

URBAN ECONOMICS  
ECONOMICS 2157G-001  
Department of Economics  
Western University

January 2021

**General Information:**

**Instructor:** Emilie Rivers  
**Office:** 4080 SSC  
**Phone:** 519-661-2111 ext. 85276  
**E-mail:** erivers5@uwo.ca  
**Office hours:** Wednesdays, 10:00AM-12:00PM Eastern Time

- Office hours will be held online on OWL
- Office hours sessions must be arranged in advance via email

**Delivery mode:** online asynchronous  
**Course website:** <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>  
**Undergraduate inquiries:** 519-661-3507 or SSC Room 4075 or [econugrd@uwo.ca](mailto:econugrd@uwo.ca)

**Registration:**

You are responsible for ensuring you are registered in the correct courses. If you are not registered in this course, the Department will not release any of your marks until your registration is corrected. You may check your timetable by using the Login on the Student Services website at <https://student.uwo.ca>. If you notice a problem, please contact your home Faculty Academic Counsellor immediately.

**Prerequisite Note:**

The prerequisites for this course are Economics 1021A/B and 1022A/B, or Economics 2001A/B.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites, and that you have not taken any anti-requisite courses. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis for appeal. If you are found to be ineligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. This decision cannot be appealed.

If you find that you do not have the course prerequisites, it is in your best interest to drop the course well before the end of the add/drop period. Your prompt attention to this matter will not only help protect your academic record, but will ensure that spaces become available for students who require the course in question for graduation.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is an introduction to urban economics, and to the economics of urban life in Canada. Topics include urbanization, location of residences and employment, housing, transportation, pollution, urban poverty, crime, and fiscal matters. The lectures will focus on

theories of urban structure and process, and on a number of policy issues. Additional course readings will provide real-world context for the material in a variety of cities in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Through the course of the semester, students will research and write an essay on a topic with urban economic relevance.

### Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to use economic theories to explain:

- what a city is, why cities exist, how and why cities grow, and why property values and rents vary within cities.
- how firms and workers choose their locations, and how the firm's choice is impacted by the location of customers, other firms, and raw material inputs.
- the forces that shape land-use and population patterns within cities.
- patterns of education, crime, and poverty within cities.
- how housing values are determined, how the characteristics of a dwelling and its surroundings impact its value, and how the determination of housing values differs from the price determination of other types of goods.
- how transportation and transportation costs impact households and firms' choices, and how public policies and public provision of transportation options might alleviate certain transportation externalities within cities.

### Textbook(s) and Course Materials:

Required Textbook: O'Sullivan. *Urban Economics* (9th ed.), International Student Edition, McGraw Hill Education.

Additional readings (articles) will be provided on the course website.

### Topics Covered:

Unit 1: Introduction and Key Concepts

Unit 2: Market Forces in the Development of Cities—City Types and Location

Unit 3: Market Forces in the Development of Cities—City Size and Growth

Unit 4: Urban Land Use

Unit 5: Population Patterns in Cities

Unit 6: Additional Urban Topics—Housing Prices and Policy, Transportation, and Crime

### Assessments and Grading (dates tentative):

#### Take-Home Quizzes

Quiz 1	January 27-28	5%
Quiz 2	February 24-25	5%
Quiz 3	March 31-April 1	5%
Model Write-Up	Due Friday, February 12 at 5PM Eastern	15%
Test	Wednesday, March 17 at 9AM	35%
Essay	Due Friday, April 9 at 5PM Eastern	35%

*Notes about the test:*

- The test will be held on online OWL.
- During the test, students are forbidden to communicate with any person other than an examination proctor or the instructor.
- During the test, students are forbidden from using any books, notes, study guides, diagrams, communication equipment such as a cell phone, computer programs or software, online resources or websites, or other aids unless specifically authorized by the instructor. Such authorization must be stated explicitly in the assessment instructions.
- The test will be mixed format. The test will not exceed 2 hours in duration, but may be shorter at the instructor's discretion. Test timing will be confirmed and additional format details will be provided at least one week prior to the test date. Students should notify the instructor of conflicts with the tentative test date and time no later than January 22.

