

**Stanford University**  
**Department of Economics**

## SYLLABUS

**Economics 101**  
**Economic Policy Analysis**  
*Housing, Neighborhoods, and Homelessness*  
**Spring 2017**

### **Instructors**

Igor Popov  
(805) 729-1517  
iapopov@stanford.edu

TA: Thomas Ginn  
tginn@stanford.edu

### **Timing and Location**

Lathrop 290  
MonWed 6:30-8:20pm  
Office Hours TBD

### **Course Description**

In this class, we explore and debate the economic forces and policies that determine who lives where and why. The goals of the course include developing a deep understanding of federal and local housing policy, neighborhood change, gentrification, and homelessness. To this end, we will read and discuss both academic literature and current trends and events. Students are expected to write extensively, synthesizing ideas and arrive at their own conclusions and opinions. Class sessions will consist of seminar-style discussion, student presentations, and guest speakers. As this course fulfills the *WIM* requirement, and great emphasis will be placed on the process of writing and preparing presentations. The class culminates in an original term paper.

By the end of the class, students should be able to

- Critique and assess housing policies proposed by local governments
- Clearly express their views on gentrification, using relevant supporting data
- Discuss recent trends affecting low-income housing markets
- Propose solutions to the Bay Area's housing crisis
- Understand the nature of U.S. homelessness and the programs addressing it

***ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE 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, described at:

<https://economics.stanford.edu/undergraduate/major/economics-common-syllabus>.

Please familiarize yourself with these rules and contact me if you have any questions.

## **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on four factors: the final term-paper, presentation preparation, a shorter writing assignment, and course participation in seminar discussions.

### *Final Paper 40%*

At the end of the quarter, you will submit an original 10-15 page term paper. The paper must embody a clear economic argument with sufficient supporting evidence. You will be graded on both the quality of the final product, and your effort and performance in iterating upon intermediate work products (i.e. outline, first draft, peer grading, etc.). You may choose from several prompts, which will be assigned near the midway point of the quarter. You will be graded on both content and structure/grammar.

### *Short Paper 20%*

Near the start of the quarter, you will write a short, 3-5 page paper, likely taking the form of an op-ed. You will be graded on both content and structure/grammar.

### *Presentations 25%*

You will present both your short paper and final project to the rest of the class. Powerpoint, Keynote, or Beamer slides are encouraged. You will be graded on the structure, clarity, and content of your talk.

### *Participation 15%*

This is not a lecture course, but rather a seminar. As a result, participation is absolutely critical for successful completion of the course. The more you engage, the more you will get out of the experience. To that end, your grade is tied to participation for added incentive. Each student must come to class prepared, having read the assigned papers and excerpts.

## **Readings**

There is no assigned textbook for the course. Instead, we will draw heavily on academic literature, newspaper articles, and excerpts from relevant books.

If you would like resources to help with the writing process, I recommend:

- *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
- George Orwell's Six Rules for Writing

**Course Schedule (Subject to change, depending on guest speaker schedules)**

*April 3:*

Introductions - why are we gathered here today?

*April 5:*

What is urban economics, and how do economists typically think about housing?

*April 10:*

Why do neighborhoods matter?

*April 12:*

How does the federal government intervene in housing markets?

*April 17:*

How do local governments intervene in housing markets?

*April 19:*

Evictions and low-income housing markets.

*April 24:*

Guest Lecture: Micah Weinberg, Ph.D., President of the Economic Institute of the Bay Area Council

*April 26:*

Is reurbanization real? Is the Bay Area in a Housing Crisis?

*May 1:*

Student presentations. **Short paper due. Final paper prompts available.**

*May 3:*

The economics of gentrification (pt. I).

*May 8:*

Guest Lecture: Ted Egan, Ph.D., Chief Economist of The City of San Francisco

*May 10:*

The economics of gentrification (pt. II). **Peer discussion of paper topics.**

*May 15:*

The intersection of housing, technology, and regulation. **Paper outline due.**

*May 17:*

Guest Lecture: Jeff Kositsky, Director, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

*May 22:*

Who is homeless in the United States? How do governments address homelessness? What is “Housing First?”

*May 24:*

The economics of homelessness - what is known and what would we like to know? **Draft of final paper due.**

*May 29:*

**Memorial Day - no class**

*May 31:*

Peer-peer final presentation workshop

*June 5:*

Closing thoughts. **Final paper presentations.**

*June 9:* **Final paper due at 5pm**