

Economics 451/551
TOPICS IN LABOR ECONOMICS

Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:50am
221 McKenzie Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 538 PLC
Email: jlindo@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: 2pm-3pm Mondays and Wednesdays
Course Website: On Blackboard

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers multiple important areas of labor economics including immigration, discrimination, intergenerational mobility, etc. While covering a wide set of topics, we will largely focus on methodological approaches that economists use to uncover causal relationships. As such, the primary goal of the course is that you learn to critically assess empirical research and statistical arguments. Throughout the quarter, you will become acquainted with the use of regression analysis, experiments, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, and regression discontinuity designs.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Economics 311, Intermediate Microeconomic Theory, is a prerequisite for this course.

READINGS

The readings consist primarily of papers that have been published in top economics journals which I will send to you via email. These range from relatively intuitive to fairly technical. You are required to read these papers in advance of our class meetings, doing your best to get a basic understanding with the more complicated papers. While reading these papers, you should make sure you understand what the research question is, why it is important, what source of exogenous variation the authors are exploiting, and the “identification strategy” the authors use in order to answer the research question. Further, you should think about the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s approach. At semi-random times throughout the quarter, I will conduct a “pop quiz” at the beginning of class to test the extent to which you have done the reading. As an accommodation for the fact that various circumstances may keep you from doing the reading or force you to miss class, I will drop your lowest pop quiz grade.

GRADING

Distribution of Points:

20%	Exam 1
30%	Exam 2
40%	Final
10%	Pop Quizzes

Makeup Exams:

If you know in advance that you must miss an exam (e.g., due to illness), you must let me know *before* the exam is administered and we will work something out if the excuse is valid.

Re-grade Policy:

Re-grade requests must be:

1. In the form of a *written* request, listing the questions deserving special attention and why such questions deserve special attention.
2. Stapled to the original exam.
3. Submitted within one week of the exam being returned.
4. Submitted with the acknowledgment that your entire exam will be reviewed a second time and, as such, you may end up losing points.

There is no need to follow the above procedure if an administrative error has been made in calculating your grade (such as an arithmetic error in adding up your score). In such a case, just bring it to my attention.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

Academic dishonesty (from plagiarizing work to cheating on exams) will not be tolerated. Please acquaint yourself with the Student Conduct Code, which is published online at www.uoregon.edu/~stl/programs/student_judi_affairs/academicdishonesty.htm. If I have reason to believe that a student is violating the Student Conduct Code, I will involve the Student Judicial Affairs Office.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements with me during the first week of the term. Please request that the counselor for students with disabilities (164 Oregon Hall) send me a letter verifying your disability.

REQUIREMENTS FOR 551 STUDENTS

Students taking the course for graduate-level credit are required to write a paper. I will provide further instructions separately. This paper will comprise 15% of your grade, Exam 1 15%, Exam 2 25%, the Final 35%, and quizzes 10%.

IMPORTANT DATES

<i>Exam #1:</i>	April 11
<i>Exam #2:</i>	May 4
<i>Guest Lecture</i>	May 16
<i>Class Cancelled</i>	May 18
<i>Memorial Day Holiday</i>	May 30
<i>Final:</i>	June 9, 10:15am

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE & READINGS

Introduction to the Course (Meeting 1)

Towards Statistical Literacy

Statistics, Randomness, and Inference (Meeting 2)

Understanding Standard Errors, Dealing With Multiple Variables (Meeting 3)

Regression Analysis (Meeting 4)

----- EXAM 1 (Meeting 5, April 11) -----

Natural Experiments (Meeting 6, April 13)

DiNardo, John and Jorn-Steffen Pischke (1997). "Returns to Computer Use Revisited: Have Pencils Changed the Wage Structure Too?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112(1): 291-303.

* Freedman, David (1991). "Statistical Models and Shoe Leather," *Sociological Methodology* 21: 291-313.

Minimum Wages (Meeting 7, April 18)

* Card, David, and Alan Krueger (1994). "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," *American Economic Review* 84(4): 772-793.

Returns to Educational Quantity (Meetings 8 and 9, April 20 and April 25)

Ashenfelter, Orley and Alan Krueger (1994). "Estimates of the Economic Return to Schooling from a New Sample of Twins," *The American Economic Review* 84(5): 1157-1173.

* Angrist, Joshua and Alan Krueger (1991). "Does Compulsory Schooling Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 106(4): 979-1014.

Tyler, John, Richard J. Murnane and John Willett (2002). "Estimating the Labor Market Signaling Value of the GED," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115(2): 431-468.

Returns to Educational "Quality" (Meetings 10, April 27)

* Krueger, Alan (1999). "Experimental Estimates of Education Production Functions," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(2): 497-532.

Angrist, Josh and Victor Lavy (1999). "Using Maimonides' Rule to Estimate the Effect of Class Size on Scholastic Achievement," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(2): 497-532.

Immigration (Meetings 11, May 2)

* Card, David (1990). "The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 43(2): 245-257.

Borjas, George (2003). "The Labor Demand Curve Is Downward Sloping: Reexamining the Impact of Immigration on the Labor Market," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

----- EXAM 2 (Meeting 12, May 4) -----

Intergenerational Mobility (Meeting 11, May 9)

* Sacerdote, Bruce (2007). "How Large Are the Effects From Changes in Family Environment? A Study of Korean American Adoptees," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Oreopoulos, Philip, Marianne Page, and Ann Huff Stevens (2008). "The Intergenerational Effects of Worker Displacement," *Journal of Labor Economics* 26(3): 455-483.

Neighborhoods (Meeting 13, May 11)

* Katz, Lawrence F., Jeffrey R. Kling and Jeffrey B. Liebman (2001). "Moving to Opportunity In Boston: Early Results of a Randomized Mobility Experiment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116(2): 607-654.

Jacob, Brian (2004). "Public Housing, Housing Vouchers, and Student Achievement: Evidence from Public Housing Demolitions in Chicago," *American Economic Review* 94(1): 233-258.

----- Meeting 14, May 16 *Guest Lecture* -----

----- May 18 *CLASS CANCELLED* -----

Discrimination (Meetings 16 and 17, May 23 and May 25)

* Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004). "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," *American Economic Review* 94(4): 991-1013.

----- May 30 *MEMORIAL DAY* -----

TBA (Meeting 18, June 1)

----- FINAL (June 9, 10:15am) -----