

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is founded on three fundamental principles shaped by my experience teaching economics and informed by my commitment to equity in the classroom. First, I emphasize the importance of analytical and mathematical tools in developing students' ability to think critically about economic and policy questions. Second, I ground my teaching in the idea that economics is a social science with direct implications for public policy, and I structure learning to help students apply economic reasoning to real-world challenges. Third, I believe that teaching is a collaborative endeavor and that learning environments are most effective when they actively engage students in constructing their own knowledge. As an educator, I am committed to fostering inclusive learning environments that reduce barriers to student success. My approach is shaped by my research, my engagement with students, and my experience working with institutional data to better understand and address equity gaps in economics education.

Principle 1: Incorporating Analytical and Mathematical Tools into Critical Thinking

Working in economics and public policy requires us to critically evaluate complex social and economic phenomena, and mathematical and analytical frameworks are crucial elements of this process. As the economist Dani Rodrik notes: "We need the math to make sure that we think straight-to ensure that our conclusions follow from our premises and that we haven't left loose ends hanging in our argument." Building a solid foundation in the quantitative methods used in applied economics and public policy is imperative for students to engage rigorously with economic reasoning. In my experience, many of the equity gaps I observe in student outcomes stem from disparities in these foundational skills, making it even more critical to provide all students with the tools they need to engage rigorously with economic reasoning. I primarily facilitate this in three ways.

First, I use a diagnostic quiz at the beginning of each course to assess students' familiarity with mathematical concepts covered in prerequisite courses. This assessment helps me identify areas where students may need additional support, allowing me to provide targeted resources and contextualized feedback. This approach is particularly important for addressing equity gaps in quantitative economics courses, where differences in students' prior preparation can impact their ability to engage fully with course material.

Second, I promote collaborative learning by linking mathematical tools to economic concepts. In my intermediate microeconomics course, for example, I organize a group-based learning activity to teach utility maximization and the properties of demand functions. Each student in a group is assigned a specific role-solving an optimization problem, connecting the solution to a graphical representation, or relating both to broader economic concepts. The groups then present their work, honing their ability to communicate problems using words, equations, and visuals. By encouraging students to articulate economic reasoning through multiple modalities, this activity fosters deeper conceptual understanding and reduces disparities in engagement.

Third, I use formative assessments such as short quizzes and structured discussions following these activities to gauge students' understanding. By integrating formative activities and assess-

ments into my teaching, I ensure that students receive frequent feedback and have opportunities to solidify their understanding before engaging with higher-stakes assessments. This approach also allows me to assess student understanding in real time, as I observe them working through problems individually and collaboratively. By identifying common stumbling blocks, I can adjust my instruction on the spot to address areas where students struggle before they move on to independent problem-solving.

Principle 2: Economics for Informed Social Policy

Economics, as a social science, offers diverse frameworks for understanding the world, and economic reasoning plays a crucial role in shaping public policy. I emphasize the strengths of economics in providing scientifically rigorous, evidence-based insights into social and policy issues. My goal is to help students see how economic concepts apply to the issues they care about and how they can use economic tools to engage both critically and charitably with policy debates.

For example, in a Master's course on Applications in Microeconomics, I conduct an in-class activity on wage inequality between high school and college graduates. I begin by asking students to estimate salary expectations under different educational scenarios and discuss the factors influencing these expectations. Then, I introduce a profit-maximization model with high- and low-skilled labor, and students solve for equilibrium wages for both groups, enabling them to test their predictions mathematically. Finally, we examine real-world wage inequality trends, drawing on economist Claudia Goldin's work to explore the historical and institutional forces shaping labor market disparities.

These activities are designed to help students connect economic theory to real-world policy debates. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that students bring diverse perspectives to these discussions, shaped by their own experiences and social contexts. In my teaching, I encourage students to critically and charitably evaluate how economic models reflect—or fail to reflect—the complexity of social issues, fostering a classroom environment where students feel empowered to question assumptions and engage deeply with policy analysis.

Principle 3: Inclusive and Data-Informed Pedagogy

Teaching is a collaborative process, and fostering an inclusive learning environment requires recognizing and addressing barriers to student success. Women and racial minorities remain underrepresented in economics classrooms, and I am committed to making my teaching more accessible while also contributing to broader efforts to close equity gaps in the field.

At UC Santa Cruz, I teach students from diverse backgrounds, including many first-generation and transfer students at this Hispanic-Serving Institution. Some students have varying levels of bilingual proficiency, and understanding these intersectional identities is crucial for effective teaching. When examining equity gaps between Hispanic and White students, I try to assess whether disparities stem from structural and racial barriers, language barriers, or other factors. This distinction matters because interventions for language-related challenges differ from those addressing broader racial disparities. Supporting students requires both institutional strategies and individualized approaches.

My work with UCSC's Institutional Research and Assessment unit has provided me with two valuable perspectives: as a researcher analyzing program learning outcomes and equity gaps across multiple disciplines, and as an instructor using classroom demographic data to inform my teaching strategies. This dual experience helps me better understand and address the needs of our diverse student population. When institutional data indicates specific challenges—whether related to language proficiency, academic preparation, or other factors such as economic disadvantage—I try to adjust my teaching accordingly. To complement this data-driven approach, I try to assign a "letter to me" in the first week of class whenever possible to get a better sense of who my students are, and understand their situational factors that are often not easily quantified.

As an instructor, I incorporate frequent, low-stakes assessments based on evidence-based learning strategies, which reinforce key concepts, encourage productive study habits, and provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding. For instance, in my role as an instructor for an intermediate microeconomics course, I would typically use a combination of formative and summative assessments to help students learn to apply tools like constrained optimization to understand optimal consumption. In low-stakes formative assessments, I explicitly list out each step of the process (such as writing the equation for a budget constraint, identifying the slope, calculating ratios of marginal utilities, and setting up the Lagrange function) as explicit and separate problems, with frequent callbacks and solution verifications. The summative versions of this problem test whether students can solve a similar problem without the explicit instructions provided in the formative assessment.

Beyond my own teaching, I contribute to fostering inclusive pedagogical practices for my fellow educators at the department level, by leading workshops for instructional teams supporting high-impact, high-enrollment required courses in the Economics curriculum. These high-impact courses typically also see large gaps in proficiency across students, and as a Graduate Pedagogy Fellow, the workshops I design and lead are intended to support instructional teams to utilize practices shown from the literature to reduce gaps in proficiency and ensure student success for all students, especially in areas of the curriculum that present more challenges for them. In these workshops, we focus on creating scaffolded, active learning activities for concepts and skills that students tend to struggle with and that hold them back from progressing in the major. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants highlighting the practical strategies they can implement in their classrooms that improve student engagement. Additionally, as a peer mentor for the Teaching and Learning Center's Summer GSI Support Team, I have worked with graduate instructors across disciplines to design equitable courses, providing feedback on course syllabi in many disciplines to incorporate universal design, culturally responsive pedagogy, and equitable assessment practices. These experiences have reinforced my belief that inclusive teaching requires not just adopting best practices but fostering an ongoing dialogue about equity-centered pedagogy.

Conclusion

My teaching philosophy is guided by the belief that students learn best when they are equipped with strong analytical tools, encouraged to apply economic reasoning to policy questions, and supported in a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. I integrate quantitative reasoning into my teaching to help students develop precision in their thinking, structure my courses to

connect economic analysis with real-world policy applications, and actively work to reduce barriers to student success. By centering these principles, I aim to prepare students not only to engage with economic ideas but to apply them in meaningful ways in their careers and communities.

Statement of Teaching Effectiveness

Drawing on my experience in serving as the instructor of record for Intermediate Microeconomics, and as a teaching assistant for several undergraduate and graduate courses in economics, I have developed a broad perspective on effective instruction. My teaching evaluations consistently highlight three key areas where my teaching has the greatest impact: breaking down complex material into clear, structured explanations, creating interactive learning environments that encourage collaboration and engagement, and offering accessible academic support that helps students succeed. These responses align with my broader approach to teaching – helping students develop intuition alongside technical skills and recognizing economics as a mathematical and experimental social science crucial for informed social policy, structuring participation to reduce disparities in engagement, and ensuring that support is available in multiple forms.¹ In this statement, I discuss how I approach each of these areas in practice, using feedback as a lens to reflect on my effectiveness in the classroom. Each section includes quantitative metrics and student testimonials that validate my approach, revealing how my methods have helped students develop confidence in economic reasoning while creating an inclusive learning environment. A full summary of quantitative evaluations and a link to all evaluations can be found at the end of this statement.

