

## *Welcome to my class!*

**Class Mtg:** MWF 10-10:50, IST 1045  
**Office:** IST 2038  
**Student Hrs:** MF 11-11:50, MW 3-4.  
More times and info below  
**Phone:** 863-874-8525

**E-mail:** [jdewey@floridapoly.edu](mailto:jdewey@floridapoly.edu)  
*This is the best way to contact me, not Canvas e-mail or phone. I will respond by COB the next day, usually sooner. We can then set up a call if needed.*

## Covid 19

We are all happy to be back to face-to-face teaching and learning. I got into this job largely because I like interacting with students in the classroom. I want us to follow the golden rule and do what we can to: 1) ensure the return to regular face to face instruction goes smoothly and 2) avoid contributing to community spread of Covid 19, doing our part to keep vulnerable members of our families and communities safe. Here are ways we can and should do that.

### Rules for in the classroom, IST, and Campus

- Face-coverings are always expected in the building.
- Absolutely no eating or drinking during class.

### Vaccination

The State University System Board of Governors, the Presidents of Florida's State Universities, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, and the Centers for Disease Control recommend vaccination against Covid 19 (barring medical contraindication). I hope everyone cares about their peers, their community, and the continuity of their education and so is already vaccinated. If you are not, the vaccine is free and available:

<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/vaccines/vaccine-locator/>

### What should I do if I think I may have COVID-19?

Students showing symptoms or exposed to COVID-19 are expected to stay in their residences (at home or in their dorm rooms) and immediately notify the Florida Poly CARE manager at [care@floridapoly.edu](mailto:care@floridapoly.edu). The CARE Manager will work with each student to triage their individual situation and the CARE Manager will notify faculty of students who are not attending courses due to COVID-19 symptoms.



## Objectives

The course is organized around a coherent theme each semester, contemporary economic issues, but details changes from semester to semester depending on current student and faculty interest and the issues prominent at the time. The overarching objective is to familiarize students with the ways a broad array of tools of economic analysis are applied to a wide range of issues. This hones analytical ability and familiarizes students with the field and its possibilities.

## Catalog Description

Content focuses on the analysis of current economic issues and policy and the study of current economic methods and theories. Students will develop broad familiarity with contemporary economic tools and thinking and the ability to formulate informed economic analysis and opinions on a broad range of current topics.

Prerequisites: Principles of Microeconomics or Macroeconomics (ECO 2023 or 2013), Statistics 1 (STA 2023) and Calculus 1 (MAC 2311).

Communication/Computation Skills Requirement (6A-10.030): Yes.

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## Textbook

No required text. Readings will be posted on the course canvas site.

## Class Delivery

- Class meetings are in person. The class run in a quasi-seminar format. I will spend some time lecturing. There will be considerable time spent on discussion, Q&A, and working example problems. Students will be asked to lead off discussion of assigned readings, to present their work on assigned exercises, to update the class on their paper, and to ask questions of one another. You will be evaluated on your contribution to class meetings.
- You should do the relevant reading before class. Exposure to the material before we talk about it will help you process the information from class, making it easier to follow without feeling lost, and helping you formulate the questions you need to ask in order to clear up confusion and learn. Typically, I will ask one student to lead off discussion of an assigned reading by presenting the highlights and a brief reaction. If you are not prepared to do so when called upon, it will be reflected in your participation grade.
- Active engagement, not only mere attendance, is expected. You learn more when you are actively engaged. Being able to communicate effectively is a Program Learning Outcome and being able to communicate effectively about Benefit-Cost Analysis is a Course Learning Outcome. Participation in discussion and Q&A is one way I can assess your ability to communicate. Attendance, engagement, and communication in class all count toward my assessment of participation, engagement, and professionalism points.

## Student Hours (aka Office Hours)

Please stop by at times indicated in the table below if you would like to talk about the course, economics, your education, or your career. I will always be available during times listed as “Always” barring serious unexpected events (e.g. sickness). There are other times I will usually, but not always, be available. Don’t count on my availability at times listed as “Usually” available, but if you happen to be there and see that I am available feel free to drop in. I am unavailable before 10 or after 4; I need 10 peaceful hours (or more) weekly for class prep and try to do it MWF mornings and evenings. I am unavailable on Tuesday or Thursday; two-fifths of my job is research and that is my focus those days.

Dr. Dewey’s Schedule: is Dr. Dewey available in his office?					
	M	T	W	Th	F
Before 10:00	Class Prep	Research Day	Class Prep	Research Day	Class Prep
10:00-10:50	Class: Cont Econ Iss		Class: Cont Econ Iss		Class: Cont Econ Iss
11:00-11:50	Always		Usually		Always
11:50-1:10	Usually		Rarely		Usually
1:10-1:50	Usually		Usually		Usually
2:00-2:50	Class: BCA		Class: BCA		Class: BCA
3:00-4:00	Always		Always		Class Prep
After 4:00	Class Prep		Class Prep		Class Prep

## Course Learning Outcomes & Alignment to Program Outcomes

Course	Bloom Level	Program
1. Apply principles and techniques of economic analysis to represent core problems, issues, or decisions related to the selected topic(s).	Remember, Understand, Apply	1
2. Analyze differing perspectives, solutions, or policy proposals pertinent to the issues and topics covered.	Analyze, Create, Evaluate	2
3. Communicate the central problems, tensions, or opportunities pertaining to the course topics.	All	3

### \*Program Outcomes

1. Apply current (data science/business analytics) concepts, techniques & practices to solve (complex/business) problems.
2. **DS**: Analyze a given data science problem and formulate a solution in terms of the datasets needed, the techniques required or the technologies to be utilized.  
**BA**: Analyze a given business problem using appropriate analytics techniques to generate insights and solutions.
3. Communicate effectively insights, analysis, conclusions, & solutions to a diverse audience.

## Graded Coursework

Assignments (20%) There will be biweekly (approximately) problem assignments. Typically, I will write them after class to fit points of interest and areas where reinforcement seems needed. The intent is to engage you with challenging material to facilitate learning. Expect to invest significant time in them. In my opinion, they are the primary way to really learn. I can explain things to you, which may help start you on a path toward understanding, but I cannot ultimately understand things for you. That requires you to flex, and strain, your mental muscles and engage with challenging problems for yourself. You are encouraged to work with other students. However, if you free ride on the effort of your peers and do not push yourself to work them on your own first, you will cheat yourself of the best chance to learn the material, and it will show on your exam and paper.

### Paper (20%)

You will select an issue or topic in economics, or to which economic analysis may be usefully applied, pose a research question in that area, study it, and write a paper answering, at least partially, your question.

I expect high quality work. There is a school of thought that holds that as soon as you try to define quality with any precision, you destroy it, but that we all (almost all) recognize it when we see it. I mostly agree. I also think there are limitless ways you can show me you did a lot of good work on your topic and limitless ways you can show me you did not do so and that trying to anticipate them all in advance is a fool's errand and ultimately only stifles your growth. Especially in a class like this.

The grading rubric below provides a general idea of what I am looking for. To provide more detail, instead of defining just what you should do in the paper with precision at this point, we will develop your topic collaboratively over the semester. Asking a question that is interesting and answerable is the sine qua non of a successful analysis, so we will start with development of your research question. To this end you will submit initial and final proposals and we will hold several class discussions on research questions. After your topic is selected, you will provide the class with regular brief updates. You will also prepare a rough draft, on which I will provide feedback, and give a formal presentation, on which the class will provide feedback. This feedback should be used to sharpen the final paper. Everything except the presentation and final paper will count either toward your assignment grade (proposals and draft) or towards your participation grade (updates and discussion).

Your paper should be modeled after academic research papers in economics or after consulting reports, whichever is more applicable in your case. We will see examples of both over the course of the semester. Detailed instructions for formatting, etc... will be on canvas.

### Presentation (5%)

You will give a formal presentation of your work after the first draft and before the final draft. It should take approximately 15 minutes and be concise and professional. You will provide feedback on each other's presentations, to facilitate improvement before the final draft is due.

Midterm Exam (15%) The midterm exam will be at the normal class meeting time on Friday October 15 so I can grade it before the midterm grade deadline.

Final Exam (20%) The final exam will occur at the assigned time (TBA) during finals week December 11-16. To reward improvement and prevent a bad day from unduly influencing your grade, the final counts in place of the midterm if it is higher.

Attendance, Participation, Engagement, and Professionalism (20%) Given the nature of the course, interaction, discussion, question and answer, and engagement are especially important. This includes rotating responsibility to lead off class discussion on required readings. The attendance portion will be tracked by either taking role or submitting daily work to canvas by the end of class. The remainder will be determined by instructor judgement. You are responsible to manage your own schedule. If you miss a few classes for reasons important to you, you will not be penalized. However, if you miss more than three meetings you will be penalized except in case of documented serious illness or other serious documented events, considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Grading Rubric

Everything is graded A, B, C, D, F according to the criteria below and using a standard 4-point GPA scale with partial credit. The corresponding number entered in the gradebook. *Ignore anything, especially percentages, calculated by Canvas!!!* A 2.3 is a C+, not 58% (2.3/4). Canvas is not smart enough to get this. Grades may be above 4, think of it as an A+ or extra credit.

Grade	Points	Criteria
P	5.0	Exceptionally rare quality far above and beyond all expectations. Mistake free. Explained & supported completely. Extremely neat. Organization crystal clear. Writing excellent. Looks & reads as if prepared by the leading expert in the area and professionally edited & formatted. The all but unachievable ideal of perfection. In practical terms making the highest possible grade 5 allows extra credit for work that goes above and beyond, allowing someone to accumulate a few B's and still earn an A, not an A-, in the course.
A	4.0	Demonstrates mastery. Complete. Correct approach. Possibly minor math errors. No central conceptual errors. Fully explained and supported. Neat and well organized with clear exposition. Grammatical errors minor.
B	3.0	Demonstrates proficiency but short of mastery. Complete or nearly so. Approach is generally correct, though there may be small conceptual errors. There may be significant mathematical errors if they do not reveal additional conceptual flaws. Explanation and support are clear and reasonable, if not complete or fully correct. Neatness, organization, and exposition allow the answer to be easily understood.
C	2.0	Demonstrates basic proficiency with the most important or central components but otherwise incorrect or incomplete. Explanation & support sufficient for the most central or important component, but otherwise incomplete or incorrect. Neatness, organization, and exposition allow the answer to be understood with some effort.
D	1.0	Reasonable effort but does not demonstrate proficiency. Approach, explanation, & support show a relation to the question with some understanding, but much is incorrect. Neatness, organization, and exposition allow the answer to be understood.
F	0.0	No attempt, unresponsive, nearly all wrong, or too messy to follow.

Rubric use in Exam Grading: Each question is graded, and points will be averaged across questions. Due to the time constraint, neatness and writing quality are judged leniently.

Rubric use in Assignment Grading: Each question is graded, and points will be averaged across exercises. Since you have time, neatness, organization, and writing quality are judged somewhat stringently. Since exercises are intended to facilitate, not evaluate, learning, completeness and correctness are judged leniently.

Rubric use in Paper and Presentation Grading: The project is graded as a whole, not in parts. Since you have plenty of time and we will have covered relevant material, completeness, correctness, neatness, organization, and exposition are all judged stringently.

## ***Tentative Schedule of Assignment and Exam Dates***

Assignment or Exam	Due Date
Assignments bi-weekly	One week after assigned
Paper Initial Proposal	Friday September 24
Midterm Exam	Friday October 15
Paper Final Proposal	Friday October 22
Paper Rough Draft	Monday November 22
Presentations	Week of Nov 29
Final Paper	Monday December 6
Final Exam	TBA, Finals Week December 11-16

## **Course Grades**

Grades will be averaged within each assignment category. Category averages will be averaged using the weights specified above. Final course grades will be determined by this weighted average according to the table to the right.

[Grading policy](#)

Course Grade	Weighted Avg Points	
	At least	Less than
A	3.833	
A-	3.500	3.833
B+	3.167	3.500
B	2.833	3.167
B-	2.500	2.833
C+	2.167	2.500
C	1.833	2.167
C-	1.500	1.833
D+	1.167	1.500
D	0.833	1.167
D-	0.500	0.833
F		0.500

## **Make-up Policy**

If the midterm is missed, the final exam will automatically count in its place. If the final is missed a make-up may be taken **ONLY** with a documented excuse recognized by university policy. Work conflicts **ARE NOT** a valid excuse. Let your employer know now that you must be available to take exams at the announced times. I accept late assignments with a penalty that is minimal at first but increases with lateness. A C is the highest possible grade for work turned in after solutions are released. There is no way to make up missed class engagement, since there must be a class for you to engage in. However, missing only a few (three or less) classes will not count against you. [Florida Poly Attendance policy](#).



