

Wake Forest University
Economics 398, Fall 2026
Honors I

General information:

Professor: John T. Dalton

Lecture: TR, 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm, 108 Kirby Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

By appointment (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday reserved for research)

Email: daltonjt@wfu.edu

Homepage: <http://www.wfu.edu/~daltonjt>

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, Monday through Friday.

ECN 398, ECN 399, and Honors in Economics and Mathematical Economics:

Economics 398 is a 1.5 credit hour course, the aim of which is to prepare students for Economics 399, also a 1.5 hour credit course. Students who complete and pass both courses will have earned 3 hours. But, completion of Economics 398 does not automatically confer enrollment in Economics 399.

In Economics 398, we will work to develop a research proposal to the point that by the end of the course, at mid-semester, students will be ready to continue work on their project under the direction of a faculty committee. Students will receive a grade for Economics 398 at midterm after completing this course.

Students who wish to take Economics 399 in the first half of the spring semester will continue their research and writing through the second half of the fall semester. Students will not be enrolled in a course; thus, they will not earn credit hours. At the end of the fall semester, these students will turn in to their committee a completed research proposal including introduction, literature review, preliminary work, and a discussion of work to be completed during the spring semester. On the basis of their performance in Economics 398 and progress over the second half of the semester, the faculty will make an “admission” decision for enrollment in Economics 399.

Students who enroll in Economics 399 will complete their research projects by the end of March. The thesis will be graded by the faculty committee. Each student will also present their work to the entire department and their peers in Economics 399 with a prepared research poster. The Department of Economics will reimburse you up to \$40 for the poster. The recommended poster size is 2x3 feet. In order to receive reimbursement, you must submit a receipt to Lesley Whitener. She will also be able to answer any questions you have about creating the poster. All students are required to submit a copy of their final thesis to me before receiving a grade for Economics 399. **Disclaimer: The final copy of your thesis will be kept in the department’s archive and may be handed out to future honors students as reference.**

Following the poster presentation of your final work, the economics faculty will consider students who have completed Economics 399 and earned a GPA of 3.0 overall and 3.3 in economics for

the graduation distinction “Honors in Economics.” Mathematical Economics majors must also complete Economics 399 with a minimum grade of B- to be considered for “Honors in Mathematical Economics.” Students of both majors may also be considered for “High Honors” in their respective majors by recommendation of their advisor to the economics faculty. The determination of honors and high honors is made by a department vote.

Text:

Every student should purchase a copy of *Economical Writing, 3rd Edition* by Deirdre McCloskey and read the text throughout the course, especially when working on writing assignments. You will need to purchase McCloskey’s book online. You are also responsible for any other readings passed out in class or posted on the class website.

Course Requirements:

There will be three main written assignments due in class. Deadlines for the main assignments are given in the calendar below. The main assignments must be turned in on time. You are also responsible for any assigned readings. Participation in class is essential and expected. All students are responsible for preparing for class activities.

For those considering admission to ECN 399: All students are also required to attend at least one research seminar in the Department of Economics. The current seminar schedule is located here: <https://economics.wfu.edu/news-events/seminars/>. Following the seminar, you must send me a brief (1 page max) reaction to the presentation and research, discussing your thoughts on the work as well as any questions you left with. These reactions are due to me by the end of the next school day after the seminar day. Students considering graduate school in economics are strongly recommended to attend all research seminars but are only required to submit one reaction paper.

Written Assignments:

Written Assignment 1, or “Potential Topics,” will be due September 3. You are required to submit 3 different ideas/topics for your research project. Each idea should be organized as follows: 1) a one sentence thesis statement or question in bold type followed by 2) a double space and then one brief paragraph describing your proposed project in further detail.

Written Assignment 2, or “Final Topic Proposal with approval from your adviser,” will be due September 24. Students will have sought out an adviser and had at least one meeting with them about the final topic to be pursued. The final topic proposal should include the thesis statement or question in bold type and an initial idea of how to answer it. Empirical projects should mention data you intend to use or collect, whereas theory and economic thought papers should mention the proposed method. Final topic proposals should be 1-2 pages in length.

Written Assignment 3, or “Research Proposal Progress Report,” will be due October 8, the last day of class. This assignment is an expanded version of the previous proposal and should include an introduction, beginning of a literature review, and any preliminary work that has occurred.

Grading:

Written Assignment 1	20%
Written Assignment 2	20%
Written Assignment 3	40%
Participation and Preparation	20%

Approximate grading scale:

95%-100% A
90%-94% A-
87%-89% B+
84%-86% B
80%-83% B-
76%-79% C+
73%-75% C
70%-72% C-
67%-69% D+
64%-66% D
60%-63% D-
0%-59% F

Grades may be curved.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Week	Class	Assignments
1	Introduction	
2	Potential Topics	Written1 due Thurs, Sept 3
3	Empirical Paper	
4	Theory and History of Thought Papers	
5	Doing Research	Written2 due Thurs, Sept 24
6	Doing Research	
7	Doing Research	
Thurs, Oct 8	Last Day of Class	Written3 due Thurs, Oct 8
Mon, Dec 7	Last Day of Fall Semester	Completed Research Proposal for ECN 399 due Mon, Dec 7
Fri, Mar 26		Completed Honors Thesis for ECN 399 due Fri, Mar 26
Wed, Apr 7		Honors Thesis Poster Session for ECN 399 on Wed, Apr 7, 3:30-5:00pm, Kirby Atrium