Clarity in Explanation and Conceptual Understanding

My teaching emphasizes conceptual clarity, ensuring that students build a deep understanding of economic reasoning before tackling more advanced technical material. I do this by breaking down complex concepts into manageable steps, reinforcing learning through guided practice, and ensuring that students develop intuition before moving to independent problem-solving. For example, when teaching constrained optimization, I scaffold the learning process by first guiding students through the foundational steps – writing a budget constraint, identifying the slope, calculating marginal utilities, and setting up the Lagrange function – before asking them to apply these steps independently. By integrating formative activities and assessments with summative practice, I ensure that students receive frequent feedback and have opportunities to solidify their understanding before engaging with higher-stakes assessments. This approach also allows me to assess student understanding in real time, as I observe them working through problems individually and collaboratively. By identifying common stumbling blocks, I can adjust my instruction on the spot to address areas where students struggle before they move on to independent problem-solving. Student evaluations affirm the impact of this approach, with consistently high ratings for statements such as “**The TA explained concepts in ways that supported my learning**” (on average, 96% responded with “frequently/very frequently” across the five most recent teaching assignments) and “**The TA organized sections/lab meetings well**” (on average, 96% responded with “frequently/very frequently” across the five most recent teaching assignments).² Selected qualitative feedback:

“Gagandeep had a very targeted approach to helping us refine our understanding of the ma-

¹You can read more about my teaching philosophy in my teaching philosophy statement on my teaching website, linked at the end of this document.

²All reported percentages exclude students who responded to a particular statement with “unable to comment.” Please read the section on Summary of Quantitative Feedback at the end of this statement for more details.

terial. Primarily by making sure we understood what was expected through assignments.”

“During his sections he would have us participate in solving the questions and would guide us through a definition or equations when we didn’t understand what it meant. And he would solve each question out step by step while writing down when the equation/process would be used.”

“Gagandeep is extremely good at teaching intermediate microeconomics. His sections are well structured and he cultivates a welcoming environment that encourages student participation. He seems invested in his students and to genuinely care about their success. His teaching methods helped boost my confidence and helped me succeed in this class. He was able to break down concepts in ways to where I actually understood course material instead of just going through the motions of solving problems using set equations.”

“It was really helpful when he would call on us to explain the next step or define something because it helped me actively recall material and helped me feel like I understood the material.”

“The format of sections were very well organized – going through a slideshow every week to study concepts, which were outlined at the beginning of the slideshow itself. It helped very much to understand what our learning goals were, and the practice examples themselves were very informative!”

Student Engagement and Inclusive Learning

I aim to structure each class session to ensure that all students can actively and meaningfully engage with course material in ways that directly connect to the course’s learning outcomes. In-class activities incorporate both individual problem-solving and collaborative group work, allowing students to develop their own understanding while also learning through discussion and shared reasoning. For instance, in Applied Econometrics, I use collective code-building exercises to help students develop a structured approach to data analysis and statistical modeling. Rather than providing fully written code for students to replicate, I introduce coding tasks incrementally, prompting students to collectively anticipate, experiment with, and implement each step. This process reinforces problem-solving strategies, encourages deeper engagement with the material, and helps students build confidence in applying coding techniques independently. Similarly, in Intermediate Microeconomics, I use a group-based learning activity to teach utility maximization and the properties of demand functions. Each student in a group is assigned a specific role – solving an optimization problem, connecting the solution to a graphical representation, or interpreting the economic intuition – and groups present their findings to the class. This activity ensures that students practice reasoning across multiple modalities – words, equations, and visuals – which both deepens conceptual understanding and reduces disparities in engagement. Students have typically found this approach to be quite helpful, with consistently high ratings for questions like **“Section meetings/labs included opportunities for students to contribute and interact”** (96% across the five most recent teaching assignments) and **“The TA provided sufficient support and encouragement for my participation in sections/labs”** (96% across the five most recent teaching assignments).

Selected qualitative feedback:

“I enjoyed how he encouraged us to participate in section, whether it was writing on the board

or writing code on a collaborative Google Doc.”

“Gagandeep Sachdeva also made us pass around a talking stick to answer what step/ method of the question we do. This made me stay on my toes and be engaged with the material even if we would say the wrong thing Gagandeep would help guide us and learn our mistakes in a way that didn’t make us scared to make mistakes.”

“Did a great job solving problems using examples unrelated to the specific problem to further students’ understanding of concepts. Encouraged participation and helped students stay engaged and gain confidence.”

Academic Support, Accessibility, and Encouragement

Creating a supportive learning environment means more than just being available during office hours – it requires ensuring that students feel comfortable reaching out when they need help. This is informed by general approach to teaching and mentorship: I work to build trust with my students, encourage open communication, and try to reduce the barriers that often prevent students from seeking help. I do this by normalizing help-seeking behaviors early on.³ I make it clear from the first week of class that questions –whether basic clarifications or more advanced discussions – are not only welcome but expected. I intentionally structure class discussions, problem-solving sessions, and review activities so that students have regular, low-stakes opportunities to ask questions, rather than feeling that they can only do so during designated office hours. Beyond structured class time, I ensure that my approachability extends outside the classroom. I keep office hours flexible, but more importantly, I work to make office hours feel informal and accessible, so that students don’t hesitate to show up. Students have responded positively to this approach, both in terms of an uptick in terms of office hours attendance, and consistently high ratings for statements like “**The TA made me feel as though I could succeed in this class**” (98% across the five most recent teaching assignments) and “**The TA was available in scheduled office hours or by appointment outside of class time (whether or not I attended office hours)**” (98% across the five most recent teaching assignments).

Selected qualitative feedback:

“Gagandeep was extremely helpful in guiding us through the homework material and the general course. His mannerisms, presentation of information, and how he explained it were top-notch. He was extremely helpful during office hours and went out of his way to help. His section material supplemented the class very well.”

“Gagandeep is super friendly and approachable. Felt like I could ask a question whenever. And whenever I did, he was helpful.”

“Best TA ever!! He is incredible engaging and kind. He is always willing to help even if that means scheduling extra sessions.”

“I also wanted to say thank you for all of your help this quarter with the econ 201 course. I really appreciate that you went out of your way to make sure everyone understood concepts, took extra time to teach us in the study room, and even held online classes while sick and gave

³Research in STEM fields shows that stigma around help-seeking is a barrier to student success for marginalized students (by gender and race), and that the messaging around help-seeking matters.

us an online option while we were sick. I also appreciate your approachability, I am typically pretty shy but I never felt hesitant to ask questions during or outside of section.”

Mentorship

Beyond my own teaching, I contribute to fostering inclusive pedagogical practices for my fellow educators at the department level, by leading workshops for instructional teams supporting high-impact, high-enrollment required courses in the Economics curriculum. These high-impact courses typically also see large gaps in proficiency across students, and as a Graduate Pedagogy Fellow, the workshops I design and lead are intended to support instructional teams to utilize practices shown from the literature to reduce gaps in proficiency and ensure student success for all students, especially in areas of the curriculum that present more challenges for them. In these workshops, we focus on creating scaffolded, active learning activities for concepts and skills that students tend to struggle with and that hold them back from progressing in the major. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants highlighting the practical strategies they can implement in their classrooms that improve student engagement. Additionally, as a peer mentor for the Teaching and Learning Center’s Summer GSI Support Team, I have worked with graduate instructors across disciplines to design equitable courses, providing feedback on course syllabi in many disciplines to incorporate universal design, culturally responsive pedagogy, and equitable assessment practices. These experiences have reinforced my belief that inclusive teaching requires not just adopting best practices but fostering an ongoing dialogue about equity-centered pedagogy.

Selected qualitative feedback:

“The introduction of a pedagogy-focused teacher training in the department really motivated me to rethink how I approach teaching. As a fairly experienced TA, I was stuck in a rut going through concepts that had become, to me, very repetitive and preparing for sections had become quite a monotonous task for me. However, these workshops gave me ideas to how to prepare for sections differently and make it more interesting. For example, while teaching my students about production costs, I conducted an exercise wherein I asked the students to come up with their own business ideas and frame a cost table, based on a specific rubric that I provided. These and other active learning exercises have helped me to engage with my students more and it seems to be helping them too.”

“I think you did a great job at getting people engaged with methods of active learning. We expect the students to learn by doing and you helped us understand that we learn (how to lead sections better) by doing too, while underscoring the importance of planning out a section.”

Conclusion

My approach to teaching is rooted in clarity, engagement, and accessibility – ensuring that students not only learn economic concepts but also develop the confidence to apply them. Through structured explanations, interactive problem-solving, and multiple avenues for academic support, I aim to create a learning environment where students can actively engage with material, deepen

their understanding, and take ownership of their learning. Student evaluations consistently affirm the effectiveness of these strategies, and I consciously try to iteratively improve my pedagogical practices based on the feedback I receive.

