

Master Syllabus

Course: ECO350: Intermediate Writing in Economics

Cluster Requirement: 1C

This University Studies Master Syllabus serves as a guide and standard for all instructors teaching an approved in the University Studies program. Individual instructors have full academic freedom in teaching their courses, but as a condition of course approval, agree to focus on the outcomes listed below, to cover the identified material, to use these or comparable assignments as part of the course work, and to make available the agreed-upon artifacts for assessment of learning outcomes.

Course Overview:

The intermediate writing course in Economics is a "variable-content" course. That is, the specific economic issues covered vary by instructor and by semester, but there is a core component of the course that focuses on the tools and practice of professional writing in the economics discipline. Students will engage in low and high stakes writing assignments throughout the semester with a particular focus on research writing, integration and synthesis of knowledge from diverse sources, policy analysis and proper citation and formatting. The course will also provide a forum for students to learn and practice oral communication and presentation skills.

Learning Outcomes:

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:

In addition to content specific learning objectives, which will vary by semester and topic, after completing this course students will be able to:

1. Apply general economic concepts in writing.
2. Organize ideas in a purposeful way illustrating command of the subject.
3. Identify, locate, evaluate, and responsibly use high quality, credible, relevant sources in support of an argument.
4. Succinctly communicate meaning to readers without errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

University Studies Learning Outcomes:

1. Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts.
2. Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences.
3. Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions.
4. Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

Examples of Texts and/or Assigned Readings:

Kwoka, John E. and Lawrence J. White. 2008. *The Antitrust Revolution: Economics, Competition, and Policy*, Fifth Edition, Oxford University Press.

Rosen, Harvey S. 2005. *Public Finance*, 7th Edition, Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Lawrence, Sarah and Daniel P Mears. 2004. *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Supermax Prisons: Critical Steps and Considerations*. Urban Institute Justice Policy Center.

Example Assignments:

1. Low-Stakes Writing Assignments: 15% or more
2. High-Stakes Paper: 25% or more
3. Course-Specific Assignments: 60% or less

All instructors will assign a high stakes paper, though the topic and nature of the paper may vary based on the topic of the course. In addition, all instructors will select from a menu of low and mid-stakes writing assignment to provide students with the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their writing throughout the course. The remaining assignments will vary based on the course content and may include problem sets, exams, and an oral presentation.

Low Stakes Writing Assignments

Instructors will choose from among the following low stakes writing assignment options such that the combined percentage of the final course grade will be a minimum of 15% and the combined writing will consist of a minimum of 10 pages. See Appendix 1 for sample assignments and corresponding rubrics.

- **Minute papers** - distributed at the end of most face-to-face classes and graded on a participation basis. At the start of the next class, there will be a brief discussion of the best 2-3 minute papers, what qualities make them models, and what improvements could be made. Minute papers will consist of one paragraph responses to questions like:
 - What was the most important topic discussed today and why?
 - What topic from today's class is the most confusing/least clear and why?
 - Content-based topics – e.g. What criteria do the FTC and DOJ use in determining whether to contest a horizontal merger?
 - Theory-based topics - e.g. Choose one vertical restraint and describe how it could be used by firms to both improve efficiency and achieve or maintain market power.
- **Discussion board posts** - requiring research and integration of information from external sources. Students will be required to write an initial post addressing the discussion concepts/questions and post responses to at least 2 classmates. Responses to classmates must advance the discussion with questions, comparisons, examples, etc. Because this is a writing course, comments on writing quality and content are welcome.
- **Summary papers** - Students will read, analyze and critique a study or academic journal article. The summary should highlight how basic economic concepts are applied and use knowledge acquired in class to analyze such aspects as: which portions of a study were done correctly and which portions were not, what differentiates this study from others in the field, what are the key contributions from the research, etc.

High Stakes Writing - Paper

Instructors will craft a scaffolded paper assignment. The paper could take the form of a secondary research paper, case study analysis, or policy analysis. Paper topics and formats will depend on the content of the course, but all will involve the following stages of development:

- Preliminary Research
- Topic Selection
- Annotated Bibliography
- Draft
- Peer Review followed by Editing
- Final Version

At each stage students will create and submit a result and receive feedback on that result. See Appendix 2 for sample assignments and corresponding rubrics.

