

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS  
3250:226-801 (78476)

Fall 2011 COMPUTER SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSIS  
5:10 PM – 6:25 PM MW CAS 103  
[myers@uakron.edu](mailto:myers@uakron.edu)

Dr. Steven Myers  
Office: A&S 445  
(330) 972-7421

Teaching Assistants:

Chen Sun [cs114@zips.uakron.edu](mailto:cs114@zips.uakron.edu)  
Tom Dolezal, [tjd22@zips.uakron.edu](mailto:tjd22@zips.uakron.edu)

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus through the month of September 2011. Some of the servers and resources are in flux.

Course notes will be available on the E drive on the departmental server at

[E:\Fall2011\226\DATA\E226\\_Fall2011\\_Plan.htm](E:\Fall2011\226\DATA\E226_Fall2011_Plan.htm)

All updates to the class will be posted there. When you load the web page note the tabs at the bottom.

Grades will be reported in <http://Springboard.uakron.edu> – check after the first assignment is graded.

Student portfolios may be accessed from the economics web site or directly here:

<http://gozips.uakron.edu/~myers/E226/>

This is a course designed to establish a baseline of competency in computer usage among all economic majors and minors and other interested students and to increase your ability to understand and apply economics. Use of the computer is a necessity for communicating as an economic analyst and this course will establish a number of minimum competencies that students must have before entering the world of work. This course will also introduce you, the economics major; to the Hansen Proficiencies that each of you must achieve to graduate. We will create and you will learn to maintain a professional electronic portfolio to demonstrate your achievement of the Hansen Proficiencies. This portfolio is assessed formatively throughout your career and summatively when you are ready to graduate. Finally, students will become familiar with datasets and will learn to interpret the published trends as economists.

Prerequisite: 3250: 100 or 3250:200 or 3250:244

Instructional Days: August 22, 2011 to December 4, 2011

Last day to withdraw: October 9, 2011 (talk to your advisor)

Last scheduled instructional day: November 30, 2011

Scheduled Final Examination time: week of December 5, 2011, time TBA

**Plan of the course:**

The course has a number of minimum competencies in computer tool use that are realized by the student completing an economic analysis (in most cases) using the tool or tools appropriate to demonstrate the competency. Evaluation of the student for competency for each module will be the ability to communicate economic analysis, not just the demonstration of the computer methods. In fact, this course will allow the student to learn a variety of computer skills, but will not teach those skills primarily. Rather, the application of those tools to economic analysis is the overarching goal of the class. Students will use economic concepts and tools from the prerequisite principles class to conduct economic analysis.

Each competency or module will require the student to:

- Learn and communicate knowledge of the computer skill.
- Explore a topic in economics, personal support as an economist or economic analysis particularly addressable by the computing skill in question.
- Present formally the economic analysis using the newly-qualified computing tool.

The student will create a portfolio of these analyses that will be used to assess majors and can be shown to potential employers. This portfolio will be in the form of an electronic cache of web pages and artifacts and will be planned out by the individual student.

**Minimum computer skills (modules):**

- Word processing in Microsoft Word (includes equation editor and insertion of images & graphics, footnotes, and references)
- Spreadsheet use (includes data input, graphics, database management)
- PowerPoint presentations
- Statistical software (SAS) to organize and analyze data
- E-mail (include attachments and email management)
- Internet searches, especially scholar.google.com and sites like rfe.org
- Library resources (including *EconLit*) and refworks
- Data sources, working papers, full texts of journals on the Internet
- Web page writing using KompoZer and basic html rules

**Evaluation:**

The instructor and the TA(s) for the course will evaluate student work for each module. The student will be evaluated on each module according to the following criteria:

- Computer: Demonstrated competency in using the computer tool.
- Resources: Demonstrated skill in knowing and using the resources needed to succeed in the module, and
- Economics: An assessment of the content of the economic support document, economic facts and economic analysis.

**Grading:**

Grades will be assigned for each module. That grade will be a weighted grade across one or more of the three evaluation points above.

The modules will make up 75% of the final grade, while 25% will be allocated to the final portfolio production. A portion of those points will be allocated for overall quality and professionalism of the finished product. While the portfolio is only 25%, it is 100% required to graduate.