# Tentative Topic Outline and Schedule

## Tentative Topic Outline

1. Introduction
  - 1.1. Example: Externalities and the economics of vaccines and masks during the Covid-19 Pandemic, property rights, public spaces, and the tragedy of the commons
2. Brief Review of Some Basic Tools
  - 2.1. Supply and Demand
  - 2.2. Optimization
  - 2.3. Multiple Regression
3. Causal Inference
  - 3.1. The Rubin Causal Model
  - 3.2. Directed Acyclic Graphs
  - 3.3. Difference in Difference Studies to Identify Causation
    - 3.3.1. Example: the impact of Marijuana Legalization on Traffic Fatalities
  - 3.4. Regression Discontinuity Studies
    - 3.4.1. Example: The Impact of Precalculus on Calculus 1 Success
  - 3.5. Some Other Techniques for Causal Identification
4. The Credibility “Revolution”
  - 4.1. Freakonomics and Cutenomics
  - 4.2. What happens to important questions that are hard to answer?
  - 4.3. What about other kinds of validity?
5. Some Economics of Covid 19
6. Some Economics of Marijuana Legalization
7. The Public Sector, Free Enterprise, Capitalism, and Socialism
8. The Budget Deficit and the National Debt
9. The Gender Pay Gap or Lack Thereof (depends on what you control for)

Additional topics: Additional topics will be determined based on student interest as gauged by discussion over the first portion of the course. We also might scratch some of the ones above if they are not of interest.

Schedule (Why there is not one): No dates are provided above. The whole point of the course is to stimulate interest in the field and to teach you what doing economics is about. It will be driven by your interest, not my plan. We will determine the evolution of the class collaboratively. I have no idea how far we will get or when we will get to any particular topic. If you have great questions and are learning, we could easily spend the whole course on just a few topics. We will move on when most of us feel returns have diminished enough to make a change worthwhile.

Rigor and Fun: This will be a blast. Don’t confuse this with lack of rigor. We will work at the higher levels of learning in Bloom’s taxonomy, I will push you hard, and we will maintain the highest expectations of one another.

## Academic Support

- Students can access the Florida Polytechnic University Library through the University website and Canvas, on and off campus. Students may direct questions to the Academic Success Center or by e-mail to [success@floridapoly.edu](mailto:success@floridapoly.edu) or [library@floridapoly.edu](mailto:library@floridapoly.edu).
- The Academic Success Center (ASC), located in the IST and at ASC East, provides a range of services. Students may direct questions to [success@floridapoly.edu](mailto:success@floridapoly.edu).

## University Policies

- [Academic Integrity](#). All students must commit to the highest ethical standards in completion of all academic pursuits and endeavors, whether in classroom or online environments.
- [Reasonable Accommodations](#): Florida Polytechnic University is committed to assisting students with disabilities and offering reasonable accommodations to those with documented eligibility. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis through an interactive process between you, ODS, and your instructor(s). If you have already registered with ODS, please ensure that you have requested an accommodation letter for this course and communicate with your instructor about your approved accommodations at your earliest convenience. If you are not registered with ODS but believe you have a temporary health condition or permanent disability requiring an accommodation, please contact ODS as soon as possible:  
[DisabilityServices@floridapoly.edu](mailto:DisabilityServices@floridapoly.edu), (863)874-8770, ASC East  
[www.floridapoly.edu](http://www.floridapoly.edu) > Student Affairs > Health Wellness > Disability Services
- [Accommodations for Religious Observances, Practices and Beliefs](#): The University will reasonably accommodate the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of individuals in regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments.
- [Title IX](#): Florida Polytechnic University is committed to ensuring a safe, productive learning environment on our campus that prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking. It is important for you to know resources are available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to your professor, but your professors have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. It is an educational goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions and in one-on-one meetings. However, it is requirement for university employees to share information with the Title IX Coordinator regarding disclosure. However, please know that your information will be kept private to the greatest extent possible. You will not be required to share your experience. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the Florida Polytechnic University [Ombuds Office](#), BayCare's Student Assistance Program, 1-800-878-5470 and locally within the community at [Peace River Center](#), 863-413-2707 (24-hour hotline) or 863-413-2708 to schedule an appointment.



Student Recording of Lectures: Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation or class attendance. Recordings may not be published or shared in any way, either intentionally or accidentally, without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements is a violation of state law (subject to civil penalty) and the student code of conduct (subject to disciplinary action). Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), and invited guest speakers is **prohibited**. For further information, go to the [Registrar's webpage](#) and click on HB233 Guidance.

## Revisions to the Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to correct typos or other errors in the syllabus and to adjust as reasonably needed to maintain the quality and function of the course.