Learning Outcomes and Artifacts

All four University Studies outcomes will be encouraged through the paper assignment; therefore, this will be the major artifact documenting student learning.

Intermediate Writing Course Criteria:

- **Intermediate Writing courses employ writing as a method of deepening student learning.** All of the writing assignments, low and high stakes, will address this criteria. From minute papers encouraging students to identify concepts that are unclear to research papers broadening and deepening students' knowledge of a particular topic, this course will use writing strategically to improve student learning of both content and written communication skills.
- **Faculty provide feedback, on-going guidance, and clear expectations for “effective” written response.** The scaffolding of the paper assignment combined with rubrics at each stage provides clear expectations for students. In addition, faculty feedback and guidance are built into the paper assignment at multiple stages and into the low stakes assignments throughout the course.
- **Writing accounts for 40-60% of the final grade.** At a minimum, this course is structured so that writing assignments make up 40% of the final grade; however, it is expected that many instructors will include more than the minimum outlined in this Master Syllabus.
- **Students must complete at least 20 pages of writing.** The paper assignment will require 10-12 pages of writing, and the low-stakes assignments will comprise at least 10 pages of writing.
- **Intermediate Writing courses should have a lower number of students, in the 20-25 range.** This course will be offered every other semester and will be open to majors only, which will allow the course capacity to be held at 25.

Sample Course Outline:

The topics and outline of the course will be dependent on the instructor and semester, but lessons on writing skills will be included in all courses. These lessons will be a combination of in-class activities, online activities, lectures, readings, etc. While the writing skills will be enforced all semester through the low stakes assignments, the timing of the scaffolded paper assignment will follow the corresponding lesson. For example, following a lesson on information literacy, students will prepare their preliminary research.

Removing the content-specific aspects of the course, a sample outline of only the writing-specific aspects is below:

Unit 1

Unit 1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Access and search EconLit for economic literature on a particular topic.
- Cull literature to identify relevant research on a particular topic.
- Request an article via inter-library loan.
- Critically read and evaluate an academic journal article and write a summary that includes the goal of the research, what distinguishes it from other research in the field, and the key findings.

Unit 1 Writing Lessons

- Information Literacy
 - searching library and internet for appropriate sources
 - definition of appropriate sources
 - how to qualify a source
- Critical Reading and Evaluation
 - determining the goal of the research
 - identifying key differentiators from other work in the field
 - articulating main contributions

- identifying key assumptions and their role in the sensitivity of the results
- identifying author's perspective and constituents

Unit 1 Writing Assignments

- Low stakes article summary
- High stakes preliminary research assignment

Unit 2

Unit 2 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Define a research/writing topic that is of appropriate scope and for which sufficient information is available
- Properly document information gathered from many sources.

Unit 2 Writing Lessons

- Choosing your topic - interest, scope, information
- Parenthetical documentation, writing a bibliography, plagiarism
- Why and How To Write an Annotated Bibliography

Unit 2 Writing Assignments

- High stakes topic selection
- High stakes annotated bibliography

Unit 3

Unit 3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Write a cohesive evaluation and synthesis of information from various sources.
- Critique a peer's writing in a constructive and productive manner.

Unit 3 Writing Lessons

- Developing an Outline
- Integrating Source Material in Your Writing
- How to Peer Review

Unit 3 Writing Assignments

- High stakes draft
- High stakes peer review

Unit 4

Unit 4 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Integrate readers' suggestions to improve the quality of the paper.
- Correct errors in the draft.

Unit 4 Writing Lessons

- Revising - Identifying Problems and Implementing Solutions
- Editing for mechanics and language control - Is this the most concise, direct paper you can write?

Unit 4 Writing Assignments

- High stakes final version

Appendix 1: Samples of Low Stakes Writing Assignments and Corresponding Rubrics

Sample Discussion Board Assignment

EconLit Search and Summary Assignment

Go to UMass Dartmouth library website (<http://www.lib.umassd.edu/>). Locate EconLit under the Find Articles and Search Databases link. Search EconLit for an article on horizontal mergers and patents.

Once you have located the following article, click on the title. In the left toolbar, click Search UMD Library Journal Locator. If UMD had online access to this article it would be available here. Because UMD does not have access to this article, you will need to request it via inter-library loan. Proceed to complete the ILL application for the article and print the completed application (but do not submit it. I have already requested the article and have posted it for you on myCourses) Hand in the print-out of the completed application in class.