Attendance Policy: Attendance will be essential to have access to the projects and instructions for each week. Absences, when noticed, will be recorded and will represent a detriment to the course grade.

**Required Books:**

Judge, Guy. Computing Skills for Economists, John Wiley and Sons, May 2000. (ISBN 0-471-98806-5)  
Amazon price: \$67.45 (used from \$35.60)

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0471988065?ie=UTF8&tag=teachingand05-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0471988065>

Companion Web Site <http://www.wiley.co.uk/judge>

Delwiche, Lora and Susan Slaughter. The Little SAS Book: A Primer, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, SAS Publishing, August 25, 2008. (ISBN 1-599-94725-0) Amazon price: \$41.55 (Used from \$38.47)

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1599947250?ie=UTF8&tag=teachingand05-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1599947250>

Companion Web Site <http://www.sas.com/apps/pubscat/bookdetails.jsp?pc=61860>

SAS Support Site <http://support.sas.com/index.html>

SAS Documentation (look for Base SAS / SAS/Stat and SAS/ETS primarily)  
<http://support.sas.com/documentation/>

### Recommended Books:

Clayton, Gary E. and Martin Gerhard Giesbrecht. A Guide to Everyday Economic Statistics, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2003. (ISBN 0-072-87329-9) Amazon Price \$30.93 (used from 0.01).  
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0072873299?ie=UTF8&tag=teachingand05-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0072873299>

Companion Web Site <http://www.econsources.com>

### Computer Requirements

In order to fully participate in the course, you need to have the following:

1. Each student must acquire a UAnet id (<https://gozips.uakron.edu/zid/app/>). Every student should already have this. To be familiar with services available check this link. Look under the info tab and read about Email.
2. Each student will need to be familiar with Internet Explorer or another comparable browser.
3. Students must use Webmail <https://id.uakron.edu/idp/Authn/UserPassword> or Zipline <http://zipline.uakron.edu> or forward their UAnet ID to an e-mail address they read often. Go to the link in point 1 and choose 'email management' to forward your email.
4. Interested students can seek help for off-campus use in the basement of the library at the Technology Learning Support Center. Their phone numbers is (330) 972-6888, or email them at [tisc@uakron.edu](mailto:tisc@uakron.edu). Hours are on the page listed in the next link.
5. The best URL for help is the <http://www.uakron.edu/its/hoss/helpdesk/index.php>.
6. Students are required to use the class homepage at <http://springboard.uakron.edu>. Once registered, this course becomes available to you. Course information will be on the E drive, Springboard will be used for grades.
7. Other information of interest to you in that support page includes getting roadrunner (OBEN) for high-speed access. (I don't know if this is still available).
8. Help in using the university library including full text access from home is here <http://www.uakron.edu/libraries/>
9. Much of the work of this course will have to be completed in the Econometrics laboratory and with access to the economics department server. To use the economics department server each student will have to use VPN for some aspects of the course and will have to link to the E and F drives on the economics server.
  1. E is named [\\econmb1\Apps](#)
  2. F is named [\\econmb1\Faculty](#)

### Communication Requirements

1. You must regularly read your UAnet email or have it forwarded to your preferred email account. See some of the links above or go to my online page [gozips.uakron.edu/~myers/online](http://gozips.uakron.edu/~myers/online) for a link that might help.
2. If I communicate to your UAnet email account I will assume you have read it within a day. There is no exception to this.
3. Use your UAnet email as your primary email address. I can respond to any email address you use, but when I am mailing to you I will either email internally in WebCT or to your UAnet address only.

### Some Links:

<http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/sas/library/default.htm>

SAS Library from UCLA. Includes a good getting started section.

<http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/sas/webbooks/reg/default.htm>

SAS Web Books. Regressions with SAS.

<http://www.aeaweb.org/RFE/>

Resources for Economists

<http://Scholar.google.com>  
Google Scholar

**Software for this course:**

- MS Office 2007/2010 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, One Note)
- Komposer (was NVU)
- Internet Explorer
- SAS 9.2
- Notepad++
- Refworks
- [Linkedin](#)
- Google Apps at UA

**Some Databases for this course**

- UA Library Website
- Ohio Link
- Econ Lit
- Lexus/Nexus
- AEA on CD
- JEE on web
- Many data websites will be discovered throughout the course.