

ECON 26B-4: Writing in Economics Practicum

Syllabus, Spring 2023

Contact Details

Instructor: Oriana Montti

Office location: S-1D

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Zoom link: <https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/7012770418>

Communication

You can contact me by email with questions or to schedule a personal or online meeting outside of the student hours. I normally respond to emails within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends).

Meeting Times/Location

Classes

Class meeting times: Tuesdays 9:35-10:55 am. The class will be in person.

Location: Shiffman 125

Student Hours

Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 pm. Room S-1D, Sachar International Center.

By appointment: in-person or online meetings.

I welcome visits during student hours, whether it is to ask a question about the course material or to talk about other concerns or interests.

Accommodations

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. **If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS) (781-736-3470, access@brandeis.edu).** You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the [SAS website](#), including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS. **If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure the effective implementation of accommodations for this class.** In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

Course Description

Course Prerequisites:

ECON 82b (can be taken concurrently).

Learning Goals:

This course is designed to enhance the student's ability to use writing in economics. To do this, each student will address a single policy issue over the semester and use writing to develop their ideas. The target audience will be economists and non-economists in government, industry, and the press. The course combines the processes of writing, re-writing, peer-reviewing, reading, and analyzing useful writing examples in the field. After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. interpret economic indicators
2. search for, display, and analyze data
3. analyze and provide feedback about different pieces of economic writing
4. develop economic analysis on a policy-relevant topic
5. produce a 2 to 4-page economic brief (short paper)
6. produce a 10 to 12-page economic policy report (long paper)
7. make an oral presentation of their written work.

This writing-intensive practicum fulfills the Writing Intensive foundational literacies requirement for Economics majors.

Course materials:

All readings will be accessible via LATTE. There is no mandatory textbook although I recommend the following:

- *Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1999). The elements of style (4th ed.). Pearson.*
- *McCloskey, D. (2019). Economical Writing, Third Edition: Thirty-Five Rules for Clear and Persuasive Prose (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing).*

Credit Hours:

Success in this two-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 4.5 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation, and research for briefs, etc.).

Course Requirements

Assignments

Assignments will be submitted via LATTE every Monday before class at 10 am. **Late submissions will not be accepted** and result in a zero unless exigent circumstances exist. In that case, please contact me via email at least 24 hours before the deadline.

Attendance and participation

Attendance is mandatory, collectively making up 20% of your final grade together with participation. Records of attendance will be kept for each class. Students are allowed one excused absence. Please notify me in advance when you are unable to make it to class.

Students are expected to participate in the course through in-class activities, peer review exercises, and one-on-one meetings. Please come to each session prepared to discuss and ask questions based on the week's assignments. This course is most beneficial when all actively participate and thoughtfully and constructively respond to the comments made in class.

Course Plan

1	1/17/23	Topic: Introductions Activity: Free writing: brainstorming topic ideas
2	1/24/23	Topic: GUIDES template. Guest Speaker: Brandeis Writing Center Activity: Grammar exercise Work to submit: Response paper, 1-2 pages on the topic of choice
3	1/31/23	Topic: Data presentation Guest Speaker: Jason Bernard, Assoc. Dir. Academic Technology, Brandeis IBS Activity: In-class short response paper, explain a graph Work to submit: GUIDES assignment
4	2/7/23	Topic: Short economic brief Activity: Narrowing the research topic. Outline short economic brief Work to submit: Search for and upload an economic brief on your topic/area
5	2/14/23	Topic: Short economic brief Activity: Identify the big idea. Peer review. Work to submit: Short economic brief first draft
	2/21/23	NO CLASS: February break
6	2/28/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Outline economic policy report Work to submit: Short brief final version. Search for and upload an economic policy report
7	3/7/23	Topic: Article report Activity: Evaluating paragraphs. Write-in studio. Work to submit: Article report
8	3/14/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Peer review Work to submit: Economic policy report first draft
9	3/21/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Individual meetings

		Work to submit: Draft for one-on-one discussion
10	3/28/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Individual meetings Work to submit: Draft for one-on-one discussion
11	4/4/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Individual meetings Work to submit: Draft for one-on-one discussion
	4/11/23	NO CLASS: Passover break
12	4/18/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Individual meetings Work to submit: Draft for one-on-one discussion
13	4/25/23	Topic: Economic policy report Activity: Student presentations Work to submit: Presentation slides and recording

