%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper topic</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline and annotated bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data report</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft of theoretical model</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written rough draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final draft of paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Attendance, Participation and Other Assignments</strong></th>
<th>30%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines of journal articles</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Short presentations:</td>
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<td>Presentation on writing style</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation on paper topic</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing and Speaking Center consultations</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Dates, details and expectations about all assignments will be provided in class and on the course Canvas site. This course has a complex, multi-faceted structure and you are expected to understand and adhere to its calendar and requirements.
Writing and speaking center consultations: I expect students to visit the UNCG Writing Center at least twice and the Speaking Center once during the semester. One of the Writing Center visits has to take place before October 22, when the first draft of the paper is due. The Speaking Center consultation must take place before November 5.

Attendance and participation: I expect students to come to class prepared and to participate in discussions. Part of the participation grade will be based on completing non-graded assignments, such as signing up for presentation slots when I ask students to do so. Other in-class assignments will also count towards attendance and participation. If you miss an in-class assignment due to being absent or late, you will not receive credit for this assignment. You will be allowed to make up in-class assignments only if you have an approved excuse to miss class. Approved excuses are limited to: illness documented by doctor’s note specifying that you are unable to attend class; death in the immediate family; travel for athletic events approved by the UNCG Department of Athletics; travel for a conference presentation.

Reading reflections: On days when there is a reading assignment, students will be expected to write a short (about ½ page) response at the beginning of class to a question I ask about the reading. These reading reflections will be part of the attendance and participation grade.

Late submission penalty: I will not offer any extensions. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by the beginning of class on the due date. I will deduct 10 percentage points for each day that your assignment is late. If you turn in your assignment at 2:01pm when it was due by 2pm, this counts as being 1 day late.

Final Grades: No extra credit assignments will be available at the end of the semester. All grade disputes must be addressed in writing. I utilize the following scale to convert number into letter grades:

- **A**: 93% to 100%
- **A-**: 90% to 92.9%
- **B+**: 86% to 89.9%
- **B**: 83% to 85.9%
- **B-**: 80% to 82.9%
- **C+**: 76% to 79.9%
- **C**: 73% to 75.9%
- **C-**: 70% to 72.9%
- **D+**: 66% to 69.9%
- **D**: 63% to 65.9%
- **D-**: 60% to 62.9%
- **F**: below 60%

I do not round the numbers. For example, a final score of 85.9% corresponds to a B, but a score of 86.0% will guarantee a B+. 
**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:** Students are expected to know and abide by UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy in all matters pertaining to this course. Violations will be pursued in accordance with the Policy. Please visit the UNCG Academic Integrity webpage and read the Academic Integrity Policy. Note that the Academic Integrity Policy states the following regarding plagiarism:

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- submitting work done by another, whether a commercial or non-commercial enterprise, including the Internet, as one’s own work
- failure to properly cite references and/or sources
- submitting, as one’s own, work done by or copied from another including work done by a fellow student, work done by a previous student, or work done by anyone other than the student responsible for the assignment
- Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more members of the group does none of the group’s work and participates in none of the group’s activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu.

Students may request accommodations for religious holidays under applicable laws. See https://catalog.uncg.edu/academic-regulations-policies/university-policies for more information.

Students should remind the instructor in advance when accommodation affects course activities, e.g., before taking exams, to ensure that the instructor has updated systems accordingly.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at https://shs.uncg.edu/ or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting https://shs.uncg.edu/srp or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.

**COMMUNICATION AND COURSE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES:**
Technical support: Students with technical issues with the course and email should contact 6TECH for support either by email or phone or chat (https://its.uncg.edu/Help/6TECH/). Please also make your instructor aware of the issue, and if there will be any delays in resolving the issue.
Faculty and Student Guidelines can be found at https://bryan.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Faculty-and-Student-Guidelines-2018-2019.pdf. Please read them carefully in order to understand the roles and responsibilities of both students and faculty.

Behaviors That Limit the Spread of COVID-19
As UNCG returns to face-to-face course offerings in fall 2020, the campus community must recognize and address concerns about physical and emotional safety. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG’s culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Wearing a face covering that covers both nose and mouth
- Observing social distance in the classroom
- Engaging in proper hand washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for maintaining appropriate social distance during class and facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seat at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking and social distancing requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow these basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and social distancing requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video
UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes: https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk