

## **ECONOMICS 409.01**

### **RESEARCH METHODS IN EXPERIMENTAL ECONOMICS**

**SPRING 2025, TTh 2:00 - 3:20 PM, CHANCELLORS HALL ROOM 121**

**PROFESSOR LISA ANDERSON**

**1/21/25 version**

### **Course Description**

In the first half of the semester students work together to design and conduct human subject experiments that address research questions motivated by prior coursework in economics. In the second half of the semester students analyze the resulting data and work independently to prepare manuscripts. Students meet regularly during the data analysis and writing phase of the course to make progress reports on their manuscripts and to discuss any challenges they face with their research. Students also exchange rough drafts of papers and provide written feedback to each other. At the end of the semester all research subjects are invited to attend a seminar in which students present the findings from their research papers.

### **Useful Information**

Office: Chancellors Hall, Room 265

Office Hours: by appointment

E-mail: [lisa.anderson@wm.edu](mailto:lisa.anderson@wm.edu)

### **Important Dates**

Spring Break: March 8-16.

Last Day to Withdraw: March 24

Rough Draft of Paper Due to Classmate: April 3

Comments Due Back to Classmate: April 10

Rough Draft of Paper Due to LA: April 17

Presentation of Results to Participants: April 29

Last Day of Class: May 1

Final Paper Due: Tuesday, May 6 at 5 pm. Per university policy, this date cannot be changed because your final paper is in lieu of a final exam and must be collected during your scheduled exam period. Consult the final exam schedule later in the semester to verify this date and time:

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/registrar/calendarsandexams/examschedules/spring25exam/#class>

### **Grades and Policies**

Your grade for this course will come from class participation (35%) and a final paper (65%).

*Class Participation:* Starting on the first day of class, you must keep a journal with details about your contribution to the data collection process (e.g., what dates did you recruit subjects, how many subjects were recruited and in what classes, what dates did you run experiments, what sessions of data did you clean, etc.). Once you begin writing research papers, we will meet on a regular basis to discuss challenges with the research process. You also will be required to read a rough draft of a classmate's paper and provide detailed feedback. These research-related activities are another component of your class participation. You should update your journal over the course of the semester. I will use the information you provide in your journal to determine class participation grades, so it is important that you keep accurate and detailed records. You should not wait until the end of the semester to complete your journal entries. You will not remember details about your class participation at the end of the semester. If you fail to keep good records about the data collection and research-related tasks you complete this semester,

your class participation grade will be adversely affected. The journal you submit to me should be typed, double spaced, with 12-point font. You are bound by the honor code to honestly report your class participation. Finally, as part of your class participation you each will make a 5-minute presentation about your research findings for the subjects who participated in the experiments. The presentation should be non-technical since the subjects will not be economics majors. You will run through the presentation and provide feedback to your classmates prior to making the presentation to the research subjects.

*Final Paper:* We will conduct a series of research experiments to build a data set this semester, and you will write a paper using some or all of this data. You will submit rough drafts of sections of your paper to me for feedback over the course of the semester. I will provide more specific details about the paper on Blackboard.

## **General Timeline**

*January:* Recruit Subjects

*February – Early March:* Run Experiments

*March and April:* Prepare Final Paper

## **Resources**

*Writing and Communication Center:* The Writing and Communication Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. The WCC's goal is to help you become a better writer and communicator. To make an appointment, visit the WCC webpage ([www.wm.edu/wcc](http://www.wm.edu/wcc)). I suggest that you make an appointment now for later in the semester. Appointment slots fill up fast late in the semester.

*Stata Lab:* The economics department now has a Stata lab to assist you with the data analysis portion of your research.

## **Recruiting Subjects for Experiments**

We need approximately 300 subjects to participate in experiments this semester, which means that we need a list of about 600 individuals who are interested in participating. Subjects for the research experiments will be recruited from undergraduate courses at the College.

Step 1: Identify relatively large introductory-level classes and contact the professor of the class to ask if you may visit his or her class for recruiting. Please work together as a class to decide who will contact which professors so you will not duplicate effort (and bombard professors with multiple e-mails). I suggest that you go in pairs to visit classes so that you can circulate sign-up sheets quickly.

Sample E-mail to Professor: Dear Professor X: I am a student in Economics 409: Research Methods in Experimental Economics which is being taught by Professor Lisa Anderson. We are recruiting students to participate in economics research experiments as part of our course this semester. Is it possible for me to come to your Principles of Economics class one day this (or next) week to make a brief announcement about the experiments and circulate a sign-up sheet? It should take no more than 10 minutes. I can come at the beginning or end of your class. If you cannot spare class time, would you be willing to forward an e-mail to your students with information about the experiments? If you have any concerns about this request, feel free to contact Professor Anderson at [lisa.anderson@wm.edu](mailto:lisa.anderson@wm.edu). Thanks in advance for your help.

If anyone asks you about PHSC approval, let them know that this experimental protocol has been approved by the W&M Protection of Human Subjects Committee (PHSC-2024-02-17-16848-Irande). Once you make arrangements with professors, you should attend classes, read the script on Blackboard and circulate sign-up sheets (or provide the ORSEE address for students to sign up on their own).

Step 2: Enter names and e-mail addresses of potential subjects in ORSEE (if you distribute sign-up sheets).

Step 3: Recruit for specific sessions using ORSEE.

### **Running Experiments**

We will run approximately 20 experimental sessions in February and Early March. Sessions will be conducted during our regular class period on Tuesday and Thursday during this period. Additional sessions will be scheduled based on room availability. All of you will assist in running the sessions during our class period. I use signupgenius.com to coordinate the experiment schedule for sessions outside of our regularly scheduled class period. I will send you a link for the sign-up page once the session schedule is determined.

### **Data Entry/Cleaning**

Some parts of the experiments will be conducted using computers, and data will be automatically saved to a spreadsheet. Those spreadsheets often need to be “cleaned.” I will discuss this process later in the semester. Some experiments may be conducted using pen and paper, so those data will have to be manually entered into excel.