

Metin M. Coşgel

Office : Monteith 316

Hours : 10-11 T and Th

Phone: 486 4662

Email: Metin.Cosgel@UConn.Edu

Web: www.cosgel.uconn.edu

ABOUT THE COURSE

This course is intended primarily for students in UConn's Honors or the Economics Scholars Programs (also open to other students with instructor's consent). Rather than being structured around a particular topic or method in economics, it aims to prepare students to do creative, independent research, particularly in writing a senior thesis in economics. It does this by providing opportunities for:

- 1) practice in writing and oral presentation
- 2) observing and commenting on research and writing by UConn Economics faculty, and
- 3) identifying interesting questions and analyzing them economically.

TEXTBOOKS

Although there are no textbook assigned for the topics to be discussed, you might purchase Deirdre McCloskey's little book appropriately titled *Economical Writing* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1999) to help you with your writing.

REQUIREMENTS:

Course grade will be based on the following (weights given in parentheses):

1. Class participation. (10%)
2. In-class writing assignments: We will occasionally do in-class writing assignments for practice, each time focusing on a different aspect of writing (see below for details). (10 %)
3. Presentation: Each student will be asked to make a short (15-20 minutes) presentation to the class on an economic problem of his or her own choice. It might be a good idea to prepare a brief (one page) handout for the class. (10%)
4. You are also asked to write a brief (2-5 pages) abstract of an idea worth exploring further and an annotated bibliography of most important professional publications (i.e., books and articles, not websites) one would need to master in tackling this problem. Those of you planning to write a senior thesis are expected to explore a potential area for the thesis. Others can further elaborate on their presentation or some other research project of their interest. In any case, you are expected to demonstrate your ability to lay out a creative research agenda, at a minimum identifying a good question and a preliminary economic answer to this question. The first draft of this assignment is due by Thursday, **March 27th** and the final draft by the last day of class, **May 1st**. You are welcome, indeed encouraged, to discuss with me your progress on this paper earlier in the semester. (20%)
5. Finally, you will write a series of papers based on class presentations by UConn faculty. About two weeks before each presentation, you will be assigned readings and given a brief question on which to write a short (2-5 pages) paper. These papers will be due on the day of the presentation. (50%)

We will work on the following aspects of writing. These categories will also be the basis for evaluating your writing assignments, weights depending on the nature of the assignment.

1. **Researching the topic:** Were relevant and good quality reference materials researched and mastered? Make sure to use an adequate number and a balanced mix of printed books, journal articles, and internet resources.
2. **Documentation and Citation:** Were all sources documented and cited appropriately? Under the [Student Code, Part VI on Academic Integrity](#), you are responsible for providing proper citation for all direct quotations, paraphrased ideas, and statistical and other information coming from other sources. Make sure to include at the

end of each paper a list of “Works Cited.” For further assistance, please refer to [UConn Library’s guide on “Citing Sources.”](#)

3. **Argument:** Is there a central idea, a thesis that is consistently sustained throughout the paper? How clear, sophisticated, and original is the idea? Does it convey a clear knowledge of the material and a recognition of alternative perspectives?
4. **Support:** How well is your argument supported? Are the contents clearly and consistently relevant to the main topic? Are examples, quotations, statistical and other information skillfully used to support the argument(s)?
5. **Organization:** Is the paper well-organized? Make sure that your objective is clarified at the beginning, each section has a clear role in meeting the objective, and that ideas flow logically from one paragraph or section to the next.
6. **Paragraphs:** Are the paragraphs coherent and well-organized? Is there one clear idea per paragraph, introduced by a clear topic sentence and developed consistently by other well-connected sentences?
7. **Sentences:** Are the sentences efficient and well-constructed? Work on constructing clear, concise sentences by avoiding words and phrases that do not fit well. Use vague pronouns and passive voice only when absolutely necessary.
8. **Mechanics:** Are the mechanical elements of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) free of errors? Using your word processor to check “spelling and grammar” before printing the paper can go a long way. But be careful: your word processor does not know if you meant “there” or “their”. You also need to proofread yourself to eliminate all errors.