Syllabus
University of Oklahoma
Department of Economics
ECON 4983-001: Economics as Social Science
Spring 2017

Professor: Dr. Chunbei Wang
Office Location: Room 336 Cate Center 1
Phone: (405) 325-3643
Email: chunbei.wang@ou.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am – 11:30 am, or by appointment.
Learning Management System: canvas.ou.edu

Course Meeting Time and Location: TR 12:00pm – 1:15pm, Adams Hall 315
Course Prerequisite: Senior status, Economics major

Course Description:
This is a seminar-style capstone course for economics seniors, and mainly takes the form of classroom presentations and discussions. The course consists of 2 parts.

- In the first part, we will read and discuss a best-selling book written by Dan Ariely introducing some interesting findings in irrational behavior. You will also be introduced to some academic work behind these stories, critically assess the book, and replicate/extend some of the research in a group project.

- In the second part, we will focus on several hot topics related to social issues to exemplify how economic theories and research methods contribute to our understanding of these issues. On a regular basis, you will be assigned journal article readings, write reading reports, present academic papers, critically assess research methods and conclusions, and synthesize existing research. A typical class in this part entails student presentation of a paper, class comments on presentation styles and contents, class discussions on the paper, and concludes with the professor’s comments.

Course Goals:
The goal of this course is to showcase how to utilize economics knowledge to analyze various social issues and be a critical thinker. Since this is a capstone seminar course, it is not about lecturing new theories or methods, but about how to make use of what you have already learned in the economics major to critically analyze various social issues and to transition yourself into an independent learner. During this process, you will also hone your oral and written communication skills via regular in-class discussions, reading reports, group presentations, a group project, and a final research paper.

Learning Outcomes:
- Reinforce the ability to apply economic theories and empirical methods to critically analyze various social issues.
- Gather, criticize, and synthesize academic literature.
- Deepen the understanding of economic concepts and theories through oral and written communications and through group and individual work.
- Enhance discussion and presentation skills.

**Recommended Book:**
Author(s): Dan Ariely
Edition: revised and expanded edition

**Supplemental Readings:**
Supplemental readings of journal and news articles will be provided on Canvas throughout the semester.

**Requirements and Grading:**
The course requirements include in-class discussions, reading reports, a group project, group presentations, and a research paper. The following is a detailed description of the requirements.

The weights in the final grade are assigned as follows:
- In-class discussions 20%
- Reading Reports 20%
- Group Project 20%
- Group Presentations 10%
- Research Paper 30%

**Letter Grade Criteria**
A 90-100  B 80-89  C 70-79  D 60-69  F <60

1. **In-class discussions (20%)**
   Major emphasis will be placed on classroom discussions and student participations. Discussion is a skill that can be sharpened through practice, and this class aims to offer plenty of opportunities for such practice. Grading will be based on willingness and readiness to participate, contributions to the discussions, and frequency of involvement.

   Considering this is a seminar course and the importance of participation, if you **miss more than 4 classes** without prior communication or proper documents, **you will receive a failing grade in this course**.

2. **Reading Reports (20%)**
   To facilitate classroom discussions, each student will complete a short reading report for the assigned readings each class. Specifically, you will be provided with a set of questions to answer for each reading assignment, type up the answers
based on the readings, print it out and bring to class, and be ready to discuss them in class.

3. **Group Project (20%)**
   The class will form into 8 groups, and each group will design an experiment project based on (or enlightened by) the experiments described in Dan Ariely’s book, present the experiment design, carry out the experiment, and present the results. The presentation of your design should cover details of the experiment plan, including answers to questions such as Who, What, When, Where, How. The presentation of your results should cover the updated details of your experiments as well as a brief statistical analysis of your results and your conclusions.

4. **Group Presentations (10%)**
   The class will form into 8 groups, and each group will be assigned a journal article to present during the semester. Each presentation should use slides and take about 20~30 minutes. At the end of each presentation, a few minutes will be used for comments on the presentation style and contents to help improve presentation skills. This is then followed by a 20-minutes class discussion led by the presentation group regarding the journal article –its merits, shortcomings, and potential extensions.

5. **Research Paper (30%)**
   The research paper should be about 20 pages, in Times New Roman font 12, double spaced. It could take one of two forms: A) a paper on the experiment project in part I; B) a literature survey of a topic covered in part II.
   A) The paper will include an introduction, brief literature review, experiment design, statistical analysis, and conclusion. The experiment may need to be redone if it was not done right the first time.
   B) The paper will include an introduction, extensive literature review, and conclusion. As we proceed through the semester, you will regularly write reading reports of assigned journal articles, and the research paper should build on these reports. In addition, you will be required to gather extra journal articles on the same topic, and summarize, criticize, and synthesize the literature to reach your own conclusion.