Park, Walter G. and Ralph Sonenshine. 2012. "Impact of Horizontal Mergers on Research & Development and Patenting: Evidence from Merger Challenges in the U.S." *Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade*. 12(1), 143-67.

Critically read and evaluate the journal article and write a 2-3 paragraph summary that includes the goal of the research, what distinguishes it from other research in the field, and the key findings. In addition, read and comment on at least two of your classmates' posts. Be sure to make substantive comments that advance the discussion.

Sample Discussion Board Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators			
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Initial Post - Quality and Timeliness	(12 points) Initial post was made before the deadline. Response is concise and thoroughly completes the requirements of the assignment. Aspects of the response are unique with respect to previous posts.	(9 points) Initial post was made before the deadline. Response completes the requirements of the assignment. Little of the response is unique with respect to previous posts.	(6 points) Initial post was not made before the deadline and/or response does not complete the requirements of the assignment.	(0 points) No posts completed.
Peer Commentary	(8 points) Posted responses to at least two classmates before the deadline. Both responses advanced the discussion in some way, such as raising questions, evaluating similarities and differences compared to other posts in the discussion.	(6 points) Posted at least one response to a classmate before the deadline that advanced the discussion.	(4 points) Did not post any responses to classmates before the deadline that advanced the discussion. Either no responses were posted or responses were merely "I agree," "good answers," and the like.	(0 points) No posts completed.

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators			
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar, and Style	(8 points) Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are rare and style is formal and professional.	(6 points) There are some errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar and/or style is too informal.	(4 points) Post(s) contains 5 or more errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation and/or style is inappropriate.	(0 points) No posts completed or posts are incoherent.

Sample Summary Paper Assignment

Read, analyze and critique the cost-benefit study. You should highlight how basic economic concepts are applied in these studies and use knowledge acquired in class to determine which portions of a study were done correctly and which portions were not.

The papers are to be typed and contained in 3-4 pages double-spaced. The paper should essentially be divided into two parts. The first part should provide a concise summary of the article. The summary may reflect and include some of the following:

- Identify the specific question/issue that is being addressed in the article
- Why is the question/issue interesting or important
- Clarify definitions of important terms if necessary
- Clearly outline the important assumptions made in the study
- Specify the perspective from which the initiative is assessed
- Clearly explain the goals of the project
- Identify the beneficiaries of the initiative and clearly outline how they would benefit from the project
- Who bears the cost of the initiative? Outline and describe the factors that are included as costs
- Discuss the valuation and analysis techniques use in quantifying analysis.
- Discuss the findings of the analysis

The second part of the paper should be a critique/reflection of the cost-benefit study. It may consider some of the following:

- How convincing was the author's results/argument? Provide evidence.
- Are the assumptions of the article reasonable; are the assumptions sensitive to any changes.
- Discuss any problems or inaccuracies in the study

Sample Summary Paper Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Exceptional (15)	Proficient (10)	Emerging (5)
Summary	Clearly and thoroughly summarize the article by identifying goal(s); major assumptions; costs and	Summarize the article showing some understanding of the goal(s); assumptions; costs and	Does not present a clear understanding of the article by identifying goal(s); major assumptions; costs and

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Exceptional (15)	Proficient (10)	Emerging (5)
	benefits; and main findings.	benefits; and findings.	benefits; and main findings.
Critique/reflection	Provide a thorough analysis of the article, identifying strengths and weaknesses. Clearly explain how the findings of the article are sensitive to the assumptions made. Identify any inaccuracies or shortcomings in the article and suggest ideas for future research with clear evidence.	Provide a brief analysis of the article, identifying a few strengths and weaknesses. Does not provide a clear explanation of how the findings of the article are sensitive to the assumptions made. Identify inaccuracies and shortcomings in the article but does not provide supporting evidence.	Does not provide an analysis of the article strengths and weaknesses. Does not identify how the findings of the article are sensitive to the assumptions made. Provides no evidence of inaccuracies or shortcoming in the article.
Research and Incorporation of Evidence from other Sources	Incorporates and properly documents evidence from sources other than the article under consideration, explaining relevance of the source material to the article being analyzed.	Incorporates and documents evidence from sources other than the article under consideration. Source material adds to the explanation of the ideas in the paper, but is not explained or the links are not clearly articulated.	Does not incorporate and document sources outside of the article being analyzed.
Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar, and Style	Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are rare and style is formal and professional.	There are some errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar. Style is too informal.	There are 5 or more errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation. Style is inappropriate.