*Notes about the writing assignments:*

- The model write-up assignment and essay assignment will be posted on the course website during the course of the semester.
- The following penalties will apply to writing assignments turned in late:
  - 10 points: Up to 24 hours late
  - 20 points: 24 - 48 hours late
  - 30 points: 48 - 72 hours late
  - 50 points: 72 - 96 hours late
  - no credit: >96 hours lateWeekends count when assessing late penalties. I will not accept excuses such as “I can't open the file”, “I lost the disk”, etc.
- Submission of a purchased or recycled writing assignment will result in a mark of zero being recorded for the assignment. The student will also be reported for an academic offense.
- Any student who does not turn in an essay, or who does not write 2500-3000 words (excluding tables, figures, appendices, footnotes and bibliography) combined between the model write-up and essay will be given a failing grade in the course.

**Policy Regarding Missed Assessments:**

Students with an approved absence from Quiz 1 or Quiz 2 will have the weight of the missed quiz reallocated to the test. Students with an approved absence from Quiz 3 will have the weight of the missed quiz reallocated to the essay.

Students with an approved absence from the test will be required to write a make-up test. The make-up test may differ in length and format from the regularly scheduled test. The make-up test will be proctored using Zoom.

Students with an approved absence covering the due date and time of a writing assignment must turn in the writing assignment by 5PM of the first day after their approved absence ends.

For example, if a student has an approved absence on Friday, April 9, the student must submit the essay by 5PM on Saturday, April 10. After the 5PM deadline, the late penalties indicated above will apply.

Students who miss any assessments must follow Western University's procedures for approval of their absence in order to receive an accommodation. Please see pp. 7-8 of this syllabus for details on these procedures. If Western University announces any procedures for the approval of absences during Winter 2021 that supplement or supplant the information provided on this syllabus, please follow those procedures. Any assessments missed without approval will receive a mark of zero.

### **Communication:**

- Students should check the course OWL site for newly posted course material at the start of each week. Most units (other than Unit 1) will span two weeks at a time, but students should still check weekly in case content or clarification has been added to a unit.
- Students should check OWL announcements multiple times per week.
- Some important announcements will also be emailed to students' UWO email accounts. Students are expected to check their UWO email daily.
- Students should post all course-related content questions on the OWL forum so that everyone can access answers to questions.
- Students are encouraged to answer each other's questions on the forums. The forums will be monitored by the instructor to correct and/or supplement answers provided by students. Questions not answered by other students will receive a response from the instructor after about 48 hours.
- For questions unrelated to course content, please contact the instructor via email from your UWO email account. Students will receive a response in 24 – 48 hours.

### **Technical Requirements**

- Laptop or computer
- Stable internet connection
- Microphone required for students who would like to attend online office hours.
- Webcam may be required for students who require a make-up for the Final Exam.

For technical support, see the OWL Help page or contact Western Technology Services Helpdesk (<https://wts.uwo.ca/about-wts/contact.html>). Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers for OWL; update your browser frequently.

### **Professionalism, Privacy and Copyright:**

- Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct.
- All course materials, including notes and outlines, handouts, videos, practice exercises, assessments, and similar materials, are protected by **copyright**. Students may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational purposes only.

- Students may not reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute any course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without written consent.
- Recordings (audio or video) are not permitted without explicit, written permission. Permitted recordings may not be distributed or shared.