Summary of Quantitative Feedback

The table below summarizes student evaluations of my teaching across multiple courses, reporting the percentage of respondents who responded “very frequently” or “frequently” to each statement about my effectiveness. Student evaluations of teaching (SETs) at UCSC typically ask students to rate their teaching assistants for each statement in the first column on a five point scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very frequently), with a sixth category (“unable to comment”). These results provide insight into how students experience my teaching, but they should be interpreted with two important caveats. First, response rates vary significantly across courses, as evaluations are not mandatory. In several cases, only a small proportion of students completed the survey, meaning that the results may not fully capture the perspectives of all students in a given class. Second, in calculating the percentages, I excluded students who selected “unable to comment,” since it is difficult to make meaningful inferences about my teaching effectiveness based on such responses. In most cases, students who respond with “unable to comment” are also those students who did not attend a majority of sections, as inferred from per-respondent reports. You can find the full set of my teaching evaluations for TAships [here](#). You can also read feedback from my asynchronous online offering of intermediate microeconomics (as a Graduate Student Instructor), feedback from the professional development workshops for graduate teaching assistants that I facilitated, statement of teaching philosophy, and other aspects of my teaching on my [teaching page](#).

Summary of Teaching Evaluations (TAships)

COURSE	Introductory Microeconomics	Applied Econometrics I	Intermediate Microeconomics	Intermediate Microeconomics	Introductory Macroeconomics	Intermediate Microeconomics	Applications in Microeconomics	Industrial Organization	Intermediate Microeconomics	Economic Rhetoric	Introductory Microeconomics	Introductory Microeconomics
	Winter 2025	Fall 2024	Spring 2024	Winter 2024	Fall 2023	Fall 2022	Spring 2022	Winter 2022	Fall 2021	Summer 2021	Spring 2021	Winter 2021
Quarter												
Level	Introductory	Graduate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Introductory	Intermediate	Graduate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Introductory	Introductory
Modality	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	Hybrid	In-Person	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote
CLARITY IN EXPLANATION AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING												
The TA explained concepts in ways that supported my learning.	78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The TA was able to answer my questions and clear up misunderstandings about the course material and concepts.	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	82%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The TA organized sections/lab meetings well.	89%	100%	100%	100%	92%	82%	50%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING												
Activities during sections were well structured and had clear goals.	80%	100%	100%	100%	92%	89%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Section meetings/labs included opportunities for students to contribute and interact.	78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The TA provided sufficient support and encouragement for my participation in sections/labs.	78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ACADEMIC SUPPORT, ACCESSIBILITY, AND ENCOURAGEMENT												
When needed, the TA was able to help me prepare for assignments (papers, quizzes, exams).	77%	100%	100%	100%	100%	82%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%
The TA made me feel as though I could succeed in this class.	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%
The TA provided useful feedback on my assignments if part of the TA duties.	75%	94%	100%	100%	100%	82%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%
The TA was available in scheduled office hours or by appointment outside of class time (whether or not I attended office hours.)	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Response Rate	21/182 (11.54%)	17/19 (89.47%)	9/115 (7.83%)	6/44 (13.64%)	17/159 (10.69%)	14/114 (12.28%)	2/13 (15.38%)	11/51 (21.57%)	3/42 (7.14%)	7/32 (21.87%)	11/299 (3.68%)	11/390 (2.82%)

Principles of Economics

Semester, *Year*, Instructor: Gagandeep Sachdeva

Class

Room

Time

Instructor Email: gsachdev@ucsc.edu

Office Hours

Location, Time

A key part of being a student and a scholar is asking questions and seeking help. I invite you to come to office hours each week to ask any questions, brainstorm ideas, and discuss the material. Reach out early and often! I love to talk about these issues and support your learning, and I enjoy getting to know you. I am happy to meet with you over Zoom as well if that reduces any experienced barriers on your end. Just email me to set something up!

Teaching Team

- Teaching Assistant 1, Email, Sections Times, Office Hour Times
- Teaching Assistant 2, Email, Sections Times, Office Hour Times

Required Readings

- Lecture slides and readings will be posted on Canvas
- Textbook: Economics (2nd Edition) by Daron Acemoglu, David Laibson, and John List

Bring to Class

- Pre-lecture reading assignments in print or digital form
- Paper and writing implements for activities that you will turn in at the end of class
- Phone, tablet, or computer for "Socrative"

Important Notes

- In-person class attendance AND participation is required (various options for "participation" available)
- Class will not be recorded; if you have to miss a lecture, it is important that you review relevant materials, get notes from peers, and come to office hours to ask clarifying questions

Important Dates and Deadlines (*link to full schedule, subject to change)

(to be filled in)

Grading

Daily Class Participation	15% of grade	(3 dropped)
Concept Mastery Quizzes	15% of grade	(2x 24-hour extension granted)
Midterm Exams (x2)	40% of grade	
Final Exam	20% of grade	
Reflection Essay	10% of grade	(1x 24-hour extension granted)

Quick Links

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- [Positionality Statement](#)
- [Course Summary & Learning Outcomes](#)
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- [Grading Breakdown](#)

Course Elements	Design Intentions
<h3>Course Summary & Learning Outcomes</h3> <p>This course provides an introduction to economic principles with an emphasis on building strong foundations for further study while developing critical thinking skills. Rather than presenting economics as a set of settled truths, we will explore economic models as tools with specific assumptions, applications, and limitations. To that extent, the learning outcomes for this course are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Explore core economic concepts, models, and their historical context, recognizing both their insights and limitations.(2) Apply appropriate economic frameworks to analyze contemporary issues and identify when different economic frameworks are appropriate for different contexts.(3) Connect microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts to demonstrate how individual decisions and broader economic systems influence each other.(4) Develop critical thinking skills to interpret economic information independently, distinguishing evidence-based claims from opinions and recognizing when additional information is needed.(5) Reflect on how economic forces shape society and recognize the ethical dimensions of economic policy choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The learning outcomes in this course are specifically designed to be as relevant and applicable as possible for students in their own lives -not just in terms of the topics we will apply them to, but the skills we will build in the process.- They have been written with Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning in mind- All assignments and assessments in this course directly support and/or assess these outcomes.

Operational Logistics

Canvas

All materials related to class are on Canvas (or will be added to Canvas throughout the course), including readings, lecture slides, class assignments, announcements, and grades. **Strongly consider keeping the Announcement and Conversation Message notifications set to the default of “notify me right away.”** Consider also downloading the Canvas application on your phone and enabling push notifications. These steps will allow you to keep track of your assignment due dates and me to reach you with class announcements or personalized messages in a timely manner. See the ITS Canvas [FAQ](#) for students.

Physical Writing Implements & Paper

Certain class activities, such as Entry and Exit Tickets, will require you to write on scratch paper, which you will turn in to me. I will do my best to bring spare paper and pencils to be able to provide these things for students who forget them occasionally, but I am not in a position to supply paper and pencils for every student during every class. Try your best to bring these things to every class.

Socrative, Padlet, and Hypothesis

There are a few digital, free resources we will use throughout the course to complement/support our learning from more traditional lecture practices and activities: We will sometimes use Socrative (no account required) in class for attendance and other learning activities. You will need to bring a phone, tablet, or laptop to class to use this online tool. A link/QR code will always be provided before the start of activities involving Socrative. We will periodically use Padlet (free accounts required) to work on collaborative concept maps in class and having a laptop or tablet to use it is going to be helpful. We will also use Hypothes.is (free account required) for collaborative reading and annotation exercises.

- **Education-related expenses can impose a considerable burden on students**, and I do not want the required materials/tools for this class to add to this.
- **If physically writing with pencil on paper is inaccessible to you, talk to me** and we will come up with digital alternatives for you.
- Similarly: **let me know ASAP if using digital technology in class is not feasible for you**. No worries—we'll make alternate arrangements!