**Course Policies**

**Extra Credit Policy:**
Extra credit opportunities, if provided, are available to all students to ensure fairness. *Individual* requests of extra credit opportunities will be denied.

**Emergency Contact**
In case of family or medical emergencies, students should email me as soon as possible (chunbei.wang@ou.edu) to keep me informed, and meet with me
afterwards to discuss missed material or assignments.

**Changes in the syllabus**
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus if desirable or necessary, and will inform you via email and in class.

**University Policies**

**Academic Integrity:**
All students are expected to conform to college-level standards of ethics, academic integrity, and academic honesty. By enrolling in this course, you agree to be bound by the Academic Misconduct Code published in The University of Oklahoma Student Code (www.ou.edu/studentcode/OUStudentCode.pdf). For further clarification please see: [www.ou.edu/provost/integrity-rights/](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity-rights/).

All members of the community recognize the necessity of being honest with themselves and with others. Cheating in class, plagiarizing, lying and employing other modes of deceit diminish the integrity of the educational experience. None of these should be used as a strategy to obtain a false sense of success. The need for honest relations among all members of the community is essential.

**Religious Observance:**
It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays, without penalty.

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy:**
Students requiring academic accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center for assistance at (405) 325-3852 or TDD: (405) 325-4173. For more information please see the Disability Resource Center website http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

**Title IX Resources and Reporting Requirement:**
For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, the University offers a variety of resources. To learn more or to report an incident, please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at 405/325-2215 (8 to 5, M-F) or smo@ou.edu. Incidents can also be reported confidentially to OU Advocates at 405/615-0013 (phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
Final Exam Preparation Period
Pre-finals week will be defined as the seven calendar days before the first day of finals. Faculty may cover new course material throughout this week. For specific provisions of the policy please refer to OU’s Final Exam Preparation Period policy (https://apps.hr.ou.edu/FacultyHandbook#4.10).

Readings:
Part I: Dan Ariely – Irrational Behavior

Part II: Social Issues
I. Immigration

II. Missing Men in the Labor Force
2. Krueger (2016): “Where Have All the Workers Gone?”

III. Legalization of Marijuana
Tentative Course Schedule:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Reading Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 17, 19</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Economics Tools</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Part I: Dan Ariely – Irrational Behavior</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 24, 26</td>
<td>Ariely – Ch 1-3, Reading Report 1 Due</td>
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<td>Ariely and Wallsten (1995), Reading Report 2 Due</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 31, Feb 2</td>
<td>Ariely – Ch 4-6, Reading Report 3 Due</td>
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<td>Review of basic statistics</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 7, 9</td>
<td>Ariely – Ch7-9, Reading Report 4 Due</td>
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<td>Ariely – Ch 10-12, Reading Report 5 Due</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 14, 16</td>
<td>Groups 1–4 present experiment design</td>
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<td>Groups 5–8 present experiment design</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 21, 23</td>
<td>Ariely – Ch 13-15, Reading Report 6 Due</td>
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<td>Kilkenomics: Dan Ariely</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Groups 1–8 present experiment results</td>
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<td><strong>Part II: Social Issues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I. Immigration</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Overview</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 7, 9</td>
<td>Group 1 Presents Card (1990), Reading Report 7 Due</td>
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<td>Group 2 Presents Friedberg &amp; Hunt (1995), Reading Report 8 Due</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 14, 16</td>
<td><strong>Spring Vacation</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 21, 23</td>
<td>Group 3 Presents Borjas (2003), Reading Report 9 Due</td>
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<td>Group 4 Presents Lofstrom et al (2011), Reading Report 10 Due</td>
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<td><strong>II. Missing Men in Labor Force</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 28, 30</td>
<td>Overview</td>
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<td>Group 5 Presents CEA (2016), Reading Report 11 Due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Group 6 Presents Krueger (2016), Reading Report 12 Due</td>
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<td><strong>III. Legalization of Marijuana</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>Overview</td>
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<td>Apr 11, 13</td>
<td>Group 7 Presents Pacula &amp; Sevigny (2014), Reading Report 13</td>
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<td>Group 8 Presents Williams et al (2004), Reading Report 14 Due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 18, 20</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Apr 25, 27</td>
<td><strong>Research Paper Draft Due Apr 25</strong></td>
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<td>Groups 1–4 Present Research Paper</td>
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<td>Groups 5–8 Present Research Paper</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 2, 4</td>
<td><strong>Final Version of Research Paper Due May 2</strong></td>
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