



Institution Name: University of Wisconsin-Madison, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics (AAE)

Course Subject, Number and Title

[AAE721: Professional Communication of Applied Economic Analysis \(001\) FA18](#)

Credits: one credit

Canvas Course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/121628>

Course Designations and Attributes

Grad 50% - Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement

Meeting Time and Location

Whole class meets some Mondays 1:20-2:10 p.m. in Taylor Hall B30.

During weeks when the whole class does not meet together as a group, class time and office hours will be used for assigned individual lab time with instructor on Mondays from 12:15 to at least 3:10 in Taylor Hall office 322.

Instructional Mode: face to face

The course will meet the one-credit hour standard through the learning that takes place during least 45 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities, which include time in lectures or class meetings, required individual coaching sessions with instructor, in-person or online meetings or exchanges, labs, tutorials, reading, writing, studying, preparation for any of these activities, and any other learning activities noted in the syllabus.

Instructor Title and Name: Dr. Karen FASTER

Instructor Availability

Office hours are Mondays 12:15-1:15 and 2:10-3:10 in Taylor Hall conference room 113, which is also the course's lab time. Instructor can be available by appointment at other times; students should email to set up a time and location. Students should *not* voice call the number in the campus directory.

Instructor Email/Preferred Contact: kefaster@wisc.edu
[All communication should be via email, not Canvas.](#)

Course Description

Focuses on professional communication in a variety of contexts. Examples include but are not limited to: presenting results for technical and non-technical audiences, writing about research findings, synthesizing knowledge from multiple sources, and summarizing and critiquing different analysis strategies. Students will develop their writing skills by completing stand-alone tasks, and by coordinating communication tasks with exercises in simultaneously offered theory and econometric classes.

This course focuses on professional communication, which is critical for a successful career as a professional economist. Professional economists use quantitative methods to generate insights on a range of applied problems. However, to ensure these insights have the desired impact, economists must use effective methods to share them with peers, managers, clients, the public, and other stakeholders.

Communicating economic insights requires writing skills and strategies that are appropriate for the task and the audience. Tasks can include presenting results for technical and non-technical audiences, writing about research findings, synthesizing knowledge from multiple sources, and summarizing and critiquing different analysis strategies.

Audiences can be technical or nontechnical. They can include: other professional economists, managers, and employees inside the same firm, peer economists outside the firm, managers outside the firm, clients, consultants hired by the professional economist's firm, staff at consulting firms that have hired the professional economist's firm, policymakers and regulators at the local, state, national, and international levels; journalists; staff at professional associations; and the general public.

Students will develop their writing skills by drawing on material from AAE 636 Applied Econometric Analysis I and completing about six stand-alone tasks in consultation with the instructor of AAE 721 Professional Communication of Applied Economic Analysis.

Requisites

- For **Resource and Energy Demand Analysis students**: Concurrent enrollment in AAE 636 Applied Econometric Analysis I and AAE 771 Microeconomics of Resources and Energy: Theory to Practice
- For **Visiting International Student Program students**: Concurrent enrollment in AAE 636 Applied Econometric Analysis I

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will gain knowledge on how to differentiate audiences and how to communicate with each; practice writing concisely, accurately, and clearly; describe an analytical method; use Excel to present results in a figure, chart, or graph and insert it into Microsoft Word or other software; transfer information from Stata or R into Excel; present results in a table that is editable in Microsoft Word; describe an economic model; explain the difference between causal and correlative relationships; summarize an empirical method; write a memo; use email, Canvas, and face-to-face communication with instructor in professional manner.

Grading

Course will be based on 275 points. Final grades are not curved. Attendance and participation are part of the grading.

- Six individual assignments ~72% or 200 points
- Four required tutorials, fifth can be attended for extra points ~22% or 60 points
- Attendance and participation in class ~6% or 15 points

Required Textbooks, Software, Other Materials

No books are required. Recommended references include:

- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. **Notes:** Good book to own, especially if you are an academic. The spiral bound version is recommended: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4200068.aspx>
- McCloskey, D. N. (2000). *Economical writing* (2nd ed.). Long Grove IL: Waveland Press. **Note:** New edition due out in spring 2019.
- Okrent, A. (2017, April 6). *5 comma types that can make or break a sentence* [Video file]. Mental Floss. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOLLTVdf300>
- Purdue University. (2018). Online Writing Lab [Website]. Retrieved from: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
- Romer, P.¹ (2015, October 9). Clear writing produces clearer thoughts [Blog post]. Retrieved from: <https://paulromer.net/clear-writing-produces-clearer-thoughts/>
- Shertzer, M. D. (2001). *The elements of grammar: The essential guide to refining and improving grammar*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books. **Note:** 1986 edition available through university library system.
- Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2014). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Essex UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Writing Center, University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2018). *UW–Madison writer’s handbook*. Retrieved from: <https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html>

Students are encouraged to read mainstream news about economics and energy, and pay attention to the language and wording. News sources include *The Economist* and the *New York Times*, Environmental News Network. Students can access *The Economist* (and other publications) for free via <https://search.library.wisc.edu/serial/9912486470602121> — click the “ProQuest Business Premium” link under “Online Access.”