Course Requirements

A Note on Pre-Lecture Readings & Preparation

Lectures in this class are going to be framed by and interleaved with active learning exercises and activities designed to engage you in co-creating, discussing, and critiquing concepts and materials. Therefore, **it is essential that you come prepared, having completed the assigned reading(s) and bringing them**

- **All assignments are designed with evidence-based learning strategies** in mind to improve your understanding of the content, help you remember it for a long time, and reward you for

to class for reference (print or digital). There will be small daily “Entry Tickets” (typically in the form of reading quizzes) for you to complete at the beginning of each class. These tickets will help you identify important ideas from reading assignments and make connections to your own experiences. **These tickets using guiding questions help 1) incentivize you to come to class on time and prepared, having done the reading, 2) you continuously monitor and reflect on your understanding of course contents, and 3) give me feedback on what is still unclear.**

1. Daily Class Participation

15% of your grade: In-person class attendance is required for this interactive discussion course. Class participation points will come from active engagement with in-class activities, such as reading quizzes, “entry” and “exit” tickets, Socrative questions/polling, small-group and whole-class discussions as well as activities, such as collaborative concept maps, and more (such as participation in Q&A/peer feedback in peer-led class discussions; see below). **Daily participation will be assessed using a variety of in-class activities in different modalities so that everyone can demonstrate participation and engagement in a way that feels comfortable for them and conducive to their learning.** Class participation will be graded on effortful completion; I want you to engage with me and the material and I do not want worrying about “making mistakes” and worrying about your grade to get in the way of that.

2. Concept Mastery Quizzes

15% of your grade: Throughout the course, you will complete x untimed 10-question multiple-choice quizzes via Canvas. The quizzes will cover the contents of the readings and the lectures. The quizzes will be open for an entire week and you can take the quizzes as often as you want to get the grade that you want (only your best grade counts). You are allowed to use all course materials available to you (notes, slides, web sources, etc.) while taking the quizzes, but I ask that you take them alone. Be mindful that the questions may change slightly as you retake the quiz. **Typically, no late quizzes will be accepted since you will always have an entire week to take the quiz as often as you want and can use all the resources available to you.** The exact due dates and instructions for the quizzes will be posted on Canvas and in the linked full schedule.

using good study habits (like reviewing content in multiple ways on multiple days, testing yourself, starting assignments early, and revising your work based on feedback).

- **Every student is allowed to miss 3 days of lecture,** for which attendance/participation grades will automatically be dropped. It is still your responsibility to catch up on the material covered in class because it will be assessed in assignments throughout the quarter.
- Quizzes are designed to space out and support your learning by giving you low-stakes opportunities to practice and retrieve course content and gain points toward your final grade. In fact, you are encouraged to take them often, even before you learn the relevant material that week (pre-testing).
- **Every student is allowed 2 24-hour extensions on any of the Concept Mastery Quizzes.**
- Read more about deadlines and extensions under [course policies](#).

3. Mid-Term Exams

40% of your grade: Two midterm exams (each worth 20% of your grade) will assess your understanding of core concepts and your ability to apply them to new situations. Exams will include a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer questions..

4. Final Exam

20% of your grade: The final exam will assess your understanding of key economic concepts and principles covered throughout the course. It will include multiple-choice questions testing fundamental concepts, short-answer problems requiring application of economic models, and an essay question asking you to synthesize and analyze material from different parts of the course. The focus will be on demonstrating your grasp of economic reasoning and your ability to connect different economic concepts.

5. Reflection Essay

10% of your grade: A short reflection essay (2-3 pages) will ask you to apply economic concepts to a current issue, comparing different theoretical perspectives and evaluating policy implications.

- I will attempt to give as much feedback as realistically possible on your individual submissions, but you are also expected to compare your answers to an in-depth grading rubric that will be provided along with your assessments.
- **If you want more specific feedback** on ANY of the activities or assignments you complete for this class, **please come see me in Office Hours** and I will be happy to chat with you in more depth.

Course Topics

Part I: Broad Strokes

- Economic questions and economic methods
- Overarching themes: scarcity, incentives, and optimization
- Thinking on the margin, and thinking in terms of opportunity costs
- The role of theory AND empirical evidence

- Link to google sheet with full (day-by-day) schedule, readings by class date, with assessment due-dates and suggested “do” dates comes here.

Part II: Individual Agents

- Consumer Theory I:
 - Scarcity: budget constraints
 - Incentives: utility
 - Optimization: law of demand
- Consumer Theory II:
 - Normal, inferior, giffen goods
 - Substitutes and complements
 - Income and substitution effects
 - Introducing elasticity, empirical importance of elasticity
- Producer Theory:
 - Factor inputs, input costs, and cost curves
 - Returns to factor and returns to scale
 - Optimization: profit-maximizing behavior, law of supply

Part III: Markets

- Markets I:
 - Market demand and market supply
 - Consumer and producer surplus

- Taxes and price controls
- Elasticity revisited
- Markets II: Perfect competition
- Markets III: Monopoly
- Markets IV: Monopolistic competition and oligopoly
- Markets V: Public goods and externalities

Part IV: Systems

- Systems I: Production Possibility Frontiers
 - Opportunity cost, technological progress and economic growth
 - Absolute and comparative advantage, gains from trade
- Systems II: Aggregating economic activity
 - From agents to sectors
 - National income accounts
- Systems III: Markets in the macroeconomy
 - Aggregate demand and aggregate supply
 - Inflation and unemployment

Part V: Economic Growth and Inequality

Coursework Hours

Understanding complex concepts, engaging critically and charitably with competing ideas, and summarizing and synthesizing your reflections takes lots of consistent practice. I want to be transparent about **what I think it will take to thrive in this course**. Outside of the 3 hours of class time each week (1.5/hour per lecture), you should plan to spend **up to** 5-7 additional hours on coursework. Here is an approximate breakdown of how that time will be spent each week:

- Readings (1-2 hours)
- Reorganizing and synthesizing notes and other materials (~1 hour)
- Practicing with and taking Concept Mastery Quizzes **OR** working on Daily Class Participation Assessments (1-2 hours)
- Preparing for or actively working on “higher-stakes” assignments (e.g., Midterm and final exams, reflection essay) down the line (~1 hour)
- Optional office hours (1 hour)

Please email me and/or come to office hours ASAP if you are concerned about the workload or feel you’re struggling to keep up. I do not want you spending more than the upper end of hours on this class. **It is really important to me that you have time to focus on your other coursework while also having fun and taking care of yourself. You can expect that I will help you, judgment-free, to make a plan to excel in this class.**

- The Google Sheet of the full schedule doesn’t just contain **“DUE” dates for assignments, but also “DO” dates**; I list which days I think it would be best for you to do which tasks in order to **both scaffold the workload and your learning in an optimal way**. Doing a little bit every day will go a long way for both your learning and your overall health.
- The Google Sheet also contains additional tabs with more information of a **typical class structure and a recommended breakdown of the work for this class for any given week**. (“DO” dates) I will also do my best to remind you of upcoming deadlines and tasks both via Canvas announcements and at the end of each lecture

Policies

Extensions: Extenuating Circumstances

This course is **universally designed**, which, among other things, means that I recognize you as human beings, who have a lot going on, and accept that sometimes “things happen,” despite the best of intentions. Assignment structures, deadlines, and grading policies, take this into account already, which is why **the deadlines in this course are firm and no additional extensions** (besides the ones you already receive, automatically, no questions asked) **will be granted under normal circumstances**. In extenuating circumstances, please email me as early as possible in advance of a conflict or as soon as possible after an unforeseeable event to arrange an extension or make-up assignment. The make-up assignment may be a different format from the one used in class. I am here to support you and your learning when these bigger excused absences arise (e.g., serious illness, participation in collegiate sporting events, an important family event, religious holiday, etc.).

Other Unofficial Circumstances

Beyond excused extenuating circumstances, smaller things will inevitably come up in the semester. There may be a day you just don't feel like going to class or a weekend you want to see a concert instead of doing your writing assignment. You may have an assignment in another class you need to prioritize. I totally support you taking time for yourself even if you don't have an “official” reason. These aren't extenuating circumstances that would permit an extension or make-up assignment, though. **Offering extensions or make-up assignments in these circumstances can be an equity issue because students who ask for these extensions may be more likely to be students who have been centered and privileged in our education system.** This is part of the reason why **everyone gets to miss 3 classes, be 1 day late on 2 of the quizzes, and 1 day late on 2 of the discussion posts - no questions asked**. I know your lives are busy with school, work, and other responsibilities. I want you to practice identifying what you need to prioritize and accepting that other commitments may suffer somewhat as a consequence. That's okay! Let me know if you need help prioritizing and scheduling your work in this class.

Grading

If you have questions about a grade you received, please email me. **I am happy to help you understand your performance. You may ask to have an assignment regraded** (I am acutely aware

- Students tend to skip this section of the syllabus. If you need any convincing that reading this part of the syllabus carefully is in your best interest, check out [**this research study**](#) that found students who read the syllabus achieve significantly higher grades (more than half a letter grade) than students who do not read the syllabus.

