



ECO 4903

Undergraduate Seminar

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Fall Term 2025

Course Time Zone | Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates are according to this time zone.

Professor Information

Jesse Bull

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Office Hours: On Zoom by appointment

Office Location: DM 319C

Department or Academic Unit: Economics

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Prerequisite: ECO3101, ECO3203

Course Description and Purpose

(From the catalog) Small class in which students will discuss readings, write a research paper, and defend research and ideas orally.

Course goal: That you develop a strong ability to communicate, both written and orally, about economics.

Textbook and Course Materials

N/A

Required/Recommended: N/A

Authors: N/A

Publisher: N/A

Publication Date: N/A

Copyright Date: N/A

ISBN 10: N/A

ISBN 13: N/A

Panther Book Pack

The Panther Book Pack rental program provides your required print and digital course materials at a flat rate of \$20 per undergraduate credit hour. When you registered for your classes this session, you were notified via email of the required course materials that are included in the Panther Book Pack.

Make sure to review the pricing for all materials across your classes this semester and compare the cost to the Panther Book Pack flat rate. If the Panther Book Pack is not your best option, you may opt out up to three days after the add/drop deadline. The deadline to opt back into the Panther Book Pack is also three days after the add/drop deadline.

If you do not opt out of the Panther Book Pack rental program, you will be charged \$20 per undergraduate credit hour for which you are registered and the course materials will be reserved in your name. For more details and to learn how to access your course materials, visit onestop.fiu.edu/bookpack.

Other Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

The readings for this course are scholarly journal articles that address the economics of various legal topics. Links to the suggested readings for each of the four topics are in course Canvas modules. You should select one topic (from the four) for the entire course (that is for your summaries of journal articles and your policy-recommendation report).

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Student learning outcomes allow faculty to assess the level of proficiency in content knowledge and skills that their students acquire in a course.

If the objective meets a special designation, you will see the code after the objective:

University Core Curriculum: UCC

Gordon Rule Writing: GRW

Global Learning: GL

Civic Literacy: CL

- evaluate primary research in the field of Economics (CLO 1)
- formulate intuitive explanations to convey the findings of formal economic analysis (CLO2)
- synthesize the ideas of several research papers (CLO3)
- develop a presentation of primary research (CLO4)

- collaborate to use economic intuition and analysis in a team environment (CLO5)

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started** page located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- **interact** online with instructor and peers;
- **review** and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;
- **log in** to the course **2 times** per week;
- **respond** to discussions by the due date specified. **No late work will be accepted;**
- **respond** to **emails** within **2 days**;
- **submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- log in to the course **2 times** per week;
- respond to **emails** within **24 hours**;

- grade assignments and/or provide feedback within 7 **days** of the assignment deadline.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within 24 hours.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Core Principles of This Course
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Assignments & Assessments

Grading is based on the following: (Failure to complete any of these may prevent you from passing the course.)

Policy-Recommendation Report

The completion of a policy recommendation report that convincingly addresses a legal issue from an economic viewpoint for one of the suggested course reading topics. Your paper should focus on a real-life issue. Critically, your paper should clearly draw from at least five scholarly articles (economics journal articles, law review articles, etc.).

However, you are encouraged to also include references, such as news articles or policy reports, that provide information about the specifics of the real-life issue.

The suggested papers for each of the four general topics, which also are suggested for your short summary assignments, were selected to provide a relatively broad background and current analysis for the economics of each topic. These suggested papers for each topic were selected to provide some of the important insights for that topic. Naturally, nine papers will not provide a granular coverage of each specific practical issue that falls under each of the four general topics. So, you are welcome to and encouraged to include papers that speak to your selected specific practical issue. These may also be substituted for papers from the reading list for your short summaries. If you choose to do this, please provide a full citation of the substituted paper and a link for where it can be found. These short summaries are aimed at “scaffolding” to help you in completing your literature review and focus

The four general topics (crime, evidence, Indian law, or plea bargaining) fit in my areas of expertise. Your paper should provide a clear policy recommendation that is supported by economic analysis. This economic analysis will typically be in academic papers, but if you would like to produce your own economic analysis, please get in touch with me so we can discuss your plans.

This paper is to directly provide a real-life policy recommendation. It should not read like a "book report" or simply go through the papers one by one. There is no set length on these, but typically 7 or 8 pages would be a minimum length to present a particular policy issue, present the relevant economic analysis, and discuss the policy recommendation(s). The policy-recommendation paper will be submitted on Canvas and will be analyzed by Turnitin.

Short summaries of papers read

These are aimed at encouraging you to read the papers throughout the semester. In economics communicating about analysis, whether one's own or that of others, has a large learning component. Organizing one's thoughts and ideas about how the analysis speaks to a particular practical problem helps one to better understand the ideas. So, I ask you to provide short summaries of what you've learned and ways it can be applied to practical issues. Each will be analyzed by Turnitin.