**Tips on How to Be Successful in this Class:**

1. At the start of each new unit, review the module for that unit under Course Content to see what resources are available in that unit. During the suggested week(s) for that unit, do the assigned textbook readings and review the documents and videos in the module.
2. Once you feel you understand the core material, try the suggested problems/practice questions to check your understanding and your ability to apply the theory to a practice problem. Make sure that you try the questions before you look at the answers!
3. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class. Most of the time, all posts will come at the start of the unit, but if I see that students are having difficulty with a specific concept, I may add additional resources later.
4. Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and meet on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
5. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you have questions or are struggling with a topic, post them on the Forum. Your classmates will be happy to discuss your question with you, and the teaching assistant and I will check the Forum to make sure that no one will lead you astray.
6. A large portion of your course mark in this class relates to writing assignments. If you feel that your writing skills could use work, I encourage you to make use of the resources and assistance available from the Student Development Centre.

**Please Note**  
**Department & University Policies for 2020-2021**

The University expects all students to take responsibility for their own Academic Programs. Students should check their registration to ensure they are enrolled in the correct courses.

**Academic Rights and Responsibilities:** Students should be familiar with their “Academic Rights and Responsibilities” as outlined [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar. Claiming that “you didn’t know what to do” is not an acceptable excuse for not following the stated procedures.

**Guidelines and Policies for Students** are posted online in the current Western Academic Calendar at <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca>. Undergraduate information for the Faculty of Social Science can be found at: <https://www.ssc.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html> and for the Department of Economics at: <https://economics.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html>.

**Rules of Conduct for Examinations:** Students are expected to know the university’s Rules of Conduct for Examinations, available [here](#).

**Cheating and Academic Offences:** Students are responsible for understanding what it means to “cheat.” The Department of Economics treats cheating and other academic offences very seriously and will investigate any suspect behavior. Students found guilty will incur penalties that could include a failing grade or being barred from future registration in Economics courses or programs. The University may impose further penalties such as suspension or expulsion.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is an academic offence. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Ideas/passages taken from another author must be referenced with footnotes or citations and acknowledged with quotation marks where appropriate. Western University uses software to check for plagiarism and students may be required to electronically submit their work. Those found guilty will be penalized as noted in point 3. See Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar.

**Academic Appeals:** Students should refer to the Student Academic Appeals section [here](#) in the Western Academic Calendar. Please note the relevant deadlines.

**Department Appeals Procedures:** The Department will not consider an appeal unless an attempt has been made to settle the matter with the instructor first. Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome may submit a written appeal to the Undergraduate Director in Economics, stating the reasons for their appeal. Information on the Department of Economics’ appeals procedure and the appeals form are available [here](#).

**Systematic Adjustments:** Systematic adjustments of class grade distributions (either up or down) can occur in Economics courses. The systematic adjustment of a class grade distribution is **not** grounds for an appeal.

**Add/drop deadlines:**

Deadline to add a second term half course:

Deadline to drop a second term half course:

**Tuesday January 19, 2021**

**Sunday March 14, 2021**

**Oversleeping or Misreading the Exam Schedule:** Faculty of Social Science policy states that oversleeping or misreading the exam schedule is NOT grounds for a makeup. This rule applies to all exams in the Department of Economics.

**End of Term Travel:** Students must book travel arrangements AFTER final exam dates have been posted; travel is not an acceptable excuse for absence from a final exam.

**Rewriting Exams and Retroactive Reweighting are NOT Permitted:** Students who proceed to write a test or examination must be prepared to accept the mark. Rewriting tests or examinations, or retroactive reweighting of marks, is **not** permitted.

**Accommodation Policies:** Students with disabilities should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

**Academic Consideration for Missed Assessments/Exams due to Student Absence:** Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to receive academic consideration if they self-report a missed assessment using the online portal, provided the following conditions are met: the assessment is missed due to an absence of no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted otherwise on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office for more information about the relevant documentation. It is strongly recommended that students notify the instructor as soon as possible, ideally before the assessment, when they become aware of an absence. University policy is that students must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the SMC or immediately upon their return from their documented absence. Failure to follow University policy and procedures may result in denial of academic accommodation and a grade of zero.

Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons. **All required documentation for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:  
[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs.](#)

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

**Policy Regarding Class Attendance and Engagement:** If the instructor deems a student's attendance or engagement in the class to be unsatisfactory, that student may be prohibited from writing the final examination. Examples of unsatisfactory class engagement include frequent absences from an in-person or synchronous online class, lack of assignment submissions, and inadequate use of online course materials. Instructors who intend to make use of this policy will notify the student in advance.

**Statement on Mental Health and Support Services:** Students under emotional/mental distress should visit [http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for more information and a complete list of resources on how to obtain help.



## Guidelines for Essay Courses

### Essay Courses<sup>1</sup>

An essay course is a course in which the cumulative amount of written work, excluding written work in examinations, is at least 2,500 words (for a half course).

To pass an essay course, students must exhibit a minimal level of competence in essay writing in addition to comprehension of the course content.

### English Language Proficiency for Assignment of Grades<sup>2</sup>

Written work that demonstrates a lack of English proficiency will be failed or, at the discretion of the instructor, returned to the student for revision to an acceptable level.

To foster competence in the English language, *all instructors will take English proficiency into account when marking*. This policy applies to all courses, not only essay courses.

### Recycling of Assignments

Students are prohibited from handing in the same paper for two different courses. Doing so is considered a scholastic offence and will be subjected to academic penalties.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as “the act or an instance of copying or stealing another’s words or ideas and attributing them as one’s own.”<sup>3</sup>

Plagiarism applies to ALL assignments including essays, reports, diagrams, statistical tables, and computer projects. Examples of plagiarism include:<sup>4</sup>

- Submitting someone else’s work as your own
- Buying a paper from a mill, website or other source and submitting it as your own
- Copying sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or ideas from someone else’s work, published or unpublished, without citing them
- Replacing selected words from a passage from someone else’s work and using it as your own without citing them
- Copying multimedia (graphics, audio, video, internet streams), computer programs, music compositions, graphs, or charts from someone else’s work without citing them
- Piecing together phrases and ideas from a variety of sources without citing them
- Building on someone else’s ideas or phrases without citing them

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<sup>1</sup>From the UWO Academic Handbook. See [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/registration\\_progression\\_grad/coursenumbering.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/coursenumbering.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> From the UWO Academic Handbook. See [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/english.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/english.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Excerpted from HC Black, *Black’s Law Dictionary*, West Publishing Co., 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from the San José State University Plagiarism Tutorial <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism>

Plagiarism is a serious scholastic offence. Possible consequences of plagiarism include a mark of 0% on the assignment, a mark of 0% for the course, and expulsion from the university.

Instructors may require students to submit written work electronically to <http://www.turnitin.com>. This is a service that assists instructors in detecting plagiarism.

Students seeking further guidance on avoiding plagiarism should consult their instructor. ***Claiming ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.***

The key to avoiding plagiarism is to correctly cite reference sources.

## **Referencing and Citation Guidelines**

The Economics Department has adopted the citation guidelines used in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. You can find an online version on the Western Libraries website. Go to <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp/index.html> and click on 'style guides'. For off-campus access, use the *OffCampus Access* sign-in on the Library's homepage.

Economics papers often use the in-text **author-date** style of citations and references. Details and examples of this style are shown in chapter 15 of the *Chicago Manual of Style Online*. See also the handy "Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide" under Tools on the homepage.

In the body of an essay, in-text citations list the last names of the authors of the piece that are referenced, the year of publication, and, where relevant, page numbers. In-text citations refer the reader to a complete list of bibliographic references at the end of the essay. Papers that cite multiple works by the same author(s) with the same publication year should add a lower case letter after the date in both the in-text citation and References (e.g., 1993a and 1993b). In doing so, the in-text citation points the reader to the relevant work.

Examples of in-text citations:

Diamond (1981, 1982) and Mortensen (1982a, 1982b) find these externalities can cause an inefficient level of search activity...

The "new view of unemployment" which emerged during the 1970s emphasized the importance of turnover in the labour force and the brief duration of many employments spells (Hall 1970, 1972; Perry 1972; Marston 1976).