- **My policies regarding grading and extensions might be different from that of your other**

that, despite an instructor's best efforts, grading can be inconsistent due to a myriad of external factors, and I am always open to reassessing my own grading). Just keep in mind that the same assignment rubric will be used and your grade may be lower upon regrading. The grade that you earn on the regrade is final.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC. In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, they may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of their college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the Academic Integrity page at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Generative AI

- An emerging question for students and educators is how to expand our notion of academic integrity with the advent of generative AI.
- Academic integrity isn't just about not cheating, it's about engaging in academic assignments in ways that allow you to develop and demonstrate your diverse skills and knowledge.
- My hope is that this course will give you enough agency over what you learn and how you present what you have learned that you will be invested in producing high-quality, creative work that reflects your own understanding and ideas.
- I want you to feel great ownership over what you create in this class. As noted above, this course will have you wrestle with genuine, (sometimes) thorny problems in the social sciences.

instructors and **knowing what to expect and how to communicate with me** about these things can help us both avoid and **work through any challenges** that come up for you throughout the course.

- **I want to acknowledge that academic integrity violations often arise from stressful situations.** Maybe you feel like you have too little time or too many other responsibilities or maybe you feel like you do not understand the material and experience embarrassment about that.
- **To avoid this situation, please reach out** when you find yourself contemplating plagiarizing or committing another kind of academic integrity violation.
- **I would rather have you turn in no work and meet with me to get to the bottom of what is preventing you from submitting your original work** (so we can help you find ways around that) than have you turn in work that is not your own
- Full disclosure, I have tried using generative AI to help me build some sections of

- Generative AI will primarily repeat what has already been written about these problems. You have the opportunity to advance both your and others' understandings of these debates, by developing and contributing your own original ideas.
- **I encourage you to use generative AI as a tool to improve your learning, not a short-cut to replace it.** Use generative AI as you see fit to better understand the complex course material and clearly convey your thoughts, critiques, and defenses of the issues we discuss.
- However, **you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, copied from other internet sources, biased, offensive, or otherwise problematic.**
- Ultimately, you are responsible for your own learning and I trust that you will use all of the resources at your disposal, including generative AI, to achieve your educational goals.

this syllabus as well, and **it has cited sources that do not exist.** And I will fact-check everything you hand in to me.

✓ You are permitted to use Generative AI for class preparation, self-testing, to aid with the Reflection Essay, provided that your work follows the course policies below.

Below are the course policies and guidelines, violations of which will be treated as breaches of academic integrity and plagiarism. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions about Generative AI, how to use it, and how to cite it.

Policies on Generative AI Use

✓ Original thought and scholarship - You are responsible for submitting high-quality, original work that reflects your own original critical thinking (e.g., your own original insight, synthesis, analysis, argument, etc.). Your ideas may incorporate information provided by Generative AI or other sources, but it is your responsibility to critically evaluate, combine, and expand on them.

✓ Give proper citation - As with other external sources, students must acknowledge the use of AI in any work they submit using [APA formatting](#). Include parenthetical citations in your writing assignments to indicate where you used generative AI for direct quotes, paraphrasing, ideas, or inspiration. Use quotation marks if you copy text directly. Finally, include the generative AI in your references section. Generally speaking, effective pieces of writing will only sparingly directly quote, paraphrase, or repeat ideas from other sources—AI or otherwise.

✓ Include Generative AI Use Log - If Generative AI is used in any way for an assignment, students must also submit a

[Generative AI Use Log](#). The log must be included in the assignment, even if students do not end up citing the AI tool (e.g., there's no quoting, paraphrasing, or ideas from the output). For example, a student might not cite an AI tool in the text or references section, but should still include the log if they used generative AI to find sources, summarize papers for their own understanding, get feedback on writing, etc. You can paste the log directly to the end of your assignment or simply link to it (just make sure that I have access to it!)

Guidelines on Generative AI Use

⚠ Don't give up the deep thinking- Research has shown that explaining things in your own words is a powerful way to deepen your understanding of material and improve your retention of those concepts. Don't let Generative AI steal your opportunity to develop deep expertise in memory, metacognition, and learning.

✓ Generate your own ideas and explanations first - As a key step of the learning process, I strongly encourage you to first write your own ideas, summaries, explanations, arguments, etc. in your own words as clearly and accurately as possible. Then, use Generative AI if you'd like to help you refine your ideas and writing. You can repeat this cycle multiple times to create a high-quality finished product of your own original thought and scholarship.

Distribution of Course Materials

Students may be disciplined for selling, preparing, or distributing course lecture materials for any commercial purpose, whether or not they were the person taking the notes. The unauthorized sale of lectures, notes, handouts, exam questions, review questions, or any other course materials, is a violation of campus policies, state law, and may also constitute copyright infringement subject to legal action.

A Note on Classroom Etiquette

In this class, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, highstakes issues and increase our understanding of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy. Despite our best intentions and efforts, sometimes we will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. Sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination, or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always, we need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes difficult conversations that

<p>arise inside issues of social justice as we deepen our understanding of multiple perspectives – and make the most of being together with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.</p>	
<h2>DRC Accommodations</h2> <p>I love this content so much—I am delighted to try and make learning accessible to you. UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center via Accommodate preferably within the first week of this course. Please also send me an email to set up a meeting in the first week of the quarter if you would like to discuss your accommodations so we can set you up for success. It can be on Zoom if you'd like. In the meantime, here are some guidelines that may be helpful:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Universal Design of this class means that (hopefully) you will not need to take advantage of any additional accommodations: Extra time on exams? No need - the quizzes are “open” for an entire week at a time and you can - are even encouraged to - take them as often as you want to get the grade that you want; need an extension on an assignment? You get a “free” extension on different assignments, no questions asked already; Can’t make it to class for whatever reason? 1 of your attendances is dropped automatically for everyone etc.
<h3>Extensions/ Missed Work</h3> <p>For students with accommodations for extensions and missed work <u>beyond the extensions and missed work accommodations that are already in place as part of the universal design of this course</u>, please email me as soon as you know you will need the extension and before the deadline whenever possible. Except for extenuating disability-related circumstances, please provide 48 hours' notice that you will need an extension. Tell me a new realistic due date. Stay in touch via email if you are not sure how long of an extension you will need or if circumstances change and you are unable to meet your new due date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are additional barriers to your learning that I can help mitigate, reach out, and I will be more than happy to make sure you feel as supported as possible!
<h3>Class Attendance</h3> <p>For any students with accommodations for attendance <u>beyond the 3 dropped attendances that everyone already receives</u>, please email me as soon as you anticipate an issue may arise. We will work as a team, potentially with your liaison at the DRC, to determine the attendance benchmark that works best for your learning and your needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing isn't something anyone is inherently good or bad at. It's a skill that one can continuously improve. Even your most

up. Because of the fast pace, it is normal to feel overwhelmed. You are encouraged to explore the following tutoring services available to you:

- [Learning Support Services \(LSS\)](#)
- [Academic Excellence Program \(ACE\)](#)
- [Modified Supplemental Instruction \(MSI\)](#)

If you have any other questions about tutoring resources, don't hesitate to reach out 😊💯

Title IX

The university has instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. Information about the Title IX Office, the online reporting link, applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found [here](#). The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using their [online reporting link](#).

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

Basic Needs, Counseling, & Psychological Services

Please do not sacrifice your health and well-being for this class or any other course, for that matter. Part of being successful means asking for the help you need. Any student experiencing difficulty affording or accessing nutritious food, or who does not have a safe, stable place to live, is urged to contact Slug Support at 831-459-4446 or deanofstudents@ucsc.edu. A

experienced professors are still working on their writing. **Getting feedback and asking for help is part of the process**; it's a sign that you're a scholar who is committed to developing. In addition to the peer- and instructor-feedback you'll receive on assignments and help in office hours, **there are several other writing supports on campus. Reach out early and often!**

- There are a number of other writing supports available on campus. [Sign up](#) for 30 minute or 1 hour sessions for 1-on-1 support through the writing center. You also have options to [sign up for help](#) through Learning Support Services. You can work on writing assignments in a [Writing Study Hall](#); a tutor will roam the study hall to answer quick questions that pop up. You may also sign up for [1-on-1 reading and writing support](#).

- Feel free to email me if you are not sure who to contact to receive the assistance you need and I can direct you to them with compassion and without judgment.

comprehensive listing of food and housing resources on campus and in Santa Cruz is available at <http://basicneeds.ucsc.edu>. If you are feeling highly stressed, anxious, or depressed, please seek help from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at the Student Health Center (831-459-2628). [The CAPS web page](#) also provides information about seeing a therapist and lists various crisis numbers.

