

# ECON 490: Week One

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Course Overview Slides

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# Plan for Today

Class introductions

Talk about:

- Course structure
- Assignments
- Doing well in this class

Finish with a review of basic statistics and introduction to R

# About Me

My name is Taylor

- I got a PhD in Economics from UCI in 2022
- I also did an MA in econ at SDSU
- I do applied micro-style research on housing, poverty, and immigration

4<sup>th</sup> year at CSUF, 5<sup>th</sup> time teaching this class

# Class Introductions

No ice breakers or fun facts about yourself!

Instead, let's do the following:

- Fill out name cards
- Complete a quick survey online

For the survey, scan QR code on the right

- Use your CSUF login
- URL is also on Canvas



# Course Prerequisites

To enroll in ECON 490, you need to have taken:

- All of ECON 310, ECON 325, and ECON 340
- At least *one* of ECON 440, ISDS 361B, or a 400-level Economics elective

**Key requirement** = Spring 2025 should be your last semester of studies

# Course Structure

First 5-6 class meetings

- Review of basic statistics and coding
- More of a formal lecture-style format

After first 5-6 meetings, more of a seminar-style format

- Discuss modern economic research
- Work on producing your own economic research = writing a capstone paper

# Assignments for this Class

<i>Category</i>	<i>% of Final Grade</i>
Attendance	10%
Weekly Activities	15%
Homework	15%
Metrics + Coding Activities	20%
Capstone Project	40%

# A Bit of Background

Students come to this course with a wide variety of backgrounds

- Some students have more/less exposure to statistics, coding, etc.
- Course is designed to get everyone on the same page with technical material

Over last semester or two, more variance in levels of basic professionalism

- Most semesters, 70-80+ percent of students don't have any issues
- However, trend appears headed in the wrong direction

As a result, I have adjusted course expectations and guidelines



# Expectations for this Course

This class is important because it is required for you to graduate

- I expect you to treat this class, and your graduation, seriously
- This means showing up to class and being responsible for your performance

After today, I expect you to be aware of all course requirements from the syllabus

It is your responsibility to:

- Review all course material each week
- Carefully review all assignment requirements
- Ask questions *in advance* if you do not understand assignment requirements

# Attendance

Attendance will be recorded each week and is worth 10% of your final grade

- You do not need to let me know if you will miss class
- You will have 1 automatically excused absence

Additional excused absences ***with documentation*** of either 1) a medical issue or 2) a scheduling conflict for student athletes (listed as “Actual Missed Classes”)

To receive attendance credit, you must follow the ***Professional Conduct Policy***

- Disruptive, rude, or otherwise unprofessional behavior will result in a loss of both attendance and weekly activity credit
- There are escalating punishments for subsequent violations

# Weekly Activities

Each week, you will complete and submit some form of in-class graded activity

- During the first 5-6 classes, these will be metrics quizzes
- After the first 6 weeks, we will have a shorter quiz or R coding activity

Goal of these quizzes/activities is to confirm that you are following along with course material and completing assigned readings

If you miss an activity, you have until **end** of lecture next week to complete it **in-person** (i.e., you can complete the activity during lecture break in following week)

# Stats + Programming Material

For the first 5-6 class meetings, regular weekly schedule:

- Review key concepts during lecture
- Coding activity homework assigned that's due the following lecture
- Start the following lecture with a quiz reviewing material from last week

Material is pitched at a “340+” level

- If you struggled with 340 or R, allocate additional time to stats review
- All course material will be available on Canvas with additional resources

# Capstone Papers

Overall objective of this course is doing your own economics research

- This means writing a capstone paper
- Lectures are designed to give you the necessary tools to do this

You may work individually or with a partner (both of you must do data analysis)

Broad structure of the capstone assignment:

- 12-to-14-page research paper written
- Core of project is your own independent data analysis
- Final presentation + paper + intermediate assignments

# Course Grading

Canvas assignments page explains each assignment in detail

- Rubrics will be available for each assignment explaining grading
- I'll post comments for all grade deductions on Canvas

Pay attention to feedback on Canvas!

- Capstone and coding activity assignments are iterative
- Key requirement for these assignments is fully responding to prior feedback

# Late Assignment Submissions

Late assignments receive a 10% reduction in total possible score for each day late

- After 7 days, unsubmitted assignments will **automatically** receive a score of 0
- I will **not** accept any assignments after this deadline

Teaching this class is extremely time- and labor-intensive

- Deadlines are set to ensure I have adequate time for instruction, course prep, etc.
- If you have questions about assignments, I am happy to help **before** they are due

After an assignment deadline has passed, it is your responsibility to submit it ASAP

- I will **not** respond to questions asking for detailed feedback, code review, etc. after the deadline for an assignment submission has passed

# AI Policy

*Some context:* I use AI, I know students use AI, we will use AI in this class

Two overarching rules regarding AI:

- **All** written submissions for your capstone assignments must be ***in your own words***
- If you are ever unsure about how you're using AI, ask me ***before*** submission

If for ***any*** reason I suspect ***any*** of the writing for a capstone assignment was generated via an AI/LLM (or used with only light editing), I reserve the right to convert that assignment for that student into an in-person exam format



# Doing Well in this Course

From prior semesters, students who did well tended to...

- Ask lots of questions & take advantage of office hours and email
- Stay on top of smaller assignments and not miss deadlines

My goal is for everyone to graduate!