The primary objectives of the LMAS are "1. To provide measures of the dynamic...the Labour Force Survey" (Statistics Canada 1990, 5).

The list of references at the end of the essay should be titled References or Works Cited. It should provide complete bibliographic information about each source cited. In addition, students should also provide adequate referencing of any data sources. This can be done in a data appendix following the text of the paper and before the References.

Examples of the format and content of references can be found here: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/ChicagoStyleAuthorDate.pdf>.

### **Writing an Economics Essay: Starting Points**

To start a written assignment, review your professor's instructions. Read published work written by economists, which will give you examples of the structure and content of economics writing. Examples are readings in the course outline, journals, working papers, etc.

Two helpful sources that give information about how to write for economics are:

McCloskey, Dierdre N. 2000. *Economical Writing, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Greenlaw, Steven A. 2006. *Doing Economics: A Guide to Understanding and Doing Economic Research*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

### **Writing an Economics Essay: Resources**

The **Resources Link** on Western University's Department of Economics website (<http://economics.uwo.ca/resources/index.html>) provides a link to a list of sources for published and unpublished economic papers, articles, books, theses, government publications, data, etc. Western Libraries has a very useful economics resource page <https://guides.lib.uwo.ca/economics>.

**DB Weldon Library** has a collection of bibliographies, indexes, handbooks, and periodicals in economics. Library holdings, the online library catalogue, and other resources are available electronically from the Western Libraries Homepage <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/>. These can be accessed off-campus with the OffCampus Proxy Server on the Library main page.

Students are encouraged to take a library orientation tour to learn about where sources of information are located both physically and online. Consult library staff for questions

*The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* is the most comprehensive dictionary of economics in existence today. It is available online through the library catalogue, or in print in the Weldon's Reference section (call # HB 61.N49 2008 v. 1-8).

*EconLit (Economic Literature)* is an electronic bibliography of literature from 1969 to the present. It covers journals, collected articles, books, book reviews, dissertations, and working papers. It also provides citations, selected abstracts, and links to Western's full-text resources. Students can also print records by downloading marked records to a text file, sending marked records by email, or exporting them to a citation manager such as *Zotaro*. For a list of citation software, see <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp/citationmanagementsoftware.html>.

**CANSIM (Canadian Socio-economic Information Management System)** is Statistics Canada's database of time series data covering a variety of economic aspects of Canadian society. Access the database by a Title Search on the Western Library's Catalogue, or from the Library's list of Databases under "Research Tools" on the Library's homepage.

## **Western Undergraduate Economics Review (WUER)**

The Department of Economics encourages students to consider submitting their essays to the *Western Undergraduate Economics Review*, a journal published annually by the Department that showcases student work in economics. For further information, please visit [http://economics.uwo.ca/undergraduate/undergraduate\\_economics\\_review.html](http://economics.uwo.ca/undergraduate/undergraduate_economics_review.html).

### **Essay Prize in Economics**

Two prizes may be awarded at the end of the academic year. One prize is for a student registered in a 2100 level course, and one is for a student registered in a 2200 or higher level course. Each prize is valued at \$500.

Students can only win the Essay Prize in Economics once. Economics 4400E is not eligible for this prize as it has its own essay award.

Instructors will nominate student essays for the prize. The essay should be submitted to the Undergraduate Coordinator for consideration by the Essay Prize Committee, which will decide the winner. The Essay Prize Committee will consist of the Undergraduate Program Director, WUER Faculty Advisor and one other faculty member. The decision of the Committee is final and cannot be appeal.

Papers will be judged on content, originality, use of references, spelling and grammar.

The grade given to the paper will not influence the decision of the Essay Prize Committee as all comments by the original marker will be removed.

The deadlines for instructor submissions are:

Fall courses: January 1<sup>st</sup>

Winter courses: May 1<sup>st</sup>

***The winner of the essay prize is encouraged to submit their paper to the Western Undergraduate Economics Review. Other appropriate papers may also be submitted.***