

# SPECIAL TOPICS 1 – ECONOMICS OF COVID-19

ECO2199A00

Taylor Wright

Fall, 2021

---

## COURSE OUTLINE

**Class schedule:** Tuesday 19h00-22h00

**SYNCHRONOUS – Lectures on Zoom, recordings and slides**

**Available on Brightspace**

**Professor's office hours:** Thursday 09h00-10h00 via Zoom

**E-mail:** [taylor.wright@uottawa.ca](mailto:taylor.wright@uottawa.ca)

**Teaching assistants:** TBA

Any questions sent by email should receive a response within two business days or during the following class if taken place within the 48 hours following receipt of the email. Note that the professor reserves the right not to answer an email if the level of language used is inadequate.

## OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

An overview of our current understanding of the economics of COVID-19. Students are introduced to key economic and health facts about the pandemic. Theoretical arguments and models that are intended to explain those facts are examined, as well as empirical evidence regarding the success of specific policies such as lockdowns. The objective is for students to gain a better understanding of some of the main challenges faced by policymakers. Topics include among others the effects of COVID-19 and government interventions on disease prevention, employment, financial markets, mental health, gender issues, and the socioeconomic determinants of compliance with social distancing orders.

## GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

---

This course aims to advance your capacity to: apply theoretical and empirical knowledge to specific COVID-19 related questions; and construct an argument that is evidence-based and expressed in a reader friendly way.

## TEACHING METHODS

---

This course is **SYNCHRONOUS** – it will take place during the scheduled time slot on Zoom. The recorded lectures and slides will be made available for students to view in Brightspace.

There is no required textbook for this course. I will be providing readings on Brightspace and the readings listed below are articles/preprints for which the University of Ottawa has an online subscription. **Note that it is not compulsory to read the articles/books listed below.**

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

---

### Components of Final Mark

Evaluation format	Weight	Date
Midterm exam I	25 or 35%	October 5, 2021
Midterm exam II	25 or 35%	November 9, 2021
Final exam	40%	During Exam Period

Midterms will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions. Your midterm with the highest mark is worth 35% and the midterm with the lowest mark is worth 25%.

#### Missed exams and requests for deferral:

Absences from exams will be penalized. Exceptions are made only for illness or other serious situations. The Faculty reserves the right to accept or refuse the reason. Conflicts due to travel, jobs, or any misreading of the examination timetable are not acceptable reasons. Absences from exams which are not excused will result in a mark of zero for the exam.

Students who are excused for missing an exam will be required to write a deferred exam, except where the professor offers a re-weighting scheme which applies to the student's case. (If available, such a scheme is described in this syllabus.) Except in the case of a re-weighting scheme, students wishing to be excused for an absence must complete a [deferral form \(DFR\)](#). This form must be completed for both midterm and final exams.

Absence due to illness must be supported by a medical certificate. Requests for deferral must be submitted, with supporting documentation (ex. medical certificate), within five working days of the exam. The request must respect all the conditions of [Academic Regulation 19.5](#).

The date of the deferred final exam is Saturday, January 15, 2021.

**Exam conflicts:**

Any conflict with a midterm exam schedule should be reported to the Professor at the beginning of the term. This request is especially applicable to the type 3 conflict (two in-class exams back-to-back) for students with special learning needs.

Any conflict with a final exam schedule should be reported to the Faculty's undergraduate office as soon as the final examination schedule is released.

**There will be no make-up midterm exams:**

In the event that a student misses a midterm, the weight of the final exam will be increased by 20%. The final exam would thus be worth 60% and the other midterm 40%.

**Policy on the EIN grade (incomplete):**

In all economics courses, students who fail to complete work (either a single piece of work or a combination of work) worth a total of 25% or more of the final grade will receive a grade of EIN in the course. The EIN grade is equivalent to a failure mark (F). See Regulation 10.6 (<https://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/academic-regulation-10-grading-system>) for details.

Please note that a denied request for a deferral may therefore lead to a failure mark.

**Language Expectations:**

This course is delivered in English, and in class interactions, including the online discussion boards, and feedback will also be managed in English. As part of your evaluation will be on your writing abilities, it is recommended to take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes such as spelling, syntax, punctuation, inappropriate use of terms, etc. You may be penalized up to 15% for poorly written materials, to the professor's discretion.

**Late Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted by their due date and time.

All late submissions will be immediately docked 5%, with an additional 5% for each subsequent day late to a maximum of 3 days, *including weekends*. **After 3 days all outstanding assignments will be given a zero (0%) grade.**

Exceptions are made only for illness or other serious situations deemed as such by the instructor. University regulations require all absences from exams and all late submissions due to illness to be supported by a medical certificate. Absence for any other serious reason must be justified in writing, to the professor, within five business days following the date of the exam or submission of an assignment.