Supporting materials

Area	Supporting materials
Grammar and style	Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1999) , The elements of style (4th ed.). Pearson. Chaubey, V. (2018) . The little book of research writing: The structural challenge of communicating knowledge + a method to meet it. (2018 ed.) Self-published, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
Writing in economics	McCloskey, D. (2019) , Economical Writing, Third Edition: Thirty-Five Rules for Clear and Persuasive Prose (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing).
GUIDES template	Matthew Weinzierl, Jonathan Schlefer, and Ann Cullen, 2017. HBS Case 9-710-044
Data presentation	UNECE (2009) , Making Data Meaningful, Part 1: A guide to writing stories about numbers, & Part 2: A guide to presenting statistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.
In-class activities	Caviglia-Harris, J. (2020) , Using the process approach to teach writing in economics, The Journal of Economic Education, 51:2, 116-129.
Peer review	Smith, H. M., Broughton, A., & Copley, J. (2005) , Evaluating the Written Work of Others: One Way Economics Students Can Learn to Write. The Journal of Economic Education, 36(1), 43-58. Kiefer, Kate. (1998) , Using Student Peer Review. <i>Writing@CSU</i> . https://writing.colostate.edu/teaching/guide.cfm?guideid=99

Evaluation and Grading

Course grades will be based on attendance, participation, and on-time delivery of assignments/papers. Please see the rubrics on Latte for detailed grading descriptions.

Class Element	Grade Percentage
1. Participation	20%
In-class participation	10%
Other assignments	10%
2. Writing assignments	20%
Response paper on a topic of choice	10%
GUIDES Template	10%
3. Short economic brief	20%
First draft	10%
Final version	10%
4. Article report	10%
5. Economic policy report	30%
First draft	10%
Presentation	5%
Final version: due May 8th, 10 AM	15%

Grades based on the course averages will be assigned as follows:

Letter grade	Percentage
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69

D	63-66
D-	60-62
E	Below 60

Important Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic honesty by a student, subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions (see section 20 of R&R). Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic honesty as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources (<https://guides.library.brandeis.edu/c.php?g=301723>).

As a college student, it is your responsibility to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Representing work generated by artificial intelligence as one's own work is considered to be academically dishonest. This includes (a) ensuring that all work submitted for grades is your own original work, and (b) properly citing any sources that you use.

Classroom Health and Safety

- Register for the [Brandeis Emergency Notification System](#). Students who receive an emergency notification while attending class should notify their instructor immediately. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. As a precaution, review [this active shooter information sheet](#).
- Brandeis provides [this shuttle service](#) for traveling across campus or to downtown Waltham, Cambridge, and Boston.
- On the Brandeis campus, all students, faculty, staff, and guests are required to observe the university's policies on physical distancing and mask-wearing to support the health and safety of all classroom participants. Review up-to-date [COVID-related health and safety policies](#) regularly.

Course Materials/Books/Apps/Equipment

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options, including vouchers for purchases made at the Brandeis Bookstore.

LATTE

[LATTE](#) is the Brandeis learning management system. Log in using your UNET ID and password. For LATTE help, contact Library@brandeis.edu.

Library

[The Brandeis Library](#) collections and staff offer resources and services to support Brandeis students, faculty, and staff. Librarians and Specialists from Research & Instructional Services, Public Services, Archives & Special Collections, Sound & Image Media Studios, MakerLab, AutomationLab, and Digital Scholarship Lab are available to help you through consultations and workshops.

Privacy

To protect your privacy in any case where this course involves online student work outside of Brandeis password-protected spaces, you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias. You must share the pseudonym/ alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

Student Support

Brandeis University is committed to supporting all our students so they can thrive. If a student, faculty, or staff member wants to learn more about support resources, the [Support at Brandeis](#) webpage offers a comprehensive list that includes these staff colleagues you can consult, along with other support resources:

- The [Care Team](#)
- [Academic Services](#) (undergraduate)
- [Graduate Student Affairs](#)
- Directors of Graduate Studies in each department, School of Arts & Sciences
- Program Administrators for the Heller School and International Business School
- [University Ombuds](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).