

Econ 438: Fall 2026

Description

This course has an applied econometrics focus. The topics include voting behavior, betting markets, sports, and various issues in microeconomics. The requirements are three empirical papers. The first, worth 20 percent of the grade, is an extension of an existing article, where some of the results are duplicated and then extended. A voting example is provided if a student wants to use it. The second, worth 30 percent of the grade, is more of the same but with no example provided. The third, worth 50 percent of the grade, is a more original paper within the range of topics covered in the course, where data are collected and analyzed using whatever econometric techniques are relevant. For seniors this paper can possibly be the beginning of a senior essay. The aim of the course is to get students doing original empirical research using econometric tools. It is also to prepare students to read empirical papers in economics and other social sciences.

Prerequisites

Two semesters of econometrics, like Econ 117 and 123 or Econ 135 and 136, and intermediate microeconomics. Special permission from the instructor is needed if the student has had only one semester of econometrics.

Attendance

Class attendance is required, and there will be considerable class participation.

Statistical Software

Any statistical software is fine. Class time will not be taken going over software.

Readings

The following list of readings is tentative. Some papers may be added and some subtracted, partly depending on students' interests. And not all papers may be required reading. Students will be asked to present some of the

papers. Also, time will be taken for students' presentations of their own papers. All readings are online except for your econometrics text.

September 2, 4, 9: Econometric Methodology and Tools

- Case, Fair, and Oster, Chapter 36, "[Critical Thinking About Research.](#)"
- Fair, Ray C., [Predicting Presidential Elections and Other Things, Second Edition](#), Chapters 1 and 2.
- Oster, Emily, [Here's Why It's So Impossible to Get Reliable Diet Advice From the News](#), *Slate*.
- * Data from *Slate* paper: [Slate data](#).
- Your econometrics text---use this for review throughout the course.
- Correlations: [Sodas are bad](#)
- Correlations: [Vegan is so so](#)
- Blood Pressure: [Take pills at night](#)
- Gary Smith on luck in baseball: [Luck in baseball](#)
- Example of data mining, Gary Smith, [Data Mining](#)
- * Fraud, [Fraud](#)
- * Covid-19 Random Control Trial, [RCT](#)
- * Gary Smith on Bayes' rule and Simpson's paradox: [Bayes' rule and Simpson's paradox](#)
- Correlations: [Steps are good](#)
- Correlations: [Fast steps are even better](#)
- Correlations: [4000 steps are good](#)
- Correlations: [7000 steps fine; don't need 10000](#)
- RCT Retirement Communities: [fast steps are good](#)

September 14, 16: Explaining and Predicting Voting Behavior

- Fair, Ray C., [The Economy and Voting Behavior](#), February 22, 2017.
- Voting site: [Voting site](#).
- Vote equation through 1960: [Equation](#).
- Pitfalls: [Pitfalls](#).
- Coattail: [Coattail](#).
- Fair, Ray C., [Predicting Presidential Elections and Other Things, Second Edition](#), Chapters 3 and 4.
- Fair, Ray C., [Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations: November 2022 Update](#).
- Fair, Ray C., [Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations](#), *American Journal of Political Science*, January 2009, 55-72. (This is optional, but you may want to skim it.)
- Seemingly Unrelated Regression Model: [SUR](#).

September 21, 23: Explaining the Voting Behavior of Members of Congress and Student Presentations of the First Paper

- Washington, Ebonya, [Female Socialization: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers' Voting on Women's Issues](#), *The American Economic Review*, 2008, 311-332.

First paper due Monday, September 28, before class.

September 28, 3024: Topics in Sports Economics--1

- Fair, Ray C., and John F. Oster, [College Football Rankings and Market Efficiency](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2007, 3-18. .
- Murray, Thomas J., [Examining the Relationship Between Scheduling and the Outcomes of Regular Season Games in the National Football League](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2018, 696-724.
- Nardinelli, Clark, and Curtis Simon, [Customer Racial Discrimination in the Market for Memorabilia: The Case of Baseball](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1990, 575-595.
- Bradbury, John Charles, and Joshua D. Pitts, [Full Cost-of-Attendance Scholarships and College Choice: Evidence from NCAA Football](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2018.
- Guo, Mengmeng, and Shihe Fu, [Running With a Mask? The Effect of Air Pollution on Marathon Runners' Performance](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2019. [complete copy](#).
- Gan, Chen, Taotao Deng, and Weishu Zhao, [Citi Marathon Events and Tourism Industry: A Quasi-Natural Experiment](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2023.
- Reilly, Partaick, John L. Solow, and Peter von Allmen, [When the Stars Are Out: The Impact of Missed Games on NBA Television Audiences](#) *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2023.
- Probit, Logit, Tobit, [Probit, Logit, Tobit](#)

October 5, 7: Topics in Sports Economics--2

- Fair, Ray C., [Estimated Age Effects in Baseball](#), *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports*, 2008.
- Solow, John L., and Anthony C. Krautmann, [Do You Get What You Pay for? Salary and Ex Ante Player Value in Major League Baseball](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2020.
- Ganz, Scott C., and Kieran Allsop, [A Mere Fan Effect on Home-Court Advantage](#), *Journal of Sports Economics*, 2024, 30-53.