The Faculty reserves the right to accept or refuse the reason; **reasons such as travel, jobs, or any misreading of the examination timetable are not acceptable.**

# COURSE OUTLINE

---

## **1. Introduction, Regression Analysis and Program Evaluation (Week 1, Sept. 14)**

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. Mastering' Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect. Princeton University Press, 2014.

Ravallion, M, 2001. "The Mystery of the Vanishing Benefits: An Introduction to Impact Evaluation," World Bank Economic Review, 15(1), 115-40.

## **2. Macroeconomic Consequences of COVID-19 (Week 2, Sept. 21)**

Brodeur, A., Gray, D., Islam, A. and Bhuiyan, S. J., 2021. A Literature Review of the Economics of COVID-19. Journal of Economic Surveys (forthcoming).

## **3. Heterogeneity by Demographic and Occupational Characteristics (Week 3, Sept. 28)**

Couch, K., Fairlie, R.W., and Xu, H, 2020. Early evidence of the impacts of COVID-19 on minority unemployment. Journal of Public Economics, 189, p. 104287.

Béland, L.P., Brodeur, A. and Wright, T., 2020. The Short-Term Economic Consequences of COVID-19: Exposure to Disease, Remote Work and Government Response. GLO Discussion Paper Series 524, Global Labor Organization (GLO).

Dingel, J.I. and Neiman, B., 2020. How many jobs can be done at home? Journal of Public Economics, 189, p. 104235.

Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., and Rauh C., 2020. Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: Evidence from real time surveys. Journal of Public Economics, 189, p. 104245.

## **4. 1st Midterm Exam (Week 3, Oct. 5)**

## **5. Pink-Collar Recession? (Week 4, Oct. 12)**

Albanesi, S., and Şahin, A., 2018. The gender unemployment gap. Review of Economic Dynamics 30: 47-67.

Alon. T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J. and Tertilt, M., 2020. This Time It's Different: The Role of Women's Employment in a Pandemic Recession. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper, No. w27660.

Beland, L. P., Brodeur, A., Haddad, J., & Mikola, D., 2020. Determinants of Family Stress and Domestic Violence: Lessons from the COVID-19 Outbreak. Canadian Public Policy (forthcoming).

Furman, J., Kearney, M.S., and Powell, W., 2021. The Role of Childcare Challenges in the US Jobs Market Recovery During the COVID-19 Pandemic. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper, No. w 28934.

## **6. Costs and Benefits of Lockdown (Week 5, Oct. 19)**

Hsiang et al., 2020. The effect of large-scale anti-contagion policies on the COVID-19 pandemic. *Nature*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2404-8>

Kong, E. and Prinz, D., 2020. Disentangling policy effects using proxy data: Which shutdown policies affected unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic? *Journal of Public Economics*, 189, p. 104257

Baek, C., McCrory, P.B., Messer, T., and Mui, P., 2020. Unemployment Effects of Stay-at-Home Orders: Evidence from High Frequency Claims Data. *Review of Economics and Statistics* (forthcoming).

Goolsbee, A., and Syverson, C., 2021. Fear, lockdown, and diversion: Comparing drivers of pandemic economic decline 2020. *Journal of Public Economics*, 193, p. 104311.

Beland, L. P., Brodeur, A. and Wright, T., 2020. COVID-19, Stay-At-Home Orders and Employment: Evidence from CPS Data. IZA Discussion Paper 13282. <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13282/covid-19-stay-at-home-orders-and-employment-evidence-from-cps-data>

## **7. Reading Break — No Class (Week 6, Oct. 26)**

## **8. Other Costs and Benefits (Week 7, Nov. 2)**

Leslie, E., and Wilson R., 2020. Sheltering in place and domestic violence: Evidence from calls for service during COVID-19. *Journal of Public Economics*, 189, p.104241.

Bullinger, L.R., Carr, J.B., and Packham, A., 2021. COVID-19 and Crime: Effects of Stay-at-Home Orders on Domestic Violence. *American Journal of Health Economics*, 7:3, p. 249.

Baron, E.J., Goldstein, E.G., and Wallace, C.T., 2020. Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 190, p. 104258.

Abrams, D., 2021. COVID and crime: An early empirical look. *Journal of Public Economics*, 194, p. 104344.

## **9. 2<sup>nd</sup> Midterm Exam (Week 8, Nov.9)**

## **10. Pollution (and Car Crashes) (Week 9, Nov. 16)**

Brodeur, A., Cook, N. and Wright, T., 2021. On the Effects of COVID-19 Safer-At-Home Policies on Social Distancing, Car Crashes and Pollution. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 106:102427.

Persico, C. L., and Johnson, K.T., 2021. The effects of increased pollution on COVID-19 cases and deaths. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 107:102431.

Dang, H.H., and Trinh, T., 2021. Does the COVID-19 lockdown improve global air quality? New cross-national evidence on its unintended consequences. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 105:102401.

