ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Department of Economics

ECONOMICS 493:10 – Fall 2025

Seminar

Course Information

Professor: Anastasiia Suvorova
Office: MULH 3043a
Email: asuvorov@stfx.ca

Lectures (MULH 3022)

- Tuesday: 2:30 – 3:45 pm
- Friday: 4:00 – 5:15 pm

Student Hours (MULH 3043a)

- Monday: 3:00 – 4:00 pm
- Tuesday: 4:00 – 5:00 pm
- Thursday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

If these times don't work for you, please let me know and I'll do my best to find another time. And if you see my door open, feel free to stop by—I'm always happy to chat.

Assessment

- Participation – 5%
- Seminar Summaries – 10% (3 summaries, 3.3% each)
- Oral Presentation of Research Proposal – 10%
- Assignments – 75% (3 assignments, 25% each)

Welcome to ECONOMICS 493!

Course overview

This is a team-taught course designed to help you take the first steps in developing and presenting your own scholarly work—your thesis. Being an economist means not only learning how to generate new knowledge through data analysis and economic modeling, but also learning how to communicate your ideas clearly and effectively.

In this course, three instructors will introduce you to research methods from their own fields of expertise. Along the way, you'll also practice general approaches that apply across different stages of a research project, such as preparing a literature review, writing a draft, and presenting your findings.

Course materials

The primary source of information will be Lectures and Lecture Materials.

Course website

The main portal to the course is Moodle.

Assessment

Your grade in this course will reflect your effort across several areas: participation, short research seminar summaries, assignments, and a final presentation of your own research idea. Each piece is designed to help you practice and grow as a researcher.

1. Assignments (75%)

- You'll complete three assignments (25% each), one from each instructor (Greg Tkacz, Fraser Summerfield, and Anastasiia Suvorova).
- These will give you a chance to practice and apply skills you are developing. Handouts and due dates will be shared by your instructors in class.

2. Participation (5%)

- I will grade your attendance and active engagement during research seminars and a Zoom alumni networking session.

3. Research Seminar Summaries (10%)

- Choose three out of five research seminars to summarize in a one-page write-up (3.3% each).
- Due one week after the seminar.
- Your summary should touch on:
    - **Motivation & Research Question:** What question is being studied? What outcomes and factors are the focus? Why does it matter?
    - **Method & Results:** What kind of data and method were used? What were the key findings?
    - **Discussion:** Can you think of a limitation, or a way to extend or improve the study?

4. Oral Presentation (10%)

- On Dec 2 and 5, you'll present your own research proposal (10 minutes + 5 minutes for Q&A).
- This is your chance to share your ideas, practice explaining them clearly, and receive feedback.
- Your grade will be based on three components (I will post presentation and evaluation guidelines on Moodle):
    - **Peer feedback (2.5%)** – classmates evaluate your presentation based on a rubric and provide suggestions.
    - **Your feedback to peers (2.5%)** – you practice giving helpful evaluations.
    - **Instructor feedback (5%)** – I'll grade your presentation using the same rubric.

Course Outline (Tentative)

This course combines **lectures, research seminars, and workshops** to give you both the tools and experiences you'll need as you prepare your thesis.

Lectures (Tuesdays & Fridays)

Each instructor will introduce you to methods and approaches from their own area of expertise:

- **Anastasiia Suvorova**
  - Descriptive Methods & Regressions in the Economics of Human Capital
- **Greg Tkacz**
  - Nowcasting and Big Data in Macroeconomics
- **Fraser Summerfield**
  - Causal Analysis in Applied Econometrics

Research Seminars (Fridays)

In these sessions, you'll hear directly from researchers about their current projects. This is a chance to see how different kinds of research questions are studied and presented and to ask questions of your own.

- Sep 26 – Anastasiia Suvorova (StFX Economics)
- Oct 10 – Weina Zhou (Dalhousie Economics)
- Oct 31 – Fraser Summerfield (StFX Economics)
- Nov 7 – Mohammad Hajizadeh (Dalhousie Health Administration)
- Nov 21 – Casey Pender (Mount Allison University, McKenna School of PPE)

Workshops & Events (Fridays)

These workshops are designed to support your skills and future plans.

