

# SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR IN ECONOMICS, 2019-2020

## Economics 4400E-001

Department of Economics  
University of Western Ontario

### The Bible: Book I

## I. The Course Team

Economics 4400 is a two-semester course for fourth year students in Economics Honors modules. The Course Committee consists of three faculty members (the Faculty Team), three specialized librarians, and a graduate teaching assistant. In addition, students can and should seek advice from other faculty members who have expertise in their areas of interest.

### The Faculty Team

<b>Prof. Ananth Ramanarayanan</b> SSC 4054 Phone: x85393 aramanar@uwo.ca Office hours: Th, 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment	<b>Prof. Charles Saunders</b> SSC 4078 Phone: x85410 csaund9@uwo.ca Office hours: Monday 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment	<b>Prof. Al Slivinski</b> <b>(Coordinator)</b> SSC 4089 Phone: x85294 aslivins@uwo.ca Office hours: W, 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment
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### The Library and Data Team

<b>Liz Hill</b> Data Services Librarian Map and Data Centre Phone: 661-2111 x85049 Email: ethill@uwo.ca	<b>Christy Sich</b> Teaching & Learning Librarian Taylor Library Phone: 661-2111 x84714 Email : csich@uwo.ca	<b>Kristi Thompson</b> Research Data Management Librarian Map and Data Centre Phone: 661-2111 x80959 Email: kthom67@uwo.ca
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### Graduate Teaching Assistant:

Robert Millard  
4012 SSC

[rmilla9@uwo.ca](mailto:rmilla9@uwo.ca)

Office hours by appointment

## II. Course Description

This course is designed to help you develop the skills to carry out an original research project through learning by doing. Subject to the approval of, and in consultation with, the Faculty Team, you will select a question on a topic you find interesting, choose your approach and methodology for answering that question. You can do this alone or with a partner, and your work will culminate in a paper that reports on your research.

Over the year you will be required to submit 6 preliminary written reports, culminating in the final draft of your paper as the 7<sup>th</sup>. You will in addition have to make 2 oral presentations to the entire class. The schedule of all this is in a separate document. This structure is designed to help you stay on track, but also to give you practice in explaining ideas clearly and concisely – a very useful skill. Useful and important information is available on the course OWL website and from time to time will be circulated by email (to your Western email address). Be sure to check the OWL website and your Western email regularly.

The Course Committee will endeavour to help you with all aspects of the project. We will provide class presentations, hands-on demos, and informal consultation and feedback throughout the year. While we will provide support, this is *your* research project. It is up to you to take charge, set your direction, and carry the project through to completion. Your success will depend on the initiative, resourcefulness, effort and skill that you devote to your project.

Research is a collective endeavour. We strongly encourage you to interact with your classmates so as to generate positive externalities and form a community of scholars. We think this sort of interaction is sufficiently important that there is an award given for the student who contributes to it the most at the end of the year (see Student Choice Award below).

Research involves the following steps: finding a topic, reading the relevant literature, developing a research strategy, accessing and analysing relevant data, writing a first draft, and revising the draft to complete the final research paper. Young scholars benefit from systematically following these steps. We have structured the course and its assignments accordingly.

Students are required to submit all assignments and meet all deadlines, and to consult with and keep the Faculty Team informed of their research progress. To facilitate communication, each student (or partnership) will be assigned one member of the Faculty Team as primary supervisor. You are expected to take the initiative to communicate with your supervisor on a regular basis (we suggest *at least* every two weeks). Within these parameters, you have considerable flexibility to follow your interests and develop your own research project.

### III. Requirements and Assessment

The formal requirements of EC 4400 are:

- To complete six written assignments on your research (the topic proposal; the research plan and literature survey; two progress reports; the draft paper; and the final paper— **Full instructions and due dates are in the Instructions document**)
- To consult with and keep in touch with the Faculty Team and your main supervisor
- To make presentations of your work to the class
- To provide feedback to fellow students on their presentations and on their papers.
- To attend and participate in all class meetings

The course mark will be calculated as follows:

10% Topic proposal and presentation

5% PR1: Data

15% PR2: Research plan and literature survey

5% PR3: Final update

20% Draft paper and presentation

10% Written commentary on another student's draft paper

35% Final paper and response to commentary

Note: A mark on the final paper of at least 60 is required to receive a mark of 60 or higher in the course. If the final paper's mark is below 60, the course mark will be the course average (calculated as above) or 58, whichever is lower.

**Partnerships:** Working with a partner has many advantages, and we strongly encourage it. If you choose to work with a partner, you and your partner will receive the same marks on everything *except* the commentary on another draft paper, which must be done individually.