Appendix 2: High Stakes Paper Assignment

Sample Case Study Analysis

Choose an antitrust case not covered in class and write an 8-10 page analysis of the case. Throughout the course, we will discuss antitrust case studies and learn the underlying economic consequences of preventing or allowing the firm behavior. For this project, you must choose a case not covered in the course and prepare your own analysis of the case. You may choose a case from the primary text, a case from the website that accompanies the text, or any other notable antitrust case. Your paper should include:

1. An overview of the market conditions prompting the case
2. Identification and explanation of the type of alleged antitrust behavior
3. An analysis of the economics of the case
4. Discussion of the outcome of the case and reasons for your agreement or disagreement with this outcome.

There are many building blocks to the final paper:

- **Preliminary Research** (15 points) – Locate, read, and summarize 3 academic journal articles on antitrust cases. You will post your summaries and complete bibliographic citations from each article to your page on the course wiki so that your classmates can learn from your preliminary research and you from theirs.
- **Topic** (10 points) No more than 3 students may choose the same case. Cases will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Be sure to do ample preliminary research to ensure that sufficient information is available.
- **Annotated Bibliography** (20 points): You must use a minimum of 8 approved sources. Approved sources include academic journal articles, firm annual reports, business periodicals, and books. You may use internet sources if they are from academic journals, national newspapers (Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, etc.), business periodicals (Business Week, The Economist, etc.), or government agencies (Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, GAO, Securities and Exchange Commission, etc.) Wikipedia and other online encyclopedias and all private websites are NOT approved sources and should not be included. If you have a question about the suitability of a source, please ask.
 - An annotated bibliography is a list of sources with a brief summary of the important information, relevance, and quality of the source. For an example and additional information, please consult <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography> or www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm
 - Chicago style, MLA, and APA formats are acceptable. For guidance, please see www.lib.umassd.edu/get/bibstyleguides.html
 - Please see the Resources folder on our myCourses page for additional writing resources
- **Draft** (25 points): Your draft should be the not-quite-perfect version of your final paper. It should show evidence of substantial research and evaluation. Consult the rubric for guidance on key criteria for grading. Comments and corrections will be made for revision before submission of final version.
- **Peer Review** (10 points): Each student will exchange his/her draft with an assigned classmate. You will then read and consider your classmates' paper according to the Draft Rubric and provide feedback on his/her paper
- **Final Version** (30 points): See the rubric for how points will be awarded and additional guidelines on formatting.

Preliminary Research Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement
Content	(8 points) All article summaries are clear, concise, and convey the main contributions of the paper. Someone who has not read the paper has a reasonable idea of what the author(s) find.	(5 points) Article summaries convey the basic contributions of the papers, but may leave someone who has not read the paper with questions about the scope or conclusions of the work.	(0 points) Summaries are not posted and/or one or more summaries do not convey the basic contributions of the papers.

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement
Quantity and Citation	(4 points) Three or more articles are summarized and the full and accurate citations are included for each.	(2 points) Two articles are summarized and the full and accurate citations are included for both.	(0 points) Fewer than two summaries are posted and/or one or more citations is missing or inaccurate.
Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, and Style	(3 points) Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are rare and style is formal and professional.	(2 points) There are some errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar and/or style is too informal.	(0 points) Writing contains 5 or more errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation and/or style is inappropriate.

