

Economics  
ECON 4F03  
Methods of Inquiry in Economics  
*Fall 2023*



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**SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

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**Instructor Information**

Siha Lee  
**Email:** lees223@mcmaster.ca  
**Office Hours:**  
By appointment

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**Course Information**

**Lectures:** Tue 11:30 am - 12:20 pm, Thur 10:30 am - 12:20 pm, CNH 102

**Course Dates:** 09/05/2023 - 12/06/2023

**Units:** 3.00

**Course Delivery Mode:** In Person

**Course Description:** Formerly ECON 3F03 This course develops skills for investigating a research question in economics, through workshops (eg. writing, library, internet, data), and the subsequent application of the skills to an economic issue. Three hours; one term  
**Prerequisite(s):** ECON 2G03, 2Z03 or 2X03; and 2H03; Credit or registration in ECON 3E03 (or 3WW3) or ECON 3EE3 (or 3U03), registration in Level III or Level IV of an Honours Economics program  
**Antirequisite(s):** ECON 3FF3, ECON 3F03, ECON 4FF3  
This course is only offered in the Fall term.

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**Important Links**

- [Mosaic](#)

- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)
- [eReserves](#)

### **Avenue to Learn**

Course materials and announcements will be posted on the Avenue to Learn website (<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>). Students are responsible for checking the Avenue to Learn website regularly to be up to date with any changes to the course.

Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used.

Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

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- Know how to search for and evaluate research papers and journal articles.
- Interpret descriptive statistics and regression models.
- Understand the following approaches to empirical economic research: observational studies, laboratory experiments, social experiments, field experiments, natural experiments
- Gain experience in presenting and evaluating the research work of others, both orally and in writing
- Gain experience working in teams

## Required Materials and Texts

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**Textbook Listing:** <https://textbooks.mcmaster.ca>

Required readings will be available on the course website (Avenue to Learn).

## Optional Course Materials

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**Textbook Listing:** <https://textbooks.mcmaster.ca>

### **Real Econometrics**

**Authors:** Michael Bailey

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Publication Date:** 2019

**Edition:** Second edition

This is a recommended resource (but not required) as it accessibly covers many of the methods discussed in the articles we will review and that you will find when doing your critical review.

## Class Format

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In Person

## Course Evaluation

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- In-class attendance – 8%
- Assignments – 24%
- Critical review project
  - Proposal (2 pages) – 8%
  - Individual presentation: Outline and summary the project (10 minutes) – 15%
  - Final paper (12-15 pages) – 25%
- Team presentation of assigned research paper (25 minutes) – 20%

## Course Evaluation Details

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### In-class attendance (8%)

I will take attendance at the start of class. Each attendance is worth 0.5%. Therefore, you must participate in at least sixteen lectures in Fall 2023 to get the maximum of 8%.

At the halfway of each class, I will be checking attendance once more for students who arrive late. Late arrivals will only receive half marks (i.e., 0.25%). If you do not show up by this point, you will be counted as absent.

### Assignments (24%)

There are **three** assignments that are worth 8% each. Details will be posted on A2L.

### Critical review project (48% total)

Students will work on an individual critical review project throughout the semester and the progress of the project will be evaluated in the following three ways:

1. Proposal (8%)
2. Individual presentation of outline and summary of the project (15%)
3. Final paper (25%)

Details on the requirements and deadlines for each component will be posted on A2L.

### Team presentation (20%)

Students will present a designated academic article as a team. Details on team assignments, dates, and academic articles will be available on A2L.

## Grading Scale

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| Grade | Equivalent Grade Point | Equivalent Percentages |
|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| A+    | 12                     | 90-100                 |
| A     | 11                     | 85-89                  |
| A-    | 10                     | 80-84                  |
| B+    | 9                      | 77-79                  |
| B     | 8                      | 73-76                  |
| B-    | 7                      | 70-72                  |
| C+    | 6                      | 67-69                  |
| C     | 5                      | 63-66                  |
| C-    | 4                      | 60-62                  |
| D+    | 3                      | 57-59                  |
| D     | 2                      | 53-56                  |
| D-    | 1                      | 50-52                  |
| F     | 0                      | 0-49                   |

## Course Schedule

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- Week 1: Introduction to the course
- Week 2: Reasoning; Correlation vs Causation
- Week 3: Fundamentals of Econometrics
- Week 4: Social and Field Experiments
- Week 5: Laboratory Experiments
- Week 6: Natural Experiments
- Week 7: Internal and External Validity
- Week 8: Critical Reading
- Weeks 9 & 10: Individual Presentations
- Weeks 11 & 12: Team Presentations

## Late Assignments

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Assignments that are late by **less than 1 hour** will be accepted with a 10% penalty. Assignments that are late by 1 hour or longer will not receive any credit unless the missed work is due to legitimate reasons (refer to the following subsection on absences, missed work, and illness).

## Absences, Missed Work, Illness

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This course follows the University's policy on [requests for missed academic work](#). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of these policies and follow them accordingly. **Students must follow up directly with the instructor within 24 hours of filing an MSAF (Self-Report) or receiving notice that their MSAF (Administrative Report) has been processed** to request details regarding the nature of any relief to be granted.

- **MSAF (Self-Report):** Self-reported MSAFs requested through MOSAIC must be received **within 3 calendar days** of the deadline. For example, if the deadline for an assignment is 9/24 (Sun), an MSAF (Self-Report) must be received by 9/27 (Wed). Failure to do so will negate the opportunity for relief.
- **MSAF (Administrative Report):** Students must follow up with the instructor within 24 hours of being notified that their request has been processed. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief.

Conditional on a relief being granted, the weight of a missed assignment will be transferred to a subsequent assignment. For other grade items, the deadline will be extended (in general, by four calendar days). In particular, if the missed grade item is a presentation, the student is still expected to give an individual presentation at an alternative date and must follow up with the instructor to arrange their alternative presentation date.

## Turnitin.com

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Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## Course Modification

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The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## Generative AI: Use Prohibited

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Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with [McMaster academic integrity policy](#), it "shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source". This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, "Contract Cheating is the act of "outsourcing of student work to third parties" (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment." Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

## APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

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### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-proceduresguidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-proceduresguidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## **Authenticity / Plagiarism**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **Email Communication**



Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including Tasks), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his/her/their discretion.

## **Courses with an On-line Element**

***Some courses may*** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Online Proctoring**

***Some courses may*** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights &](#)

[Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#).

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.