- If you have questions, I am always happy to help

# Goals for this Class

Two broad objectives (from the syllabus):

- Learn what modern (empirical) economics research looks like
- Learn how to conduct your own economic research

*After this fall, you probably won't ever draw another graph by hand or take FOCs!*

In practice, class is about getting comfortable working with & thinking about data

- This is what people think of when they see “BA in econ” on a resume
- Class assignments are designed to help you market yourself as an econ major

# Getting Comfortable Working with Data

This class places a heavy emphasis on working with data

Goal is to give you **general** skills that are helpful in econ-related jobs

- We'll learn to use R...
- But most important topics are concepts like relationships, visualization, etc.

Ultimately, produce final projects that you can use to highlight skills on a resume, in an interview, etc.

# Data-Related Jobs

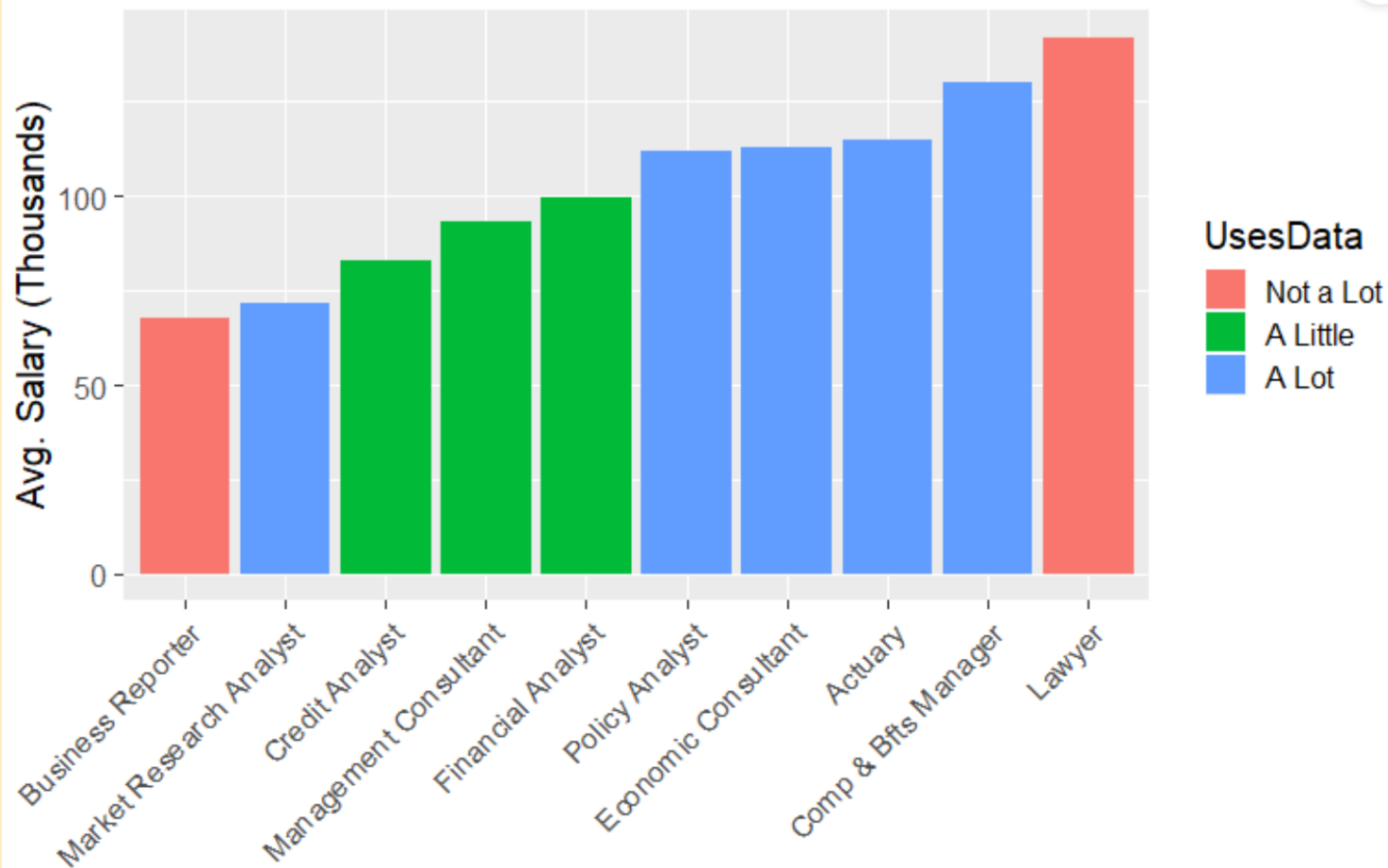
As a student, I was always a bit wary when professors said their class was “useful”

- Professors work as professors... what about other jobs?
- I spend a lot of time thinking about generalizability for course content

When I talk about econ-related jobs as “using data” or being “data-adjacent,” I don’t just mean data science or academic research

This can include pricing strategy for Marriott (my wife), economic consulting (my brother), legislative analyst for CA’s state legislature (old classmate), etc.

## Do Top-Ten Econ Major Jobs Use Data?



# Things to Do for Next Week

Things to do this week:

- Make sure you have access to R + RStudio (either on your PC or in the cloud)
- Complete the first coding activity
- Review lecture material

Next week:

- Submit coding activity to Canvas ***before*** lecture
- Lecture will start with a quick quiz on stats + R material from tonight

In general, anything on lecture slides or R activity is fair game for the quiz