

**ECON 335**  
**Economic Journalism**

I. Requirements

- A. Prerequisites: Students must have completed Econ 201, 202 and 203.
- B. Economic Journalism will be conducted in a workshop format. It is scheduled to meet regularly on Thursday afternoons, 2:50-5:20. Attendance at these meetings is required. It is essential that students make a sincere effort to attend every class.
- C. Each student will be expected to complete six written assignments due, roughly, every other week. On those weeks when a student does not have an assignment due (i.e., when she is not acting as a "Reporter"), she will serve as an "Editor" on another student's news story. Each student also will be expected to submit Rewrites of her assignments on the weeks she is an "Editor". Assignments will range in length, roughly, from 800 to 1200 words.
- D. The schedule of assignments appears below.
- E. Grading will be based on the quality of written assignments including rewrites, editorial work and classroom participation. The emphasis on evaluating student work, first, will be on its economic content and, second, on the quality of its exposition.
- F. There are no examinations in Economic Journalism. A portfolio of the semester's work is due on the last day of classes.

II. Course Mechanics

- A. Students enrolled in Economic Journalism will be randomly assigned to one of two groups, Groups A and B. Throughout the semester, each group will serve on alternate weeks as either Reporters or Editors. Editing assignments will rotate weekly enabling each student in Group A (B) to serve as an Editor to a student in Group B (A). Two assignments, the OPED and Interview, will not follow this format. In these cases, students, ordinarily, will submit articles with a joint by-line.
- B. Class meetings will be devoted to analyzing student articles. It is essential that the following system is adhered to. Each week's Reporters must file their stories in Econ 335's Google Group by 7:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to the class meeting devoted to their assignment. Penalties will be imposed on late or missing work.
- C. Editors will be assigned to Reporters one week in advance of a story's deadline. Reporters must submit a draft of their article to their Editors prior to the Tuesday deadline. The Reporter must leave time to rewrite her news story in response to the

Editor's comments. A "marked-up" draft (I recommend using Word's track changes feature) of the Reporter's story should be submitted to me by the story's Editor.

- D. Each student must read and be prepared to discuss all stories written for every class session. Each student should come to class with a list of substantive comments or questions concerning the economic arguments raised in each submission. Class discussion, in part, will be organized around your comments on the economic content of your classmates' articles.
- E. Economic Journalism's system of Reporters, Editors and classroom review of student articles can only work if each individual acts in a responsible manner. Reporters must write the first draft of their stories in time for their Editors to be able to review them. Editors must return stories in a timely manner enabling their Reporters to rewrite their drafts. Reporters must file their final stories in time for the rest of the class to carefully review them prior to class meetings. All class members must read all assigned material and allocate time between Tuesday at 7:00 pm and Thursday at 2:50 pm to read, take notes and formulate specific questions about the contributions of other class members. Finally, all students must be willing to engage *actively* in discussion during class meetings. The success of Economic Journalism depends upon the class' interdependence and on each student's commitment to making the course a worthwhile experience.

### III. Readings

- A. Economic Journalism does not have a traditional Reading List or a required textbook. Specific assignments often are tied to particular readings. These readings will be available off the internet or will be provided in class. Options for purchasing the two books we will review will be discussed in class. Students are expected to make use of their macro, micro and econometrics texts from previous courses. Course assignments may relate to material in development, international, labor, public and other applied fields of economics.
- B. Throughout the semester, students are encouraged to read economic reporting by reading coverage of economic news, for example, in *The Economist*, *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. The "Economic Focus" in *The Economist* and "Economic Scene" and "Economic View" features in the *New York Times*, respectively, illustrate excellent economic reporting and analysis.

**ECONOMICS 335**  
**ECONOMIC JOURNALISM**  
**FINAL SCHEDULE – SPRING 2014**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1	Jan 28	A,B	Listen to the State of the Union Address, 9 pm
1	Jan 30	A,B	Introduction to Econ 335, Economic Journalism; Reporting on President Obama’s State of the Union Address
2	Feb 6	A	Official Report: Congressional Budget Office (CBO), “What Accounts for the Slow Growth of the Economy After the Recession?” (November 2012); <a href="http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/43707-SlowRecovery.pdf">http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/43707-SlowRecovery.pdf</a>
3	Feb 13	B	Official Report: Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The Employment Situation: January 2014” (release date: Feb. 7); <a href="http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm">http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm</a> More information available at <a href="http://www.bls.gov/ces/">http://www.bls.gov/ces/</a>
4	Feb 20	A	Professional Article: Najy Benhassine, Florencia Devoto, Esther Duflo, Pascaline Dupas and Victor Pouliquen, “Turning a Shove into a Nudge? A ‘Labeled Cash Transfer’ for Education”; <a href="http://economics.mit.edu/files/8936">http://economics.mit.edu/files/8936</a>
5	Feb 27	B	Professional Article: Amy Finkelstein et al., “The Oregon Health Insurance Experiment: Evidence from the First Year,” <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> (August 2012); <a href="http://economics.mit.edu/files/8139">http://economics.mit.edu/files/8139</a>
6	March 5	A,B	OPED “pitch” to Heather Long ’04; due by 4 pm
6	March 6	A, B	Plenary. Including a conversation with Heather Long ’04, Deputy Opinion Editor, <i>The Guardian</i>
7	March 13	A	Book Review: Angus Deaton, <i>The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality</i> (Princeton, 2013)
8	March 21	A,B	Interview/Profile Proposal Due
8,9	March 20, 27	A,B	Spring Break
10	April 2	A,B	Calderwood Lecture, Wellesley College, PNE Atrium 4:30 pm; Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach ’95, “Lifetime Impacts of the Safety Net”; Class Dinner at Bertucci’s in Wellesley, 6:30 pm
10	April 3	A,B	OPED (Joint or Single By-Line)
11	April 10	B	Covering an Economic Lecture: Diane Schanzenbach ’95
12	April 16	A,B	Screening: Claudia Goldin, “A Grand Gender Convergence”; PNE 127, 7 pm
12	April 17	A,B	OPED (Joint or Single By-Line)
13	April 24	A	Covering an Economic Lecture: AEA Presidential Address; Claudia Goldin, “A Grand Gender Convergence” (January 2014); <a href="http://networkedblogs.com/T7EOc">http://networkedblogs.com/T7EOc</a>
14	May 1	A,B	Class Canceled
15	May 8	B	Book Review: Simon Johnson and James Kwak, <i>White House Burning: The Founding Fathers, Our National Debt, and Why It Matters to You</i> (Vintage, 2012)
16	May 14	A,B	All Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing Meeting; PNE 339, 3-4:15
16	May 14	A,B	Interview/Profile with Academic Economist (Joint or Single By-Line); Wellesley College Club, 4-5:15
17	May 19	A,B	Economic Journalism Portfolio Due No Later than 5 pm

