Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Economics, Dalhousie
Econ 3315 Labour Economics
Fall 2026

Instructor: Professor Weina Zhou
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Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 2:35pm - 3:55pm, McCain 2184
Office Hour: Thursday 1:00pm-2:30pm

Prerequisites: Econ 2200, 2201 (with minimum grade of C)

Course Description:
This course provides an overview of basic concepts in labour economics. The course focuses on covering contemporary topics in labour economics, such as education, health and family economics. The course also aims to acquaint students with various empirical methodologies used in labour economics.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop familiarity with topics in various fields of labor economics
- Gain a preliminary understanding of empirical analysis in labor economics
- Cultivate the ability to interpret and present academic papers in labor economics

Course Assessment: Students will be evaluated based on five course requirements:

1. **Attendance (10%)**: Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the term.
2. **Midterm (20%)**: Scheduled for Oct. 13 (tentative).
3. **Assignments (10%)**: Three assignments will be given. Two will count toward the grade (5% each), graded on a "Pass/Fail" basis. If all three are completed, the lowest grade will be dropped.
4. **Individual Project (25%)**: Students may choose one of the following options:
   Option 1: Select an academic paper published in a top-ranked journal in the field of Labour Economics, write a report summarizing the paper, commenting on its limitations, and suggesting potential extensions.
   Option 2: Develop a research topic related to Labour Economics, conduct an analysis, and write a research report.
   For both options, students are required to present their project to the class for approximately 20–25 minutes during the last class(es) of the term. The project proposal is due Oct. 29, and the final paper is due Dec. 10.

5. **Final Exam (35%)**: Scheduled by the Registrar.

The use of cell phones is not permitted during lectures. Unauthorized use of a cell phone will result in an automatic deduction of 2 points per incident from the final grade. Students who need to use a laptop during class must consult with me in advance. The use of tablets for note-taking is allowed.

Policy on Missed Materials:
Assignments
If a student misses one assignment, the remaining assignments will be used to calculate the final grade. If a student misses two or more assignments, the weight of the missed assignments will automatically be shifted to the final exam. There is no need to email me about missed assignments. Assignments must be submitted either in person during lecture time or through Brightspace. Late submissions of assignments will not be accepted for any reason. If a student does not miss any assignments, the assignment with the lowest grade will be excluded from the calculation.
Exams
Exams are closed-book and will take place in person. If a student is unable to write an exam for a valid reason, they must email me in advance and submit the Student Declaration of Absence Form online through Brightspace under the *Assessments* tab. If a student misses the midterm, the midterm weight will be shifted to the final exam. If a student misses the final exam, they will be required to write a make-up exam as soon as they are able.
Term Paper
Late projects will be marked down by 20% per day. Plagiarism and AI detection software may be used in my evaluation of your term projects.

Course Policies related to Academic Integrity & Artificial Intelligence (AI Policy):
Students are encouraged to use AI tools (e.g., Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini) to help understand concepts or questions they are struggling with. However, assignments must be completed independently: the work you submit must be your own, and AI should not be used to produce your assignment answers for you.
Students may use AI to assist with their individual project. However, during your in-class presentation, I will ask you questions about your own project to assess how well you understand your data, analysis, and conclusions.

Grading Scheme:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
90-100	85-89	80-84	77-79	73-76	70-72	65-69	60-64	55-59	50-54	<50

Other General Notes:
Please note the Department of Economics Statement on Academic Integrity posted on the course website. As part of an academic community it is your responsibility to be aware of

appropriate conduct. Any academic offence will be reported and acted upon immediately by Dalhousie administration.

Course Coverage (subject to change):

1. Health

   Almond, D. (2006). Is the 1918 influenza pandemic over? Long-term effects of in utero influenza exposure in the post-1940 US population. Journal of political Economy, 114(4), 672-712.

   Almond, D., & Currie, J. (2011). Killing me softly: The fetal origins hypothesis. Journal of economic perspectives, 25(3), 153-172.

   Almond, D., Currie, J., & Duque, V. (2018). Childhood circumstances and adult outcomes: Act II. Journal of Economic Literature, 56(4), 1360-1446.

   Daysal, N. M., Simonsen, M., Trandafir, M., & Breining, S. (2022). Spillover effects of early-life medical interventions. Review of Economics and Statistics, 104(1), 1-16.

   Nilsson, J. P. (2017). Alcohol availability, prenatal conditions, and long-term economic outcomes. Journal of Political Economy, 125(4), 1149-1207.

   Zhou, W., & Wang, S. (2023). Early childhood health shocks, classroom environment, and social-emotional outcomes. Journal of Health Economics, 87, 102698.

2. Education

   Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. L. (2010). Externalities in the classroom: How children exposed to domestic violence affect everyone's kids. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2(1), 211-228.

   Hill, A. J. (2015). The girl next door: The effect of opposite gender friends on high school achievement. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 7(3), 147-177.

   Hill, A. J., & Zhou, W. (2023). Peer discrimination in the classroom and academic achievement. Journal of Human Resources, 58(4), 1178-1206.

   Sacerdote, B. (2011). Peer effects in education: How might they work, how big are they and how much do we know thus far?. In Handbook of the Economics of Education (Vol. 3, pp. 249-277). Elsevier.

Zhou, W., & Hill, A. J. (2023). The spillover effects of parental verbal conflict on classmates' cognitive and noncognitive outcomes. Economic Inquiry, 61(2), 342-363.

3. Labour Market

Fallick, B., Haltiwanger, J., McEntarfer, E., & Staiger, M. (2025). Job displacement and earnings losses: The role of joblessness. American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, 17(2), 177-205.

Schwandt, H., & von Wachter, T. M. (2019). Unlucky cohorts: Estimating the long-term effects of entering the labor market in a recession in large cross-sectional data sets. Journal of Labor Economics, 37(S1), S161-S198.

Shigeoka, H. (2020). Long-term consequences of growing up in a recession on risk preferences. NBER Working Paper No. 26352.

Humlum, A., Munch, J. R., & Plato, P. (2025). Changing tracks: Human capital investment after loss of ability. American Economic Review, 115(5), 1520-1554.

Akerlof, G. A., & Kranton, R. E. (2000). Economics and identity. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 115(3), 715-753.

Blundell, J., Duchini, E., Simion, Ş., & Turrell, A. (2025). Pay transparency and gender equality. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 17(2), 418-445.

Kleven, H., Landais, C., & Søgaard, J. E. (2021). Does biology drive child penalties? Evidence from biological and adoptive families. American Economic Review: Insights, 3(2), 183-198.

4. Environment and Health

Greenstone, M., He, G., Jia, R., & Liu, T. (2022). Can technology solve the principal-agent problem? Evidence from China's war on air pollution. American Economic Review: Insights, 4(1), 54-70.

He, G., & Tanaka, T. (2023). Energy saving may kill: evidence from the Fukushima nuclear accident. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 15(2), 377-414.

Tanaka, S., Teshima, K., & Verhoogen, E. (2022). North-South displacement effects of environmental regulation: The case of battery recycling. American Economic Review: Insights, 4(3), 271-288.

5. Family Economics

   Wang, S., & Zhou, W. (2018). Do siblings make us happy?. Economic Development and Cultural Change, 66(4), 827-840.

   Zhou, W. (2014). Brothers, household financial markets and savings rate in China. Journal of Development Economics, 111, 34-47.

Syllabus Appendix (Formerly University Policies and Statements)
Syllabus Appendix: Student Supports & University Statements, Policies, and Guidelines