### ***Late Penalties***

Due dates for the assignments are shown in the attached documents. Grade penalties (out of 100) for late submissions will be as follows:

1-24 hours late -10 points

24-48 hours late -30 points

48-72 hours late -50 points

>72 hours late no credit

## **IV. Course Schedule and Detailed Instructions**

The *scheduled* class times are **Mon 5:30-6:30** and **Thurs. 4:30-6:30** in UCC 54B.

### **However, note the following:**

1. We will not meet on every scheduled day.
2. On some days, class meetings will occur in other rooms.
3. On some days that we do meet, the class may extend beyond the scheduled time.
4. We may need to meet on other days, also.

A schedule of all planned class meetings and events, plus all deadlines, is provided in the document titled '**Econ 4400E 2019/20 Detailed Schedule**'. Be sure to add all the class meeting times to your calendar, **and keep all M, Th class times available even if no meeting is shown in the timetable**, in case we need to add a session.

Our classroom has been booked for the entire academic year, so you can use it when the class is not meeting to meet with your co-author, consult with classmates, and practise presentations.

A detailed set of instructions for preparing and submitting all of the 'deliverables' required for this course is also provided in another document, titled '**Instructions for all Submissions**'.

## **V. Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to conduct independent, original economic research.

Specific learning outcomes include being able to:

- formulate a clear research question
- identify and synthesize literature relevant to a research question

- design and carry out a plan to investigate a research question
- analyze data using appropriate software and empirical methods
- apply economic concepts, models and methods to address a research question
- interpret research findings and draw appropriate conclusions
- present research in a professional manner, both orally and in writing
- evaluate critically the quality of one's own research as well as that of others
- give and receive critical feedback in a constructive, professional manner

## VI. Everything Else You Need to Know

### *Writing Dos and Don'ts*

The above-mentioned 'Instructions for all Submissions' document contains instructions and advice specific to Ec 4400. In addition, you may consult the **Guidelines for Essay Courses** posted on the course website. The **Guidelines** contain links to writing resources and assistance, information on how to cite sources, information on essay formats and styles, etc.

**Plagiarism:** All your work for this course should reflect your own work and should properly cite and reference all sources. Any instances of plagiarism will be **severely** penalized. It is your responsibility to know what PLAGIARISM is and NOT do it! For more information on plagiarism, see the **Guidelines for Essay Courses**. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask the Course Team.

### *Presentations—Audio Visuals*

Students should use slides for their presentations prepared with PowerPoint or some similar software program. Whatever software you use, difficulties with projecting your slides seems to be minimized if they are converted to a pdf file. The classroom is equipped with AV equipment.

### *Statistical Software*

Students who undertake projects involving empirical work are free to use whatever statistical software they prefer. **Stata** is the **recommended software package** because the Course Committee is familiar with it, it is well suited to research topics usually undertaken by students in 4400, and it is available on the SSC network. Phuong will run sessions specifically on using Stata in Ec 4400.

An introduction to using Stata on the SSC network is available at

<http://ssts.uwo.ca/support/helpdocuments/statistics/index.html>

Print copies of the full set of Stata manuals are on reserve at Weldon Library. The Map and Data Centre at Weldon has copies of Stata manuals and publications that are available for use within the Centre. Much Stata documentation is available online through its HELP command, and there are Stata sessions on the course schedule.

### *Material from Previous Years*

Selected submissions from previous years are available on the course website. These can give you an idea of the standards expected and of the variety of approaches used in recent years. These materials are for you to use for purposes related to Ec4400E; they should NOT be shared or circulated to anyone else.

### ***Helpful Materials from Weldon***

Weldon Library maintains a web page for students in Economics. It is full of *extremely* useful information and links. Check it out at <http://guides.lib.uwo.ca/economics>

### ***Awards & Prizes for EC 4400 Students***

Two awards are given each year to students in Ec4400E. The award winners receive a certificate and book prize, not to mention *eternal glory!*

**Mark K. Inman Senior Essay Prize:** Awarded to the author(s) of the final paper that is judged to be the best in Economics 4400E. It is given in memory of Dr. Mark K. Inman, one of the founding members of the Department of Economics and Chair of the Department from 1939-62. With the author's or authors' consent, the winner of the Mark K. Inman Senior Essay Prize is automatically included in the *Western Undergraduate Economic Review*.

**Student Choice Award:** Awarded to a full-time student enrolled in Economics 4400E who has made the greatest contribution to the class and is most helpful to other students in the course. Students enrolled in Economics 4400E will nominate candidates and select the winner by secret ballot. In the event of a tie, the Faculty Team will decide the winner.