October 12, 14: Political Betting Markets

- Wolfers, Justin, and Eric Zitzewitz, [Prediction Markets](#), *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 2004, 107-126.
- Rhode, Paul W., and Koleman S. Strumpf, [Historical Presidential Betting Markets](#), *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 2004, 127-142.
- Snowberg, Erik, Justin Wolfers, and Eric Zitzewitz, [Partisan Impacts on the Economy: Evidence from Prediction Markets and Close Elections](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2007, 807-829.
- Snowberg, Erik, Justin Wolfers, and Eric Zitzewitz, [Party Influence in Congress and the Economy](#), November 30, 2006.
- Wolfers, Justin, and Eric Zitzewitz, [The 'Standard Error' of Event Studies: Lessons from the 2016 Election](#), *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 2018.
- Diercks, Anthony M., Jared Dean Katz, and Jonathan H. Wright, [Kalshi and the Rise of Macro Markets](#), NBER Working Paper 34702, January 2026.

October 19, 26, 28: Announcement Effects on Stock and Bond Markets and Student Presentations of the Second Paper

- Knight, Brian, [Are Policy Platforms Capitalized into Equity Prices? Evidence from the Bush/Gore 2000 Presidential Election](#), *Journal of Public Economics*, 2006, 751-773.
- Shon, John J., [Do Stock Returns Vary With Campaign Contributions? The Bush versus Gore 2000 Presidential Elections](#), 2006.
- Fisman, Raymond, ["Estimating the Value of Political Connections"](#), *The American Economic Review*, September 2001, 1095-1102.
- Fisman, David, Ray Fisman, Julia Galef, and Rakesh Khurana, [Estimating the Value of Connections to Vice-President Cheney](#)," May 24, 2006.
- Wagner, Alexander F., Richard J. Zeckhauser, and Alexandre Ziegler, [Unequal Rewards to Firms: Stock market Responses to the Trump Election and the 2017 Corporate Tax Reform](#), *AER Papers and Proceedings*, 2018.
- Fair, Ray C., [Shock Effects on Stock, Bonds, and Exchange Rates](#), *Journal of International Money and Finance*, 2003, 207-341.

Second paper due Monday, November 2, before class.

November 2, 4: Natural Experiments

- Gentzkow, Matthew, and Jesse M. Shapiro, [Preschool Television Viewing and Adolescent Test Scores Historical Evidence From the Coleman Study](#), *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2008.
- Jensen, Robert, and Emily Oster, [The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women's Status in India](#), *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 2009, 1057-1094.
- Barreca, Alan I., Melanie Guldi, Jason M. Lindo, and Glen R. Waddell, [Saving Babies? Revisiting the Effect of Very Low Birth Weight Classification](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2011.
- Dell, Melissa, and Pablo Querubin, [Nation Building Through Foreign Intervention: Evidence from Discontinuities in Military Strategies](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2018
- Merilainen, Jaakko, and Matti Mitrunen, [The Loser's Long Curse: How Exposure to Class Conflict Shapes Election Outcomes](#), *Comparative Political Studies*, 2023.

November 9, 11: Grades, Wine, and Extramarital Affairs

- Hamermesh, Daniel S., and Amy Parker, [Beauty in the Classroom: Instructors' Pulchritude and Putative Pedagogical Productivity](#), *Economics of Education Review*, 2005.
- Durden, Garey C., and Larry V. Ellis, [The Effects of Attendance on Student Learning in Principles of Economics](#), *The American Economic Review*, 1995, 343-346.
- Ashenfelter, Orley, David Ashmore, and Roberty Lalonde, [Bordeaux Wine Vintage Quality and the Weather](#), *Chance*, 1995, 7-14.
- Fair, Ray C., [Predicting Presidential Elections and Other Things, Second Edition](#), Chapter 6.
- Gracner, Tadeja, Claire Boone, and Paul J. Gertler, [Exposure to Sugar Rationing in the First 1000 Days of Life Protected Against Chronic Disease](#), *Science*, 2024.
- Fair, Ray C., [A Theory of Extramarital Affairs](#) *The Journal of Political Economy*, 1978.

