STANFORD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

ECONOMICS 101 (5)        FALL 2011

Economic Policy Analysis

The Demographics and Economics of Aging in the U.S.

Instructor:  Gopi Shah Goda
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gopi@stanford.edu

Time and Location:  Mondays/Wednesdays 9:00 – 10:50, Econ 106

Office Hours:  Mondays/Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:00 or by appointment

Teaching Assistant:  Christine Exley (clexley@stanford.edu)

Section Time and Location:  Fridays 10:00 – 10:50, Econ 140

TA Office Hours:  TBA

Objective of the Course:  To develop oral and written skills in order to analyze and convey economic ideas effectively.

Description of the Course:  This class has two equally important goals: (1) to understand the role of changing demographics in the United States and its implications for policy regarding public and private institutions, and (2) to learn how to communicate economic ideas clearly and effectively in both oral and written form.

We will accomplish the first goal by investigating research and policy writings on two main topics: health care and retirement policy in the United States. You will learn about the implications of population aging for economic institutions, current research on related topics, and proposals and ideas to reform these institutions for future generations.

Along the way, we will be developing critical thinking skills to assist in the second goal of this course, improving written and oral communication in economics. As this course fulfills the Writing in the Major requirement for the economics department, there will be a series of assignments that build towards writing a final paper for the course. This paper will be on topics
related to the material presented in this course but must bring an improvement over the scope and
the depth of class discussion.

Textbooks: There are no required textbooks for this course; however we will
draw on material from:

• *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G.
  Colomb and Joseph M. Williams
• *Economical Writing* by Deirdre N. McCloskey
• *A Guide for the Young Economist* by William Thomson
• *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White

Attendance: Required.

Late assignments: Not accepted.

Economics Department Common Course Policies: All courses taught in the Stanford
Department of Economics are governed by a common set of course management rules. A
document explaining these rules is available at
http://economics.stanford.edu/undergraduate/economics-common-syllabus. Please familiarize
yourself with these rules and contact me if you have any questions.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy brief</td>
<td>50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic worksheet</td>
<td>25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data/methodology/results section</td>
<td>25*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper draft</td>
<td>25*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>25*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of writing center consultation</td>
<td>25*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper presentation</td>
<td>75**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>200**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total: 500 points

* Full points will be awarded if assignment is completed and turned in by due date.
** Points will be awarded based on grading criteria provided in class if assignment is completed
  by due date.

No late assignments will be accepted. There will be no exceptions.

A brief description of these assignments is below; more details regarding the assignments will be
provided in class. Written assignments should be completed in a suitable font (e.g. Times New
Roman, 12 point size) and double spaced so there is room for comments.
Class participation: You should be prepared to present the arguments made in the readings and point to potential fallacies in those arguments and will be tasked with leading the discussion of class readings throughout the quarter. Part of the class participation grade will also come from your engagement with in-class exercises and the presentations of other students.

Policy brief: You will be asked to complete a 3-5 page policy brief which describes and critically evaluates an academic paper for a lay audience. You may choose from a list of academic papers that will be provided in class or you may write about a paper you choose yourself with prior approval from the professor.

Research topic worksheet, data/methodology/results section, and draft of final paper: These assignments will help you make progress towards your final paper. Each of these will be discussed during required meetings with the professor and teaching assistant.

Peer review: You will be assigned to a group with one or two other people in the class. You will read through your partner’s draft and make written comments on the substance and form of the draft. Note: if you do not turn in your final paper draft in time to receive credit, you forfeit your opportunity to obtain credit for the peer review assignment.

Proof of writing center consultation: You will be asked to meet with a consultant at the Hume Writing Center about your final paper draft and provide written proof of your consultation.

Final paper presentation: Each student will do a 10-15 minute oral presentation of their paper to the class. It is recommended that you use PowerPoint slides that boil your paper down to the main points of your analysis in a clear and concise manner.

Final paper: Your final paper should be 10-12 pages in length (not including tables, figures and references) and make a substantive economic argument backed up by evidence. The final paper you hand in should be a substantially revised of your draft which takes into consideration comments received from your peers, the teaching assistant, and the professor.
## Course Schedule and Due Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Introduction: Demographics and Aging</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>How to Read Empirical Papers/Developing a Research Question and Methodology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Brief</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Topic 1: Health Care and the Elderly</td>
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<td>10/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>No Class; Meet with Professor/TA about Research Question</td>
<td>Research Topic Worksheet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Topic 2: Social Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>How to Write an Empirical Paper: Data, Methods, Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Topic 3: Pensions and Health/Disability Insurance</td>
<td>Data/Methodology/Results Section</td>
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<td>11/2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>No Class; Meet with Professor/TA about Research Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>How to Write an Empirical Paper: Introduction, Lit Review, Discussion, Conclusion</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Conducting Peer Review/In Class Peer Review</td>
<td>Final Paper Draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>No Class; Meet with Professor/TA about Paper Draft</td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>No Class (Thanksgiving)</td>
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<td>11/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Preparing your Slides/Revising your Draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>No Class; Meet with writing center consultant about draft; Extended office hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>Final Paper Presentations</td>
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<td>12/7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Final Paper + Proof of Writing Center Consultation (due by 5pm)</td>
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Reading List *(subject to change)*

**Bold** indicates reading to prepare for class discussion.

### Introduction: Demographics and Aging

#### September 26: *Why Care About Aging?*


#### September 28: *Demographic Trends*


### Topic 1: Health Care and the Elderly

#### October 5: *Health Care in the U.S.*

• “Four Proposals for Restraining Federal Health Care Spending”

October 10: *Medicare*


October 12: *Long-Term Care and Medicaid*

**Topic 2: Social Security**

October 19: *How it works and what it does*


October 24: *How to fix it*


**Topic 3: Pensions and Health/Disability Insurance**

October 31: *Public and Private Pensions*


November 2: Health and Disability Insurance