Annotated Bibliography Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators			
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Quantity and Timeliness	(5 points) Annotated bibliography includes at least 8 approved sources and was posted to the wiki by the deadline.	(3 points) Annotated bibliography includes at least 5 approved sources and was posted to the wiki by the deadline.	(1 point) Annotated bibliography contains fewer than 5 sources and was posted to the wiki by the deadline.	(0 points) Annotated bibliography was not posted to the wiki by the deadline
Content	(12 points) Each source has a complete and accurate citation followed by a 1-2 paragraph explanation of the value of the source.	(8 points) Each source has a complete and accurate citation followed by a 1-2 sentence explanation of the value of the source.	(4 points) Some sources are missing complete and accurate citations and/or some sources do not have explanations of the value of the source.	(0 points) All of the sources are missing complete and accurate citations and/or all sources do not have explanations of the value of the source and/or no content was posted by the deadline.
Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, and Style	(3 points) Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are rare and style is formal and professional.	(2 points) There are some errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar and/or style is too informal.	(1 point) Annotated bibliography contains 5 or more errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation and/or style is inappropriate.	(0 points) Annotated bibliography was not posted by the deadline.

Draft Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators			
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Progress	(4 points) Draft contains an introduction, body, and conclusion in a minimum of 8 pages.	(3 points) Draft contains an introduction, body, and conclusion in a minimum of 6 pages.	(2 points) Draft is fewer than 6 pages in length and/or it does not contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.	(0 points) Draft was not submitted.
Content	(13 points) Paper includes all four required content areas (see assignment). Writing shows evidence of critical interpretation and evaluation of source documents. Source information is integrated into text and used to support primary themes of the paper. Demonstrates command of economic theory and practice through correct use of economic terms, accurate interpretations of findings of other researchers, and insightful conclusions.	(9 points) Paper includes all four required content areas. Source information helps to communicate primary themes of the paper but is not integrated smoothly and/or the significance of the information is not explained. Demonstrates understanding of economic theory and practice through correct use of economic terms and explanations of findings of other researchers.	(6 points) Paper is missing one or more of the four content areas and/or source information does not help to communicate primary themes of the paper and/or writing does not demonstrate understanding of economic theory and practice.	(0 points) Draft was not submitted.
Writing Style and Format	(4 points) Draft uses formal, professional language; errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation are rare.	(3 points) Draft contains fewer than 5 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and style flaws are rare.	(1 points) Style is inappropriate and/or draft contains more than 5 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	(0 points) Draft was not submitted by due date or writing is incoherent.
Sources and Documentation	(4 points) Draft references a minimum of 8 approved sources using correct parenthetical documentation and a formal bibliography.	(3 points) Draft references a minimum of 8 approved sources but requires some corrections in documentation and/or bibliography.	(1 points) Draft references fewer than 8 approved sources and/or requires major corrections in documentation and/or bibliography.	(0 points) Draft does not include sources and/or documentation.

Final Version Rubric

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators			
	Exceptional	Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Completion	(5 points) Contains an introduction, body, and conclusion in an 8-10 page paper.	(3 points) Contains an introduction, body, and conclusion in a 6-7 page paper.	(1 points) Final version is fewer than 6 pages in length and/or does not contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.	(0 points) Final version was not submitted by the deadline.
Content	(15 points) Paper includes all four required content areas (see assignment). Writing shows evidence of critical interpretation and evaluation of source documents. Source information is integrated into text and used to support primary themes of the paper. Demonstrates command of economic theory and practice through correct use of economic terms, accurate interpretations of findings of other researchers, and insightful conclusions.	(10 points) Paper includes all four required content areas. Source information helps to communicate primary themes of the paper but is not integrated smoothly and/or the significance of the information is not explained. Demonstrates understanding of economic theory and practice through correct use of economic terms and explanations of findings of other researchers.	(5 points) Paper is missing one or more of the four content areas and/or source information does not help to communicate primary themes of the paper and/or writing does not demonstrate understanding of economic theory and practice.	(0 points) Final version was not submitted by the deadline.
Writing Style and Format	(5 points) Final version uses formal, professional language; errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation are rare. Writing is clear and concise.	(3 points) Final version contains fewer than 5 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and style flaws are rare. Writing is clear.	(1 points) Style is inappropriate and/or final version contains more than 5 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	(0 points) Final version was not submitted by the deadline or most or all of the writing is incoherent.
Sources and Documentation	(5 points) Final version references a minimum of 8 approved sources using correct parenthetical documentation and a formal (non-annotated) bibliography.	(3 points) Final version references a minimum of 8 approved sources but requires minor corrections in documentation and/or (non-annotated) bibliography.	(1 points) Final version references fewer than 8 approved sources and/or requires major corrections in documentation and/or bibliography.	(0 points) Final version does not include sources and/or documentation.