



Syllabus for Fall 2021

University of Wisconsin-Madison

AAE 720: Seminar in Quantitative and Applied Economics

Credits: 1

Course Designations and Attributes: Graduate Level Course in AAE

Meeting Days & Times and Location:

The class will meet on Fridays, from 2:30pm to 3:30pm, starting September 10th and ending December 10th. We will meet in [Taylor Hall Room B30](#).

Instructional Mode: Face-to-face lectures

How Credit Hours are met by the Course: This class meets for 60 minutes every week over the Fall semester. Students will work on course learning activities for about 60 minutes out of the classroom for every class period (i.e., 60 minutes per week throughout the semester, on average).

INSTRUCTOR

Name: Jordan van Rijn, Ph.D.

Availability: I will hold office hours on Tuesdays from 1:00pm – 2:00pm and Fridays from 10:30am – 11:30am in Taylor Hall room 318.

Email/Preferred Contact: Please put “[AAE 720]” into the subject line of all correspondence. I will strive for same day replies during the week and within 48 hours on weekends and during vacation periods.

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The AAE 720 seminar course consists of presentations from industry professionals and academics on various topics related to the field of quantitative and applied economics. The course will also cover topics related to effective presentation skills.

Prerequisites

Students are strongly encouraged to have prior knowledge of econometrics and microeconomic theory.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is intended to help MSPO students apply the knowledge they've gained from courses in econometrics and microeconomic theory by practicing listening and evaluating presentations on topics related to quantitative and applied economics. A critical skill is to be able to understand an economic argument, identify the statistical approach used, understand why that particular approach was used, and appreciate any limitations of a specific economic argument or econometric methodology.

Another critical skill in the economics profession is to learn how to effectively communicate ideas to a diverse audience. For example, economists are regularly expected to present at seminars, board meetings, conferences, or give interviews to the media. Since these audiences may or may not have experience with economics and quantitative methods, it is important to learn how to present data, statistical analysis, and economic theory and concepts in simple and clear language. Therefore, a secondary goal of this course is to help MSPO students gain presentation skills and experience. This will be achieved through learning from the textbook and instructor, observing and learning from the examples of a variety of outside presenters from industry and academia, and preparing for and performing your own presentation.

Specifically, this course has the following learning outcomes:

- Gain experience and skills at actively listening to and evaluating the arguments and methods of presentations from industry and academia;
- Master the vocabulary relevant to an economics topic, understand the economic context for the issue, and pros/cons associated with potential solutions;
- Develop professional presentation skills through presentation examples and practice.

GRADING

- Quiz: 20%
- Presentation outline: 20%
- Presentation: 40%
- Class attendance & participation: 20%

Final letter grades may be curved upward, but a minimum guarantee is made of an A for 93 or above, AB for 87 or above, B for 80 or above, BC for 75 or above, C for 70 or above, and D for 60 or above.

QUIZ

- There will be approximately 4 - 5 outside presenters from industry and academia. In order to encourage your active listening and participation during their presentations, there will be a quiz on October 29th to test your knowledge of their presentation material, including any associated PowerPoint slides and papers. This will constitute 20% of your grade.

PRESENTATION & PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

- Each student is responsible for giving a 10-15-minute presentation during the final five classes of the course. I will provide more instructions about this in a separate document, but the presentation will cover a topic of your choice related to economics. The presentation can be of one of two formats: 1) Presentation of someone else's economics paper that uses econometric analysis; or 2) Presentation of your original analysis that uses statistical, econometric or

graphical analysis. You will be graded on both your presentation and your presentation slides. Overall, the presentation represents 40% of your grade.

- By October 8th, you are expected to choose a presentation topic and approve it with the instructor. You will also need to provide a presentation outline of your main argument/s and supporting points. I will provide more instructions about this in a separate document. The presentation topic and outline will constitute 20% of your grade.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

- It is very helpful for you and other students if we can create as collaborative and interactive a learning environment as possible. In many ways, you are all in the best position to support each other, help each other learn, and provide feedback to each other. Therefore, you are expected to actively participate in class discussion. This includes asking questions to outside presenters and the instructor, providing feedback to students on their presentations, responding to questions from the instructor or other presenters, and otherwise actively participating in class. I will also provide evaluation sheets for each presenter (including students) that each student is expected to fill out and answer questions about.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

- [How to Give a Speech: EASY-TO-LEARN SKILLS for Successful Presentations, Speeches, Pitches, Lectures, and More!](#), Gary Genard, Gedar & Maitland Press, 2016
 - In particular, I recommend reading Chapters 1, 3 - 7, and 9
- In the second class, I will provide PowerPoint slides that summarize some of the main points of the textbook. Therefore, the textbook is not required, but it is strongly recommended. There will be a copy of the textbook held on reserve at the UW-Madison library.

COURSE TIMELINE

Date	Topic
09/10	Introduction to class / Resources
09/17	Effective presentation skills
09/24	Presentations from industry / academia
10/01	Presentations from industry / academia
10/08	Presentations from industry / academia Tasks: Presentation topic & outline due
10/15	Presentations from industry / academia
10/22	Presentations from industry / academia
10/29	Tasks: Quiz on presentations & papers
11/5	Student presentations
11/12	Student presentations
11/19	Student presentations
11/26	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
12/3	Student presentations
12/10	Student presentations

RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- See the Guide's [Rules, Rights and Responsibilities](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community

Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: “The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.”

<http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Institutional statement on diversity: “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>