Isphording, I.E., and Pestel, N., 2021. Pandemic meets pollution: Poor air quality increases deaths by COVID-19. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 108:102448.

## **11. Determinants of Social Distancing, Masks, and Vaccination (Week 10, Nov. 23)**

Brodeur, A., Grigoryeva, I. and Kattan, L., 2021. Stay-at-Home Orders, Social Distancing and Trust. *Journal of Population Economics*, 34(4), p. 1321.

Chawla, G., Chen, L., Farmer, A. and Wright, A. L., 2020. Tracking Mask Mandates during the COVID-19 Pandemic. IPAL Lab, DPSS Lab.

Brzezinski, A., Kecht, V., Van Dijke, D., and Wright, A.L., 2021. Science Skepticism Reduces Compliance with COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Policies. University of Chicago, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics Working Paper No. 2020-56, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3587990>

Allcott, H., Boxell, L., Conway, J., Gentzkow, M., Thaler, M., and Yang, D., 2020. Polarization and public health: Partisan differences in social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. *Journal of Public Economics*, 191, p. 104254.

Bargain, A., and Aminjonov, U., 2020. Trust and compliance to public health policies in times of COVID-19. *Journal of Public Economics*, 192, p. 104316.

Geoffard P., and Philipson T., 1996. Rational Epidemics and Their Public Control. *International Economic Review*, 37(3), p. 603.

Geoffard P., and Philipson T., 1997. Disease Eradication: Private Versus Public Vaccination. *American Economic Review*, 87(1), p. 222.

Sakai, Y., 2018. The Vaccination Kuznets Curve: Do vaccination rates rise and fall with income? *Journal of Health Economics*, 57, p.195.

Więcek, W., Ahuja, A., Kremer, M., Simoes A., Snyder, C., Tabarrok A., & Tan B.J., 2021. Could Vaccine Dose Stretching Reduce COVID-19 Deaths? National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper, No. w29018.

Chevalier, J.A., Schwartz, J.L., Su, Y., and Williams, K.R., 2021. Distributional impacts of retail vaccine availability. *Journal of Urban Economics* (forthcoming).

## **12. COVID-19 and Mental Health (Week 11, Nov. 30)**

Beland, L.P., Brodeur A., Mikola, D. and Wright, T., 2021. COVID-19, Occupation Tasks and Mental Health in Canada. Canadian Journal of Economics (forthcoming).

Brodeur, A., Clark, A.E., Fleche, S., and Powdthavee, H., 2021. COVID-19, lockdowns and well-being: Evidence from Google Trends. Journal of Public Economics, 193, p. 104346.

Guintella, O., Hyde, K., Saccardo, S., and Sadoff, S., 2020. Lifestyle and mental health disruptions during COVID-19. PNAS, 118(9), e2016632118.

### **13. Conclusion (Week 12, Dec. 7)**

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

---

### **Intellectual property right of course content**

The materials you receive for this course are protected by [copyright](#) and must be used for this course only. You do not have permission to disseminate these materials, regardless of the means of dissemination including the uploading of these materials to any website or mobile application. These materials include but are not limited to, any course notes provided by the professor, their Powerpoint presentations, and any lecture recordings you may have.

If you require clarification, please consult your professor.

© Taylor Wright. All rights reserved.

### **Regulation on Bilingualism at the University of Ottawa**

Every student has the right to require that a course be given in the language used to describe the course in the course calendar ([Academic Regulation I-2](#)).

Except in programs and courses for which language is a requirement, all students have the right to produce their written work and to answer examination questions in the official language of their choice, regardless of the course's language of instruction.

### **Prevention of Sexual Violence**

If you feel unsafe, call 9-1-1 or reach out to Campus Protective Services at 613-562-5411.

The University of Ottawa has a zero-tolerance policy for any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity or gender expression. This includes both physical and psychological acts that are committed, threatened, or attempted against a person without the person's consent, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, sexual exploitation, and cyberbullying. The University, as well as various employee and student groups, offers a variety of services and resources to ensure that all uOttawa community members have access to confidential support and information, and to procedures for reporting an incident or filing a complaint.

**Notice: Collection of Personal Information with Adobe Connect/Zoom/MS Teams Recordings**

In accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* in Ontario and with University [Policy 90](#), your personal information is collected under the authority of the *University of Ottawa Act*, 1965.

The Adobe Connect/Zoom/MS Teams sessions will be recorded for purposes consistent with the fulfillment of the course learning activities and outcomes. The recording may include the use of your video presence, picture, and voice. If you choose not to have your picture or voice recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality or request accommodation from your instructor. The recording will be available only to authorized individuals through University of Ottawa systems.

If you have questions about the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information in this notice, please contact [taylor.wright@uottawa.ca](mailto:taylor.wright@uottawa.ca).