Grading Breakdown

97 - 100 A+ 87 - 89 B+ 77 - 79 C+ 67 - 69 D+ 59 or below F
93 - 96 A 83 - 86 B 73 - 76 C 63 - 66 D
90 - 92 A- 80 - 82 B- 70 - 72 C- 60 - 62 D-

- Grades first rounded up to nearest whole number

Congratulations on finishing the entire syllabus! If you have made it this far, make my day by sending me an email with a picture of your pet or another random animal you like :)

Current Debates in Economics

Semester, *Year*, Instructor: Gagandeep Sachdeva

Class

Room

Time

Instructor Email: gsachdev@ucsc.edu

Office Hours

Location, Time

A key part of being a student and a scholar is asking questions and seeking help. I invite you to come to office hours each week to ask any questions, brainstorm ideas, and discuss the material. [Reach out early and often!](#) I love to talk about these issues and support your learning, and I enjoy getting to know you. [I am happy to meet with you over Zoom as well if that reduces any experienced barriers on your end. Just email me to set something up!](#)

Teaching Team

- Teaching Assistant 1, Email, Sections Times, Office Hour Times
- Teaching Assistant 2, Email, Sections Times, Office Hour Times

Required Readings

- Supplemental readings will be posted on Canvas.

Bring to Class

- Pre-lecture reading assignments in print or digital form
- Paper and writing implements for activities that you will turn in at the end of class
- Phone, tablet, or computer for "[Socrative](#)"

Important Notes

- In-person class attendance AND participation is required (various options for "participation" available)
- Class will not be recorded; if you have to miss a lecture, it is important that you review relevant materials, get notes from peers, and come to office hours to ask clarifying questions

Important Dates and Deadlines ([Full Schedule](#), subject to change)

(to be filled in)

Grading

Daily Class Participation	30% of grade	(3 dropped)
Concept Mastery Quizzes	10% of grade	(2x 24-hour extension granted)
Post Reflections & Peer Responses	10% of grade	(2x 24-hour extension granted)
Peer-Led Class Discussion	15% of grade	
Critical Reflection Paper	35% of grade	
• Outline	5% of grade	
• Pre-Final Presentation	10% of grade	
• Final Write-up	20% of grade	

Quick Links

[Course Summary & Learning Outcomes](#)

[Operational Logistics](#)

[Course Requirements](#)

[Course Topics](#)

[Coursework Hours](#)

[Policies](#)

[Extra Credit Opportunity](#)

[DRC Accommodations](#)

[Support Services](#)

[Grading Breakdown](#)

Course Elements	Design Intentions
<h3>Course Summary & Learning Outcomes</h3> <p>“Current debates in economics” is probably a misnomer. They are current (and sometimes long-standing) debates in the social sciences. Economists can provide a distinctive perspective in how we speak to said debates- not necessarily providing conclusive answers but aiming to approach these questions with careful framing, scientific rigor, epistemic humility, and awareness of our <i>assumptions-possibilities frontier</i>.</p> <p>My intention for this course is for you to be able to <i>carefully frame</i> the debates into clearly defined causes and effects, or premises and conclusions, and think about what would count as evidence in these framings. I don’t expect you to take a conclusive stance on any particular side of any given debate, but to be able to deliberate upon <u>what each side claims in a clear and scientifically rigorous way</u>- in terms of cause and effect. To that extent, the learning outcomes for this course are listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Explore differing notions of justice and equality and describe how these concepts are framed using evidence within economic debates.(2) Analyze debates in the social sciences by identifying clear premises and conclusions.(3) Summarize, synthesize, and critique differing viewpoints and evidence in said debates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Traditionally, learning outcomes are a part of the syllabus that is often “skipped” - maybe that is because we feel like they are not very relevant or maybe because they can be very abstract. There is also often a lack of alignment between the goals for learning and how learning is assessed in the class.- The learning outcomes in this course are specifically designed to be as relevant and applicable as possible for students in their own lives -not just in terms of the topics we will apply them to, but the skills we will build in the process.- They have been written with Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning in mind

- (4) **Connect** theoretical frameworks (like ideas of equity and efficiency) to real-world applications (like policies on minimum wages or affirmative action).
- (5) **Demonstrate** an understanding of the complexity of economic debates by (a) **reflecting** on one's own assumptions and biases, (b) **actively participating** in discussions and (c) **writing** reflective essays that **critically** and **charitably** engage with competing points of view.
- (6) **Locate** and **interpret** accessible research relevant to course debates.

- **All assignments and assessments in this course directly support and/or assess these outcomes.**

Operational Logistics

Canvas

All materials related to class are on Canvas (or will be added to Canvas throughout the course), including readings, lecture slides, class assignments, announcements, and grades. **Strongly consider keeping the Announcement and Conversation Message notifications set to the default of “notify me right away.”** Consider also downloading the Canvas application on your phone and enabling push notifications. These steps will allow you to keep track of your assignment due dates and me to reach you with class announcements or personalized messages in a timely manner. See the ITS Canvas [FAQ](#) for students.

Physical Writing Implements & Paper

Certain class activities, such as Entry and Exit Tickets, will require you to write on scratch paper, which you will turn in to me. I will do my best to bring spare paper and pencils to be able to provide these things for students who forget them occasionally, but I am not in a position to supply paper and pencils for every student during every class. Try your best to bring these things to every class.

Socrative, Padlet, and Hypothesis

There are a few digital, free resources we will use throughout the course to complement/support our learning from more traditional lecture practices and activities: We will sometimes use Socrative (no account required) in class for attendance and other learning activities. You will need to bring a phone, tablet, or laptop to class to use this online tool. A link/QR code will always be provided before the start of activities involving Socrative. We will periodically use Padlet (free accounts required) to work on collaborative concept maps in class and having a laptop or tablet to use it is

- **Education-related expenses can impose a considerable burden on students**, and I do not want the required materials/tools for this class to add to this.
- **If physically writing with pencil on paper is inaccessible to you, talk to me** and we will come up with digital alternatives for you.
- Similarly: **let me know ASAP if using digital technology in class is not feasible for you**. No worries—we'll make alternate arrangements!

<p>going to be helpful. We will also use Hypothes.is (free account required) for collaborative reading and annotation exercises.</p>	
<h2>Course Requirements</h2> <h3>A Note on Pre-Lecture Readings & Preparation</h3> <p>Lectures in this class are going to be framed by and interleaved with active learning exercises and activities designed to engage you in co-creating, discussing, and critiquing concepts and materials. Therefore, it is essential that you come prepared, having completed the assigned reading(s) and bringing them to class for reference (print or digital). There will be small daily “Entry Tickets” (typically in the form of reading quizzes) for you to complete at the beginning of each class. These tickets will help you identify important ideas from reading assignments and make connections to your own experiences. These tickets using guiding questions help 1) incentivize you to come to class on time and prepared, having done the reading, 2) you continuously monitor and reflect on your understanding of course contents, and 3) give me feedback on what is still unclear.</p> <p>1. Daily Class Participation</p> <p>30% of your grade: In-person class attendance is required for this interactive discussion course. Class participation points will come from active engagement with in-class activities, such as reading quizzes, “entry” and “exit” tickets, Socrative questions/polling, small-group and whole-class discussions as well as activities, such as collaborative concept maps, and more (such as participation in Q&A/peer feedback in peer-led class discussions; see below). Daily participation will be assessed using a variety of in-class activities in different modalities so that everyone can demonstrate participation and engagement in a way that feels comfortable for them and conducive to their learning. Class participation will be graded on effortful completion; I want you to engage with me and the material and I do not want worrying about “making mistakes” and worrying about your grade to get in the way of that.</p> <p>2. Discussion Posts & Responses/Social Annotation</p> <p>10% of your grade: There will be brief, guided reflection posts (on Canvas) or social annotations (on Hypothesis) every two weeks. These assignments will help you synthesize what you read and what we discussed and will challenge you to extend and apply your</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All assignments are designed with evidence-based learning strategies in mind to improve your understanding of the content, help you remember it for a long time, and reward you for using good study habits (like reviewing content in multiple ways on multiple days, testing yourself, starting assignments early, and revising your work based on feedback). - Every student is allowed to miss 3 days of lecture, for which attendance/participation grades will automatically be dropped. It is still your responsibility to catch up on the material covered in class because it will be assessed in assignments throughout the quarter. - Every student is allowed 2 24-hour extensions on either a Canvas Discussion Post/Hypothesis post OR a Peer Response.

knowledge further. They will directly or indirectly contribute to your brainstorming for both Peer-Led Class Discussion, and the Final Critical Reflection paper. **Typically, no late Posts/Responses will be accepted since you will always have multiple days to think about, draft, and complete these (brief, informal) assignments.**

3. Concept Mastery Quizzes

10% of your grade: Throughout the course, you will complete **5 untimed 10-question multiple-choice quizzes via Canvas**. The questions will cover the contents of the readings and the lectures. The quizzes will be open for an entire week and you can take the quizzes as often as you want to get the grade that you want (only your best grade counts). You are allowed to use all course materials available to you (notes, slides, web sources, etc.) while taking the quizzes, but I ask that you take them alone. Be mindful that the questions may change slightly as you retake the quiz. **Typically, no late quizzes will be accepted since you will always have an entire week to take the quiz as often as you want and can use all the resources available to you.** The exact due dates and instructions for the quizzes will be posted on Canvas and in the linked full schedule.

