

ECON 25A
Oral Communication in Economics Practicum
Summer 2024
Syllabus

Class Information:

Location: Online

Class Time: 1:50 PM–4:00 PM on Tuesday and Thursday

Contact Details

Instructor: Cansu Isler

Email: cansuisler@brandeis.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Prerequisites: Econ 80a

Course Description:

This course is designed for undergraduate students in economics, aiming to equip them with essential presentation tools and techniques for effectively communicating concepts, analyses, and insights in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and finance to a variety of audiences, including both experts and non-experts. Although the prerequisite for this course is ECON 80A: Microeconomic Theory, students are also permitted to present papers and research ideas related to macroeconomics and finance. Furthermore, students will acquire foundational LaTeX skills and learn econ-style visual techniques, enhancing their ability to present economic and financial information with clarity and impact.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will attain a robust set of skills and competencies essential for effective communication in the field of economics. They will be able to articulate intricate economic concepts with clarity and coherence, demonstrating a profound understanding of foundational principles. Through practical applications, students will acquire proficiency in applying empirical econometric techniques, enhancing their ability to conduct and interpret analyses commonly employed in economics and finance research. Furthermore, students will develop the confidence and expertise to communicate economic insights to diverse audiences, ranging from experts to non-experts. The introduction to basic LaTeX skills will empower students to create professional and formatted documents commonly used in academic and research contexts.

Textbook: The textbook is NOT required. Detailed lecture notes will be provided.

Recommended books and website:

- Microeconomics by Goolsbee, Levitt and Syverson, 2nd edition
- Annette Simmons, *The Story Factor* (Basic Books, 2006)
- Holly Weeks, *Failure to Communicate: How Conversations Go Wrong and What You Can Do to Right Them* (Harvard Business Press, 2008)
- Jay Heinrichs, *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us about the Art of Persuasion* (Three Rivers Press, 2007)
- This website contains a broad range of famous speeches—texts, audio, and videos:
www.americanrhetoric.com

LATTE

I will communicate important course updates through the LATTE message posts. Please be sure to check all notifications coming from LATTE in a timely manner. Please note that all LATTE communications as well as my personal messages will go only to your Brandeis e-mail account. I will answer students' e-mails within 24 hours.

Expectation and Evaluation: Success in this two-credit course is based on the expectation that students will contribute a minimum of 4 hours of study time per week in preparation for class. Students are expected to attend ALL classes unless specifically allowed by the instructor. Students are expected to be in class on time and complete all assignments on time as well. Effective class participation requires that students read any assigned readings and prepare for class before coming to class.

Please use your computer or tablet solely for the purpose of listening the class and taking notes.

Students are encouraged to ask questions, share relevant insights, and contribute to all class discussions and activities. **Grades will be based on the speeches, and on class professionalism — particularly on contributing constructive spoken and written feedback on others' speeches.** One or more unexcused absences, including the final presentation class, will affect the final grade.

Grading components:

- Presentation 1- 25%
 - Economics/Finance theory and its real-world applications.
 - You will find an article from WSJ, Financial Times, The Economist, The New York Times, Slate....
- Presentation 2- 25%
 - Applied micro/macro or finance academic paper.
- Students can select their paper from the shared list, or they may choose one independently
- Presentation 3- 25%
 - Each student will choose a specific topic and make presentation focusing on:
 - Research Question (and motivation)
 - Literature review (read papers related to your research idea)
 - Methodology (which models can be used)
 - Data (which datasets can be used)
- Class Participation - 25%

All presentations are mandatory.

Please sign up on www.overleaf.com, a complimentary platform enabling the creation of LaTeX presentations. Each student is required to produce a **minimum of one presentation** utilizing LaTeX Beamer.

Academic honesty

You are expected to be familiar with, and to follow, the University's policies on academic integrity. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult [Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to Student Rights and Community Standards. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. [Citation and research assistance](#) can be found on the [university library website](#).

NOTE: While employing language aids like Grammarly to enhance expression is acceptable, using AI (ChatGPT and CodePilot) to generate presentation materials is considered plagiarism. In cases where the origin of the work or individual effort is uncertain, instructors retain the right to request an oral explanation of responses.

Accommodations

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS). You can contact them at 781-736-3470, email them at access@brandeis.edu, or visit the [Student Accessibility Support home page](#). You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the SAS website, including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS.

If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class. In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

Course Materials

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.

NOTE: I reserve the right to change this syllabus as time and circumstances dictate. Necessary changes will be announced in class and a copy of the revised syllabus will be posted on LATTE. Finally, if the rules above seem inflexible, please understand that they are guided by the goal of managing a large lecture with a reasonable balance of efficiency and equity.