## STUDENT SERVICES & RESOURCES

---

### Faculty Student Experience Centre

The goal of the [Student Experience Centre](#) is to help students with their academic and social well-being during their time at the University of Ottawa. Regardless of where a student stands academically, or how far along they are in completing their degree, the Student Experience Centre is there to help students continue on their path to success.

A student may choose to visit the [Student Experience Centre](#) for very different reasons. Younger students may wish to talk to their older peers to gain insight into programs and services offered by the University, while older student may simply want to brush up on study and time management skills or learn about programs and services for students nearing the end of their degree.

In all, the [Student Experience Centre](#) offers a place for students to talk about concerns and problems that they might have in any facet of their lives. While students are able to voice their concerns and problems without fear of judgment, mentors can garner further insight in issues unique to students and find a more practical solution to better improve the services that the Faculty of Social Sciences offers, as well as the services offered by the University of Ottawa.

### [Academic GPS](#)

The *Academic GPS* hub is a one-stop shop for academic support. Whether you're an experienced student or just starting out, you'll find some great resources to help you succeed.

#### With the Academic GPS, you can:

- chat with a mentor seven days a week
- register for study groups
- take part in study methods workshops (note taking, time management, exam preparation, stress management, Academic Integrity Session, etc.)
- book an appointment with a mentor

### [Health and Wellness](#)

Your wellness is an integral part of your success. If you don't feel well, it can be hard to focus on your studies.



Dedicated professionals and fellow students who care about you are always ready to provide advice and support. Depending on your needs, many activities and services exist to accompany you during your academic journey.

Services include:

- opportunities to connect;
- counselling sessions
- peer support;
- physical activity;
- wellness activities and workshops;
- spiritual guidance.

If you want to connect with a counsellor, you can book an appointment online or go to their walk-in clinic at 100 Marie-Curie, fourth floor.

You can also drop-in to our wellness space, chat online with a peer helper, or access 24/7 professional help through the website.

### **Academic accommodations**

The [Access Service](#) tries to make sure all students with disabilities have equal access to learning and research environments, the physical campus and University-related programs and activities. The Academic Accommodations service works with other campus services to create an accessible campus learning environment, where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to flourish.

We offer a wide range of services and resources, provided with expertise, professionalism and confidentiality.

#### **Some services we offer**

- Help for students with disabilities in making the transition
- Permanent and temporary accommodation measures
- Learning strategy development
- Adaptive exams
- Transcriptions of learning material
- Interpretation (ASL and LSQ)
- Assistive technologies

If you think that you might need any of our services or supports, [email the Academic Accommodations service](#) ([adapt@uOttawa.ca](mailto:adapt@uOttawa.ca)).

## Human Rights Office

The mandate of the [Human Rights Office](#) is to provide leadership in the creation, implementation and evaluation of policies, procedures and practices on diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility and the prevention of harassment and discrimination.

**Contact information:** 1 Stewart St. (Main Floor – Room 121) - Tel.: 613-562-5222 / Email: [respect@uOttawa.ca](mailto:respect@uOttawa.ca)

## Career Services

[Career Services](#) offers various services and a career development program to enable you to recognize and enhance the employability skills you need in today's world of work.

# REGULATION ON ACADEMIC FRAUD

---

## Preamble

Academic integrity is a fundamental value at the core of all academic activities. [The regulation on academic fraud](#) defines the acts that can compromise academic integrity and outlines the various sanctions and consequences of such acts, and the procedures for handling allegations and setting sanctions. Further information on academic integrity is available on the [website of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs](#).

## Definition

1. Any act by a student that may result in a distorted academic evaluation for that student or another student. Academic fraud includes but is not limited to activities such as:
  1. plagiarising or cheating in any way;
  2. submitting work not partially or fully the student's own, excluding properly cited quotations and references. Such work includes assignments, essays, tests, exams, research reports and theses, regardless of whether the work is in written, oral or any other form;
  3. presenting research data that are forged, falsified or fabricated in any manner.
  4. attributing a statement of fact or reference to a fabricated source;
  5. submitting the same work or a significant part of the same piece of work in more than one course, or a thesis or any other piece of work submitted elsewhere without the prior approval of the appropriate professors or academic units;
  6. falsifying or misrepresenting an academic evaluation, using a forged or altered supporting document or facilitating the use of such a document;
  7. taking any action aimed at falsifying an academic evaluation.

## Sanctions

1. Students who commit or attempt to commit academic fraud, or who are a party to academic fraud, are subject to one or more sanctions ([full list](#)), such as:
  1. a written warning;
  2. zero for part of the work in question;
  3. zero for the work in question;
  4. zero for the work in question and the loss of additional marks for the course in question;
  5. zero for the work in question, with a final grade no higher than the passing grade for the course in question;
  6. an F or NS grade for the course in question.