4. Peer-Led Class Discussion

15% of your grade: Starting Week 4, 30 minutes of one lecture in each week will be dedicated to students (**in groups of 2-3**) leading a class discussion on any one specific debate relating to the sub-field corresponding to the subfield in that given week. Individuals in each group would be required to **summarize, entertain, and challenge** competing views within their chosen debates, with a Q&A/peer feedback session from other students. **Each student only needs to lead the group discussion once, and everyone will receive the same grade.**

5. Critical Reflection Paper

35% of your grade: After the first three weeks, I will provide an overview of several subfields where we will explore specific ongoing and long-standing debates. From one of these subfields, you will select a debate related to the ones covered in class and write a brief (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font) final reflection paper. The goal of this paper is to elaborate on, and engage both **critically and charitably** with competing views in your chosen debate, both from the perspective of how they have been evaluated scientifically, and the broader historical/political/cultural context that these debates speak to. These are skills that you will be practicing through all assessments

- Both discussion/annotation posts, and quizzes are designed to space out and support your learning by giving you low-stakes opportunities to practice and retrieve course content and gain points toward your final grade. In fact, you are encouraged to take them often, even before you learn the relevant material that week (pre-testing).
- **Every student is also allowed 2 24-hour extensions on any of the Concept Mastery Quizzes.**
- Read more about deadlines and extensions under [course policies](#).
- Without TA support, I will not be able to give you extensive written feedback on every single assignment (although grading rubrics should always be clear and comprehensive), which is why **giving each other feedback (e.g., via Discussion Post Responses) is going to be crucial for supporting your learning**
- **If you want more specific feedback on ANY of the activities or assignments you complete for this class, please come see me in Office Hours and I**

<p>in the course. The grade for this critical reflection paper will be split across three sub-assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page-outline describing your topic and your ideas, due by Week 7. (5%) • A 15 minute in-class presentation of your “first-draft,” due in Week 12-13. (10%) • Final paper submission, due in Week 15. (20%) 	<p>will be happy to chat with you in more depth.</p>
<h2>Course Topics</h2> <p>Part I: Broad Strokes (3 Weeks/ 6 Lecture Meetings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notions of justice, and how economists think about (and differ on) justice. (1 Week/ 2 lectures) • Inequality: History, trends, and the relationship between growth and inequality (1 Week/ 2 Lectures) • The Equity-Efficiency Tradeoff (or lack thereof) (1 Week/2 Lectures) <p>Part II: Specific Topics/Debates (Weeks 4-15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Topics (1 Lecture) • Education (1 Week/ 2 Lectures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To Test or Not To Test (Standardized Testing) • Labor Relations and Workers’ Rights (3 Weeks/ 6 Lectures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum wages and (un)employment (1 week/2 lectures) ◦ The role of unions (1 week/2 lectures) ◦ Immigration (1 week/2 lectures) • Discrimination (4 Weeks / 8 Lectures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Theories of discrimination, and their critiques (1 week/2 lectures). ◦ Gender wage gap (1 week/2 lectures) ◦ Racial bias in algorithmic decisions (1 week/2 lectures) ◦ Affirmative Action in Admissions (1 week/2 lectures) • Environmental Justice (1 Week/ 2 Lectures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Should developing countries and developed countries follow the same timeline to reach net-zero emissions? <p>An under-construction list of readings for each topic can be found here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to google sheet with full (day-by-day) schedule, readings by class date, with assessment due-dates and suggested “do” dates comes here. (here is a tentative version) • Elements of schedule might change depending on classroom size (for instance, may not need two weeks for everyone’s reflection paper presentations).
<h2>Coursework Hours</h2> <p>Understanding complex concepts, engaging critically and charitably with competing ideas, and summarizing and synthesizing your reflections takes lots of consistent practice. I want to be transparent about what I think it will take to thrive in this course. Outside of the 3 hours of class time each week (1.5/per lecture), you should plan to spend up to 10-12 additional hours on coursework. Here is an approximate breakdown of how that time will be spent each week:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Google Sheet of the full schedule doesn’t just contain “DUE” dates for assignments, but also “DO” dates; I list which days I think it would be best for you to do which tasks in order to both scaffold the workload and your learning in an

- Readings (2-3 hours)
- Reorganizing and synthesizing notes and other materials (~ 1 hour)
- Practicing with and taking Concept Mastery Quizzes **OR** working on Canvas/Hypothesis Discussions and Responses (1-2 hours)
- Preparing for or actively working on “higher-stakes” assignments (e.g., Critical Reflection Paper, Peer-Led Class Discussion) down the line (3-5 hours)
- Optional office hours (1 hour)

Please email me and/or come to office hours ASAP if you are concerned about the workload or feel you’re struggling to keep up. I do not want you spending more than the upper end of hours on this class. **It is really important to me that you have time to focus on your other coursework while also having fun and taking care of yourself. You can expect that I will help you, judgment-free, to make a plan to excel in this class.**

optimal way. Doing a little bit every day will go a long way for both your learning and your overall health.

- The Google Sheet also contains additional tabs with more information of a **typical class structure** and a **recommended breakdown of the work for this class for any given week**. (“DO” dates) I will also do my best to **remind you of upcoming deadlines and tasks both via Canvas announcements and at the end of each lecture**

Policies

Extensions: Extenuating Circumstances

This course is **universally designed**, which, among other things, means that I recognize you as human beings, who have a lot going on, and accept that sometimes “things happen,” despite the best of intentions. Assignment structures, deadlines, and grading policies, take this into account already, which is why **the deadlines in this course are firm and no additional extensions** (besides the ones you already receive, automatically, no questions asked) **will be granted under normal circumstances**. In extenuating circumstances, please email me as early as possible in advance of a conflict or as soon as possible after an unforeseeable event to arrange an extension or make-up assignment. The make-up assignment may be a different format from the one used in class. I am here to support you and your learning when these bigger excused absences arise (e.g., serious illness, participation in collegiate sporting events, an important family event, religious holiday, etc.).

- Students tend to skip this section of the syllabus. If you need any convincing that reading this part of the syllabus carefully is in your best interest, check out [this research study](#) that found students who read the syllabus achieve significantly higher grades (more than half a letter grade) than students who do not read the syllabus.

Other Unofficial Circumstances

Beyond excused extenuating circumstances, smaller things will inevitably come up in the semester. There may be a day you just don’t feel like going to class or a weekend you want to see a concert instead of doing your writing assignment. You may have an assignment in another class you need to prioritize. I totally support

you taking time for yourself even if you don't have an "official" reason. These aren't extenuating circumstances that would permit an extension or make-up assignment, though. **Offering extensions or make-up assignments in these circumstances can be an equity issue because students who ask for these extensions may be more likely to be students who have been centered and privileged in our education system.** This is part of the reason why **everyone gets to miss 3 classes, be 1 day late on 2 of the quizzes, and 1 day late on 2 of the discussion posts - no questions asked.** I know your lives are busy with school, work, and other responsibilities. I want you to practice identifying what you need to prioritize and accepting that other commitments may suffer somewhat as a consequence. That's okay! Let me know if you need help prioritizing and scheduling your work in this class.

Grading

If you have questions about a grade you received, please email me. **I am happy to help you understand your performance. You may ask to have an assignment regraded** (I am acutely aware that, despite an instructor's best efforts, grading can be inconsistent due to a myriad of external factors, and I am always open to reassessing my own grading). Just keep in mind that the same assignment rubric will be used and your grade may be lower upon regrading. The grade that you earn on the regrade is final.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC. In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, they may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of their college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to

- **My policies regarding grading and extensions might be different** from that of your other instructors and **knowing what to expect and how to communicate with me** about these things can help us both avoid and **work through any challenges** that come up for you throughout the course.