There are 3 of these. All of your short summaries should be on the same topic. Please review the topics early to decide on which topic you wish to read and write your policy-recommendation report. Each is over three papers. These are due throughout the semester. If you are using additional/alternative papers, these can be included.

The first and third summaries are to be brief recorded presentations (less than 7 minutes for all three papers). These should have a few slides and concisely convey the main ideas and intuition for the analysis. You have several options for how to record your presentation. Two are the following. Zoom has a nice recording feature that will allow you to record your slides and yourself. The recording can then be shared or uploaded in the presentation assignment. Another is to do an audio recording for each slide in Powerpoint. It may be convenient to upload your presentation to YouTube, Google Docs, or Drop Box, to share it, but the technological issues of how to share it (and any security concerns) are for you to consider.

The second summary is to be typed and should entail a page or less for each paper.

The summary of each paper will be graded based on how well it answers the following questions:

What is the main issue?

What is the main finding(s)/result(s) and intuition for the main result(s)?

What are the practical implications of the issue and findings?

Presentation of your policy-recommendation report

The individual presentation of your policy-recommendation report. Your presentation should be recorded and made available in the assignment, which allows for file uploads (a link to a YouTube video, etc. is also fine). These should use slides and are to be presented in a professional manner. Your recorded presentation will be 15 minutes or less. Regardless of the length, it should thoroughly cover the ideas in your literature review. In particular, it should motivate the practical problem considered and provide clear intuition for the main ideas.

You have several options for how to record your presentation. Two are the following. Zoom has a nice recording feature that will allow you to record your slides and yourself. The recording can then be shared or uploaded in the presentation assignment. Another is to do an audio recording for each slide in Powerpoint. It may be convenient to upload your presentation to YouTube, Google Docs, or Drop Box to share it, but the technological issues of how to share it (and any security concerns) are for you to consider.

Collaborative Online International Learning Team Project

This is an opportunity to apply your economics training to a real-life problem while working in a team with other students from Toronto Metropolitan University. This is excellent preparation for many career paths. You are asked to develop strategy for an international business. Each team's submission will be analyzed by Turnitin. After completion of the project, you will be asked to do a short reflection writing.

Your team assignment will be emailed to your FIU email account (I will make an announcement in Canvas once this has been done). It is your responsibility to get in touch with your teammates. If there are issues with working with your assigned team, please let me know before the assignment is due. Lack of planning or timely work with your teammates will not be a reason to allow this assignment to be submitted individually.

Active Participation in Discussion Forums

You are asked to complete three discussion posts and one Padlet post. For the readings in week 1, you are asked to post the following: 2 things you learned, and 1 way you can apply it to the real world. I'll also ask that you respond to the posts of at least two of your classmates. You should post your responses within one week of the due date for the "2-1" post.

Additionally, you are asked to introduce yourself in the appropriate discussion during the first week of the course and to also respond to two of your classmates. In the second week, you will be asked to do a similar "2-1" post regarding the readings for that week.

Further, you are asked to complete one post on the Padlet page for the COIL project with the Toronto Metropolitan University class. As with the other discussions, you are also asked to respond to two others.

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Writing in the Discipline Micro-Credential

Micro-credentials highlight specific 21st century knowledge and skills that a person has acquired during their college career. Many employers today are looking to hire people not just for their diploma, but also for their skills, and so micro-credentials are becoming increasingly common on resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and digital portfolios. FIU offers a wide range of micro-credentials, and as a student enrolled in this course, you have the opportunity to earn a micro-credential called "Writing in the Disciplines."

This micro-credential will equip you to be a more effective and professional writer and communicator in your discipline and future workplace. Earning this micro-credential will build your professional resume and communicate to others that you possess in-demand 21st century skills related to communication, writing, and professionalization.

This micro-credential is offered through the FIU Office of Micro-Credentials Links to an external site., in collaboration with the FIU Writing Across the Curriculum Program.

Please note that earning this micro-credential is voluntary and separate from passing this course. However, completing the assigned five modules that are part of earning the badge count for 10% of your course grade. This is because, whether you choose to complete the badge, the material covered in those modules is helpful for you. Note that to earn the badge, you must score at least 80% on each.