Students are required to read material as assigned, including articles, emails, handouts announcements, and other material the instructor distributes in person and/or via Canvas announcements and postings, email, Wisclists, and other methods. Materials needed each Monday will be emailed and/or posted on Canvas by 8 a.m. that Monday, so students should check their email and the Canvas site and bring handouts and questions about them to class or tutorial.

¹ 2018 Nobel prize winner in economics

Students will be required to use Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook; Canvas; and Stata or R.

No Exams, Quizzes, or Major Papers

Student grades will be based on five to seven assignments and preparation for required individual coaching sessions with instructor.

Homework, Tutorial, and Other Assignments

The course's five to seven assignments each will not more than one to 1.5 double-spaced pages in length, including any table (singled spaced) or figure. The assignments must have 1-inch margins and 12-point serif type for the narrative, and a document size for U.S. letter-size paper (not A4, but 8.5 by 11 inches or 215.9mm x 279.4mm).

Students are required to write, format, and otherwise prepare a draft of each assignment and bring it printed out single-sided to meet with instructor for coaching session during class or office hours. Students will sign up for coaching sessions via Canvas or a Google doc upon the instructor's invitation. Each tutorial will last about 10 minutes. Attending these sessions is part of the course grade; students can miss one without losing points.

The plan is for students to submit assignments for grading via Canvas. This method could change if the learning curve for Canvas proves too steep.

Communication and Attendance

Students are required to use campus email and Canvas systems and to check those accounts several times a week at minimum.

Students should use email to communicate with the instructor, not Canvas.

As with any job, students choosing to be absent from class or a coaching session are expected to notify the instructor *in advance* by email, kefaster@wisc.edu. Prior notification does not mean that students can turn in assignments late.

Deadlines

Meeting deadlines is important in the real world. However, life does get in the way. Accordingly, with advance note, each student is allowed to miss one deadline for one assignment or to miss one of five tutorials. After that, the instructor may not accept any late assignments. Students contacting the instructor before the deadline lose 10% of the points possible. Students not contacting the instructor prior to the deadline lose 20% of the possible points. Tutorial points cannot be made up, but attending all five provides the opportunity to make up points. Unless some other arrangement has been made, the student has 48 hours from the deadline to deliver the assignment to the instructor. The student should arrange with the instructor for how the late assignment is to be delivered and confirm the agreement in email.

Technological problems generally will not be an excuse for late work. Students are expected to back up their electronic files and to retain copies of all assignments.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW–Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. Such action includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. More information: studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

McBurney Disability Resource Center Syllabus Statement on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin–Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act, Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW–Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [the course instructor] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. The instructor will work directly with the student or coordinate with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. More information: <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

University’s Institutional Statement on Diversity

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW–Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

UW–Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. More information: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

Sample Tutorial Evaluation Rubric

Date of tutorial: _____ Score: _____ out of 15

Assignment: _____

Bring two single-side paper copies of assignment. Text not in a table or figure should be double-spaced. Zero points are earned if student skips a tutorial.

- _____ out of 3 Student was on time.
- _____ out of 5 Student prepared by creating detailed, well-edited draft to present at tutorial. Student brought thoughtful questions and comments to the session.
- _____ out of 7 Draft lacks technical errors: Words are spelled correctly, abbreviations are minimal or nonexistent, punctuation is correct, capitalization is consistent. If a figure or table, all required elements are included.

Schedule

Week	Date	Topic and/or Activity
Week 1	September 10	Introduction; attribution, audience. Unveil Assignment 1: Colleague Bio due by noon, September 14.
Week 2	September 17	Whole class meets; write concisely, accurately, clearly. Unveil Assignment 2: Description of Economic Model aka Client Memo
Week 3	September 24	Tutorial week: Assignment 2 Client Memo
Week 4	October 1	Tutorial week: Assignment 2 Client Memo
Week 5	October 8 October 12	Whole class meets. Unveil Assignments 3 and 4 Colleague Bio due by noon for entire class
Week 6	October 15 October 19	Tutorial week: Assignment 3 Table-Figure-Description Table-Figure-Description due by noon via Canvas for October 15 cohort
Week 7	October 22 October 26	Tutorial week: Assignment 3 Table-Figure-Description Table-Figure-Description due by noon via Canvas for October 22 cohort
Week 8	October 29 November 2	Tutorial week: Assignment 4 Methodology Narrative Assignment 4 due by due by noon via Canvas for October 29 cohort
Week 9	November 5 November 9	Tutorial week: Assignment 4 Methodology Narrative Assignment 4 due by due by noon via Canvas for November 5 cohort
Week 10	November 12	Whole class meets. Unveil assignments 5 and 6.
Week 11	November 19	Tutorial week: Assignment 5 Thanksgiving is November 22; no classes Thursday, Friday; deadline is November 27 for cohort
Week 12	November 26 November 27 November 30	Tutorial week: Assignment 5 Assignment 5 due by due by noon via Canvas for November 19 cohort Assignment 5 due by due by noon via Canvas for November 26 cohort
Week 13	December 3 December 4	Tutorial week: Assignment 6 Assignment 6 due by due by noon via Canvas for December 3 cohort
Week 14	December 10 December 14	Tutorial week: Assignment 6 Assignment 6 due by due by noon via Canvas for December 10 cohort Last university class day is December 12.
Week 15	December 17	exam week: no exam