November 16, 18: Minimum Wage, Minimum Driving Age

- Card, David, and Alan Krueger, [Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast-Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania](#), *The American Economic Review*, 1994, 772-793.
- OPTIONAL: Jardim, Katerina, et al., [Minimum Wage Increases, Wages, and Low-Wage Employment: Evidence From Seattle](#), NBER Working Paper 23532, May 2018.

- Clemens, Jeffrey, and Michael R. Strain, [The Short-Run Employment Effects of Recent Minimum Wage Changes: Evidence from the American Community Survey](#), November 12, 2017.
- Schanzenbach, Diane Whitmore, Julia A. Turner, and Sarah Turner, [Raising State Minimum Wages, Lowering Community College Enrollment](#), NBER Working Paper 31540, December 2023.
- Carpenter, Christopher, and Carlos Dobkin, [The Effect of Alcohol Consumption on Mortality: Regression Discontinuity Evidence from the Minimum Drinking Age](#), *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, January 2009, 164-182.

Outline of third paper due Wednesday, November 30, before class.

November 30, December 2: Is the Harvard Admissions Process Biased Against Asian Americans?

- Arcidiacono, Peter, Josh Kinsler, and Tyler Ransom, [Legacy and Athlete Preferences at Harvard](#), December 22, 2020.
- Arcidiacono, Peter, Josh Kinsler, and Tyler Ransom, [Asian American Discrimination in Harvard Admissions](#), June 10, 2020.
- OPTIONAL: [Peter Arcidiacono's report, October 16, 2017](#)
- OPTIONAL: [David Card's report, December 15, 2017](#)
- OPTIONAL: [Arcidiacono's rebuttal to Card's report](#)
- OPTIONAL: [Card's rebuttal to Arcidiacono's rebuttal](#)
- OPTIONAL: Arcidiacono, Peter, Josh Kinsler, and Tyler Ransom, [Divergent: The Time Parh of Legacy and Athlete Admissions at Harvard](#), NBER Working Paper 26315, September 2019.

December 7, 9: Student Presentations of the Third Paper

Third paper due Tuesday, December 15, at 9:00am.

Possible Other Readings

- Chetty, Raj, et al., [The Economic Impacts of COVID-19](#), September 2020.
- Goodman, Joshua, Oded Gurantz, and Jonathan Smith, [Take Two! SAT Retaking and College Enrollment Gaps](#), NBER Working Paper 24945, August 2018.
- Almond, Douglas, Joseph J. Doyle, Jr., Amanda E. Kowalski, and Heidi Williams, [Estimating Marginal Returns to Medical Care: Evidence from At-risk Newborns](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2010.

- Almond et al., [Reply](#), *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2011.
- Guthold, Regina, Gretchen A. Steverns, Leanne M. Riley, and Fiona C. Bull, [Worldwide Trends in Insufficient Physical Activity from 2001 to 2016](#), WHO study 2018.
- Data from Hamermesh and Parker paper: [Data](#).
- Wiebe, Douglas J., et al, [Association Between the Experimental Kickoff Rule and Concussion Rates in Ivy League Football](#), *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2018.
- Chen, M. Keith, Jonathan E. Ingersoll, Jr., and Edward H. Kaplan, [Modeling a Presidential Prediction Market](#), *Management Science*, 2008.

News Items and Miscellaneous

- Exercise: [Exercise](#)
- Wine results: [Wine results](#)
- Drinking: [Drinking](#)
- How to Slow the Wind: [How to Slow the Wind](#)
- NBER studies: [NBER studies](#)
- Decline Rates: [Decline Rates](#)
- Concussions: [Concussions](#)
- BAA: [BAA](#)
- Branch Rickey: [Branch Rickey](#)
- A big problem for young workers: 70- and 80-year olds who won't retire [older workers](#)
- Ozempic slows aging [Ozempic](#)
- Emily Oster, Processed foods [Processed foods](#)
- Black Males and Police [Police](#)
- Viagra and Alzheimer's [Viagra and Alzheimer's](#)
- Gary Smith p-hacking 1 [p-hacking 1](#)
- Gary Smith p-hacking 2 [p-hacking 2](#)
- Library help [Library help](#)
- Sun Bathing [Sun Bathing](#)
- Current prediction markets [Current prediction markets](#)
- Market prices and probabilities [Market prices and probabilities](#)
- Food and sperms [Food and sperms](#)
- Vote 1960 [Vote 1960](#)
- 2SLS [2SLS](#)
- Soda tax [Soda tax](#)
- list1 [list1](#)
- polarization [polarization](#)

- gini [gini](#)
- Mendelian randomization [Mendelian randomization](#)
- Vietnam draft [Vietnam draft](#)