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

Reference the [Zoom Student Tutorials](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points of Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Policy Recommendation Report	1	100	100	25%
Presentation of Policy Recommendation Report	1	100	100	20%
Summaries of papers on reading list	3	100	300	25%
Active participation in discussion forums	4	100	400	5%
Writing in the discipline modules	5			10%
Collaborative Online International Learning Project and Reflection			150	15%
Total	10	N/A	1000	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A	93 - 100
A-	90 – 92.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B-	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	70 – 76.99
D	60 – 69.99
F	0 – 59.99

Canvas Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Academic Honesty Policy	Quiz	0
	Open Forum	Discussion	0
	Practice Quiz	Quiz	0

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Short summary 2 (on papers 3 and 4)	Assignment	100
9/3/25	Week 1: Discussion Posts on Talley, E. "Theory of Law and Economics." and Posner, R. (1987) The Decline of Law as an Autonomous Discipline: 1962 - 1987"	Discussion	100
9/3/25	Week 1: Introduce Yourself	Discussion	100
9/10/25	MC - WID Quiz: Cultivating a Professional Persona	Quiz	10
9/10/25	MC - WID Writing a Professional Email	Assignment	10
9/10/25	Week 2: Discussion Posts on Coase, R.H. (1960), "The Problem of Social Cost," Journal of Law and Economics 3: 1-44.	Discussion	100
9/13/25	MC - WID Genre Analysis	Assignment	10

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
9/13/25	MC - WID Quiz: Understanding and Analyzing Genre	Quiz	10
9/15/25	Padlet Post for COIL	Discussion	100
9/16/25	Zoom meeting with COIL teammates	Assignment	0
9/20/25	Short summary 1 (on papers 1, 2, and 3)	Assignment	100
9/30/25	Zoom meeting (2nd) with COIL teammates	Assignment	0
10/18/25	MC - WID Quiz: Writing is Rewriting	Quiz	10
10/18/25	MC - WID Self-Editing Assignment	Assignment	10
11/8/25	Short summary 3 (on papers 7, 8, and 9)	Assignment	100
11/13/25	COIL Project	Assignment	100
11/22/25	MC - WID Writing in the Disciplines Student Project	Assignment	100
11/22/25	Policy Recommendation Paper	Assignment	100
12/8/25	COIL Reflection	Assignment	50

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
12/8/25	MC - WID Writing in the Disciplines Micro-Credential Final Reflection	Assignment	25
12/8/25	Presentation of Policy Recommendation Paper	Assignment	100

Schedule of Topics

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Week 1 (8/25): Introduction. Read Talley, E. "Theory of Law and Economics." and Posner, R. (1987) "The Decline of Law as an Autonomous Discipline: 1962-1987." Discuss these in the relevant discussion. Introduction post. All due 9/3

Week 2 (8/31): Read Coase, R.H. (1960), "The Problem of Social Cost," Journal of Law and Economics 3: 1-44.

Discuss in the relevant discussion. Due 9/10.

Complete WID Module 1 by 9/10.

Week 3 (9/7): Read papers and work on assignments due in Weeks 4 and 5.

Complete WID Module 2 by 9/13.

Week 4 (9/14): Presentation of brief summary of papers 1, 2, and 3 due 9/20

COIL Padlet post (both initial and responses to two others) due by 9/15

Meet with COIL team on September 16 (not required).

Week 5 (9/21): Read papers.

Week 6 (9/28): Read papers.

Meet with COIL team on September 30 (not required).

Week 7 (10/5): Read papers.

Week 8 (10/12): Complete WID Module 3 by 10/18.

Typed short summary on papers 4, 5, and 6 due 10/18.

Week 9 (10/19): Read papers.

Week 10 (10/26): Read papers.

Week 11 (11/2): Presentation of brief summary of papers 7, 8, and 9 due 11/8.

Week 12 (11/9): COIL project due 11/13.

Week 13 (11/16): Policy-recommendation paper due 11/22.

Complete WID Module 4 by 11/22. The Writing in the Disciplines Student Project is your policy-recommendation paper.

Week 14 (11/23): Thanksgiving week

Week 15 (11/30): Presentation of policy-recommendation paper due 12/8.

COIL Reflection due 12/8.

Week 16 (12/7): WID Module 5 due by 12/8.

Core Principles of this Course

This course is designed to serve all students by fostering collaboration and encouraging an appreciation for multiple perspectives and ideas. We recognize and value the lived experiences that each student brings to the classroom and are committed to ongoing education that supports open participation.

In alignment with Florida International University's endorsement of the Florida Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression, this course supports full and open discourse. Civil and respectful discussion is fundamental to critical thinking, both within the classroom and in broader university events. Students are expected to engage in discussions with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to consider differing viewpoints.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility** (CRCA) is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.

How to Do Well

As you know, most of the problems that economists consider interesting are analyzed using some math. However, most of these interesting problems are initially thought about by using words, and words are essential in conveying why they are interesting.

A critical part of presenting your ideas is being able to describe the important features of the issue and analysis using words. Working to be able to explain intuition for economic questions and analysis will be very helpful for your success in the course, **and for your career**. Further, I suggest trying to find ways to be excited about both the research ideas we will cover this term, and communicating about them. Additionally, being consistent in posting comments on each paper presented ensures that you obtain participation points. These are easy points.