- **I want to acknowledge that academic integrity violations often arise from stressful situations.** Maybe you feel like you have too little time or too many other responsibilities or maybe you feel like you do not understand the material and experience embarrassment about that.
To avoid this situation, please reach out when you find yourself contemplating plagiarizing or committing another kind

the Academic Integrity page at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Generative AI

- An emerging question for students and educators is how to expand our notion of academic integrity with the advent of generative AI.
- Academic integrity isn't just about not cheating, it's about engaging in academic assignments in ways that allow you to develop and demonstrate your diverse skills and knowledge.
- My hope is that this course will give you enough agency over what you learn and how you present what you have learned that you will be invested in producing high-quality, creative work that reflects your own understanding and ideas.
- I want you to feel great ownership over what you create in this class. As noted above, this course will have you wrestle with genuine, (sometimes) thorny problems in the social sciences.
- Generative AI will primarily repeat what has already been written about these problems. You have the opportunity to advance both your and others' understandings of these debates, by developing and contributing your own original ideas.
- **I encourage you to use generative AI as a tool to improve your learning, not a short-cut to replace it.** Use generative AI as you see fit to better understand the complex course material and clearly convey your thoughts, critiques, and defenses of the issues we discuss.
- However, **you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, copied from other internet sources, biased, offensive, or otherwise problematic.**
- Ultimately, you are responsible for your own learning and I trust that you will use all of the resources at your disposal, including generative AI, to achieve your educational goals.

 **You are permitted to use Generative AI for class preparation, self-testing, to aid with discussion posts and responses, and for the Critical Reflection Paper, provided that your work follows the course policies below.** Below are the course policies and guidelines, violations of which will be treated as breaches of academic integrity and plagiarism. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions about Generative AI, how to use it, and how to cite it.

of academic integrity violation.

- **I would rather have you turn in no work and meet with me to get to the bottom of what is preventing you from submitting your original work** (so we can help you find ways around that) than have you turn in work that is not your own
- Full disclosure, I have tried using generative AI to help me build some sections of this syllabus as well, and **it has cited sources that do not exist.** And I will fact-check everything you hand in to me.

Policies on Generative AI Use

 **Original thought and scholarship** - You are responsible for submitting high-quality, original work that reflects your own original critical thinking (e.g., your own original insight, synthesis, analysis, argument, etc.). Your ideas may incorporate information provided by Generative AI or other sources, but it is your responsibility to critically evaluate, combine, and expand on them.

 **Give proper citation** - As with other external sources, students must acknowledge the use of AI in any work they submit using [APA formatting](#). Include parenthetical citations in your writing assignments to indicate where you used generative AI for direct quotes, paraphrasing, ideas, or inspiration. Use quotation marks if you copy text directly. Finally, include the generative AI in your references section. Generally speaking, effective pieces of writing will only sparingly directly quote, paraphrase, or repeat ideas from other sources—AI or otherwise.

 **Include Generative AI Use Log** - If Generative AI is used in any way for an assignment, students must also submit a [Generative AI Use Log](#). The log must be included in the assignment, even if students do not end up citing the AI tool (e.g., there's no quoting, paraphrasing, or ideas from the output). For example, a student might not cite an AI tool in the text or references section, but should still include the log if they used generative AI to find sources, summarize papers for their own understanding, get feedback on writing, etc. You can paste the log directly to the end of your assignment or simply link to it (just make sure that I have access to it!)

Guidelines on Generative AI Use

 **Don't give up the deep thinking**- Research has shown that explaining things in your own words is a powerful way to deepen your understanding of material and improve your retention of those concepts. Don't let Generative AI steal your opportunity to develop deep expertise in memory, metacognition, and learning.

 **Generate your own ideas and explanations first** - As a key step of the learning process, I strongly encourage you to first write your own ideas, summaries, explanations, arguments, etc. in your own words as clearly and accurately as possible. Then, use Generative AI if you'd like to help you refine your ideas and writing. You can repeat this cycle multiple times to create a high-quality finished product of your own original thought and scholarship.

Distribution of Course Materials

Students may be disciplined for selling, preparing, or distributing course lecture materials for any commercial purpose, whether or not they were the person taking the notes. The unauthorized sale of lectures, notes, handouts, exam questions, review questions, or any other course materials, is a violation of campus policies, state law, and may also constitute copyright infringement subject to legal action.

A Note on Classroom Etiquette

In this class, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, highstakes issues and increase our understanding of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy. Despite our best intentions and efforts, sometimes we will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. Sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination, or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always, we need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social justice as we deepen our understanding of multiple perspectives – and make the most of being together with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.

DRC Accommodations

I love this content so much—I am delighted to try and make learning accessible to you. UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center via Accommodate preferably within the first week of this course. Please also send me an email to set up a meeting in the first week of the quarter if you would like to discuss your accommodations so we can set you up for success. It can be on Zoom if you'd like. In the meantime, here are some guidelines that may be helpful:

Extensions/ Missed Work

For students with accommodations for extensions and missed work beyond the extensions and missed work accommodations that are already in place as part of the

- The Universal Design of this class means that (hopefully) you will not need to take advantage of any additional accommodations: Extra time on exams? No need - the quizzes are “open” for an entire week at a time and you can - are even encouraged to - take them as often as you want to get the grade that you want; need an extension on an assignment? You get a “free” extension on different assignments, no questions asked already; Can’t make it to class for whatever reason? 1 of

universal design of this course, please email me as soon as you know you will need the extension and before the deadline whenever possible. Except for extenuating disability-related circumstances, please provide 48 hours' notice that you will need an extension. Tell me a new realistic due date. Stay in touch via email if you are not sure how long of an extension you will need or if circumstances change and you are unable to meet your new due date.

Class Attendance

For any students with accommodations for attendance beyond the 3 dropped attendances that everyone already receives, please email me as soon as you anticipate an issue may arise. We will work as a team, potentially with your liaison at the DRC, to determine the attendance benchmark that works best for your learning and your needs.

Support Services

Writing & Studying Support

Summer courses move quickly, and it can be challenging to keep up. Because of the fast pace, it is normal to feel overwhelmed. You are encouraged to explore the following tutoring services available to you:

- [Learning Support Services \(LSS\)](#)
- [Academic Excellence Program \(ACE\)](#)
- [Modified Supplemental Instruction \(MSI\)](#)

If you have any other questions about tutoring resources, don't hesitate to reach out 😊¹⁰⁰

Title IX

The university has instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. Information about the Title IX Office, the online reporting link, applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found [here](#). The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using their [online reporting link](#).

your attendances is dropped automatically for everyone etc.

- **If there are additional barriers to your learning that I can help mitigate, reach out,** and I will be more than happy to make sure you feel as supported as possible!

- **Writing isn't something anyone is inherently good or bad at.** It's a skill that one can continuously improve. Even your most experienced professors are still working on their writing. **Getting feedback and asking for help is part of the process;** it's a sign that you're a scholar who is committed to developing. In addition to the peer- and instructor-feedback you'll receive on assignments and help in office hours, **there are several other writing supports on campus.**

- Reach out early and often!**
- There are a number of other writing supports available on campus. **Sign up** for 30 minute or 1 hour sessions for 1-on-1 support through the writing center. You also have options to [sign up for help](#)

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

Basic Needs, Counseling, & Psychological Services

Please **do not sacrifice your health and well-being for this class or any other course**, for that matter. Part of being successful means asking for the help you need. Any student experiencing difficulty affording or accessing nutritious food, or who does not have a safe, stable place to live, is urged to contact Slug Support at 831-459-4446 or deanofstudents@ucsc.edu. A comprehensive listing of food and housing resources on campus and in Santa Cruz is available at <http://basicneeds.ucsc.edu>. If you are feeling highly stressed, anxious, or depressed, please seek help from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at the Student Health Center (831-459-2628). [The CAPS web page](#) also provides information about seeing a therapist and lists various crisis numbers.

Grading Breakdown

97 - 100 A+	87 - 89 B+	77 - 79 C+	67 - 69 D+	59 or below F
93 - 96 A	83 - 86 B	73 - 76 C	63 - 66 D	
90 - 92 A-	80 - 82 B-	70 - 72 C-	60 - 62 D-	

Congratulations on finishing the entire syllabus! If you have made it this far, make my day by sending me an email with a picture of your pet or another random animal you like :)

through Learning Support Services. You can work on writing assignments in a [Writing Study Hall](#); a tutor will roam the study hall to answer quick questions that pop up. You may also sign up for [1-on-1 reading and writing support](#).

- Feel free to email me if you are not sure who to contact to receive the assistance you need and I can direct you to them with compassion and without judgment.

- Grades first rounded up to nearest whole number