

Economics 100C Honors - Spring 2015

Monday 4:00-4:50pm, Sequoyah Hall 244

Professor: Mark Jacobsen (m3jacobsen@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours: Economics Building, Room 227
Mondays 11:00am-12:00noon and by appointment

Overview:

This honors section accompanies Economics 100C and meets once a week in seminar format. We will discuss a range of topics, spanning for example the use and abuse of market power and questions that are not as traditionally “economic” like the value of clean air. As a companion to the 100 series the issues and papers we discuss will be micro- rather than macro-economic, but otherwise explore a range of topics in economics.

In addition to the prerequisites in the course catalog you should be comfortable with basic statistics: there will be several applications to data and policy questions. Please feel free to talk with me if you have any questions on this or any other aspects of the course.

Course structure and requirements:

The course will be organized around the readings and topics outlined below. I expect that you will do the required reading and come prepared with your thoughts and questions. It will not be enough to simply skim the articles quickly: you should read carefully and be prepared to discuss the authors' arguments critically.

50% of your grade will come from participation in class (including help leading the discussion one of the weeks, sign up during class) and 50% from a short discussion paper (1000-1200 words). The ability to express your thoughts clearly in speaking and writing is essential in almost all directions you may take after UCSD: I hope this course will offer some preparation and guidance along both dimensions.

Course Schedule:

(Please check your UCSD email for the papers, reminders, and any updates.)

- March 30: Jacobsen (2013): “Fuel Economy and Safety: Vehicle Class and Driver Behavior” (American Economic Journal)
- April 6: Basker (2007): “The Causes and Consequences of Wal-Mart’s Growth” (Journal of Economic Perspectives)
- April 13: Currie and Walker (2011): “Traffic Congestion and Infant Health: Evidence from E-Z Pass” (American Economic Journal)
- April 20: *No class (makeup class during the week of May 25th)*
- April 27: Homonoff (working paper): “Can Small Incentives Have Large Effects? The Impact of Taxes versus Bonuses on Disposable Bag Use”
- May 4: Hannesson (2008): “The Exclusive Economic Zone and Economic Development in the Pacific Island Countries” (Marine Policy)
- May 11: Persky (2007): “From Usury To Interest” (Journal of Economic Perspectives) and Stegman (2007): “Payday Lending” (Journal of Economic Perspectives)
- May 18: Spar (2006): “Continuity and Change in the International Diamond Market” (Journal of Economic Perspectives)
- May 25: *No class (Memorial Day holiday)*
- May 27 or 28 (makeup class, date and time to be announced):
Carson and Roth Tran (2009): “Discounting Behavior and Environmental Decisions” (Journal of Neuroscience, Psychology, and Economics)
- June 1: **Discussion paper due**
Reading to be announced (topic will be price discrimination)