- Oct 17 – Sam Read (StFX Library) – Using library resources for research
- Oct 24 – Jon Rosborough (StFX Economics) – Graduate school and SSHRC scholarship applications
- Nov 28 – Alumni Networking (Zoom) – Meet program alumni, hear about career paths, and ask questions

The detailed tentative schedule for the course is provided below using the following color scheme

Research Seminars
Lectures: Pr. Suvorova
Lectures: Pr. Tkacz
Lectures: Pr. Summerfield
Workshops

September

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5 Introduction
8	9 Descriptive Methods Econ of Human Capital	10	11	12 Descriptive Methods Econ of Human Capital
15	16 Nowcasting and Big Data Macroeconomics	17	18	19 Nowcasting and Big Data Macroeconomics
22	23 Nowcasting and Big Data Macroeconomics	24	25	26 Anastasiia Suvorova (StFX Economics)
29	30 NO CLASSES			

October

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3 Regressions Econ of Human Capital
6	7 Regressions Econ of Human Capital	8	9	10 Weina Zhou (Dalhousie Economics)
13	14 Literature Review	15	16	17 Sam Read StFX Library
20	21 Working with Data	22	23	24 Jon Rosborough SSHRC and Grad School
27	28 Causal Analysis Applied Econometrics	29	30	31 Fraser Summerfield (StFX Economics)

November

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4 Causal Analysis Applied Econometrics	5	6	7 Mohammad Hajizadeh (Dalhousie Health Adm.)
10	11 NO CLASSES	12	13	14 NO CLASSES
17	18 Presenting Research	19	20	21 Casey Pender (MountA McKenna School of PPE)
24	25 Writing a Draft	26	27	28 Zoom Alumni Networking Event

December

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	**2 Oral presentations**	3	4	**5 Oral presentations**

Missed Classes

You are expected to actively participate in class and attend all lectures and seminars unless you fall ill or other extenuating circumstances happen.

Drop date

You can drop this course, online in Banner, on or before November 5. The drop date is set by the registrar.

Communication

Email is the main form of communication beyond lectures or student hours. I will monitor emails daily during business days, so you will generally receive a response in 24 – 48 hours. I may check email on weekends and holidays, but it will be at my discretion.

Use of AI and group work

I encourage you to use the AI tools available to you in a way that will benefit your future career. Generative AI can be helpful, but it also has important limits. To make sure you're getting the most out of this course and practicing your own skills, here are the guidelines:

Assignments

- Each instructor will set expectations for their own assignment.

Research Seminar Summaries

- These must be entirely your own work. AI tools are not permitted here, since the goal is to capture *your own understanding and reflections* on the seminar.

Oral Presentations

- You may use AI tools to help with preparing slides or practicing delivery.
- However, the research proposal itself must be your own work**.** The purpose is to develop your own research ideas and learn how to explain them clearly.

Use of electronic devices

You can use electronic devices only for learning purposes during class time. Using cell phones or laptops for non-class purposes is distracting for you, your classmates, and our guest speakers.

General information

Learning environment

All students are encouraged to show respect for each others' learning progress. Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe, and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity.

Copyright notice

These course materials are designed for use in Course Fall 2025 ECON 493 at StFX University and are the property of instructors, unless otherwise stated by the instructors. Copying this material for distribution, online posting, or selling of this material to third parties without permission is subject to Canadian Copyright Law and is strictly prohibited.

Academic integrity

Students are encouraged to read section 3.8 of the 2025-2026 Academic Calendar.

Raising Concerns about Instruction or Instructor Conduct

StFX is committed to maintaining a respectful and inclusive academic environment where all members of the community feel empowered to express concerns. If you have questions or reservations about an instructor's teaching or behaviour, please follow the steps below:

1. Speak with the Instructor
Whenever possible, begin by discussing your concern directly with the instructor. You can request a meeting by contacting them at asuvorov@stfx.ca**.** Open, respectful dialogue is often the most effective path to resolution.

2. Contact the Department Chair
If the issue remains unresolved, or if you prefer to speak with someone else, contact the Chair of the Department to which the instructor belongs. The Chair can help mediate the situation and work with you to identify appropriate solutions. The Chair can be reached at gtkacz@stfx.ca.
If the instructor is also the Department Chair, or if you do not feel comfortable contacting the Chair, proceed to Step 3.

3. Reach out to the Dean's Office
As a final step, you may contact the Dean's Office at nkaur@stfx.ca**.** The Dean's Office can assist you in arranging a meeting and provide further guidance on how to address your concern.