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Economics Undergraduate Board

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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

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Economics Department Introduces New Major Options

SAFA HASAN

This academic year, the Economics department announced the creation of four new option majors for economics undergraduates. Under the Bachelor of Arts, there is one new option, International Economics, while the other three, Economics: Data Science, Economics: Strategy, and Financial Economics, fall under the Bachelor of Science.

The department previously offered specialization in specific topics through certificates, where you would have to take four specified courses and attain a required GPA. The new major options are a way of transitioning out of the certificate system to majors instead. You can apply for the major options at the time of application to the Econ major or later on during normal application cycles. The new options require about 10-25 credits within each specialization as an addition to the regular economics major requirements.

The International Economics option offers a focus on economic theory and empirical methods to gain an understanding of international trade, economic development, and financial investments. Students interested in this option are required to take courses ECON 471 International Trade and ECON 472 International Finance. Other courses that count for the major include ECON 475 Economics of the European Union, ECON 491 Issues in Economic Development, and ECON 488 Population and Development.

The Data Science focus emphasizes “statistical methods and data fluency” through an economic lens. This option requires some courses outside of Economics, such as CSE 160 Data Programming and SOC 225 Data and Society, in order for students to get an understanding of data manipulation and certain coding languages.

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Course Spotlights: EUB Members’ Class Recommendations

ECON 488

MAXWELL JESME

As Fall Quarter 2025 was winding to a close, I found myself with just a few months to conduct research for my economics honors thesis and felt more than a little out of my depth. I had selected a research topic that was interesting, but the nature of the data presented complex challenges and a path toward proving that a causal relationship existed (or demonstrating that it didn’t) seemed elusive to me. My econometrics background was limited to ECON 482, which I found to be heavy on fundamental theory and light on practical experience. To try and get a better idea of my statistical options, I decided to enroll in Causal Inference (ECON 488); and thanks to this class, I was able to design and implement a model for my honors thesis with some measure of confidence.

To anyone who is hoping to do economics research—be it in academia, industry, or government—Causal Inference is one of those must-take classes. Causality is, after all, the holy grail of any research project. In this class, you’ll learn all of the

fundamental techniques for determining causality in an econometric model, including such classics as difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, and matching, to name a few. Importantly, you’ll also get ample experience implementing these techniques in R: this class is the closest thing to an R crash course that I’ve encountered in the department, and I found it incredibly useful for projects going forward. Professor Bunting is an excellent lecturer and has a knack for lending intuition to complex methodology; his problem sets are challenging but their grading is relatively forgiving.

Even if you don’t expect to actually conduct original economics research in your career, I’ve also found that the understanding afforded to me by this class makes me a more critical consumer of economics literature, as well as research literature in general. This class will give you the tools to evaluate the robustness of the empirical techniques chosen by others, and weigh their research findings accordingly. In a broad sense, what Causal Inference really does is teach you how to think about proving things. It’s a class I can’t recommend enough.

Course Spotlights: EUB Members' Class Recommendations

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ECON 471 & 472

VINCENT LIEN

If you are an economics major, you have likely heard of the highly renowned courses of Professor Theo Eicher. With staggering praises sung perennially by the faithful tongues of the entire department, Professor Eicher lives up to every ray of his reputation and much more. ECON 471 and 472—International Trade and International Finance, respectively—are absolutely fundamental to any economics student who has even an ounce of care for the real world application of their studies. The two courses are taught as complements to each other to map out a comprehensive understanding of international economics, which is more prevalent now than ever before. With his engagement-intensive lecture style, Professor Eicher emulates the pedagogical structure observed in law school, requiring and rewarding outside-of-class preparation through what is commonly referred to as cold-calling, which, in combination with his humorous expositions, commands invariably the classroom's full concentration. Additionally, current events are an integral part of the courses. Students are expected to read up on recent news related to economics and interpret it by applying the concepts explored in lectures. Nothing—I do not exaggerate—nothing taught in either of the courses is taught without some form of real world application/example to solidify comprehension. One would then be correct in inferring that students who are not prepared to put in the time and effort would find the two courses utterly impossible, yet I would argue fervently that there is truthfully nothing more worthwhile to an economics student than this.

Having taken both 471 and 472, I, along with countless others, can say with unflinching confidence that Professor Eicher's lecture style is exceedingly effective. Graded Socratic reviews are done at the beginning of each lecture which strongly incentivizes the students to study the materials from the previous lectures before coming in. This practice is, needless to say, exceptionally profitable in retaining and acquiring new knowledge while must also be of tremendous avail on the exams since unfruitful cramming is not only discouraged but quite literally unfeasible, provided that one desires a good grade in either of the courses. It would be a colossal failure on my part if I have by my testimony somehow dissuaded students from ECON 471 and 472,

but I do not intend, would in fact loathe, to sugarcoat the high and perhaps uncommon expectations students face in the two courses, which would, consequently, bedim the unparalleled professorship of Professor Eicher, the inexorable attestation to his passion as an intensely brilliant Economist.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Economics Kahoot!

Come join the EUB and WiE for a fun Kahoot about economics and the UW Economics department!

Thursday, February 26
Sav 156
5:00 PM

Introducing the Economics Major Options: A Conversation with the Founders

Learn about the new Economics majors with Melissa Knox, Patrick Pineda, and Dennis O'Dea

Tuesday, March 3
Smith 102
4:00 PM

Paul Heyne Seminar

Monitoring Harassment in Organizations with Professor Rachel Heath
TBD

WANT TO JOIN UW ECON'S EUB?

We are the EUB, a group of UW undergrad Econ majors that advocate on behalf of the Econ majors and communicate with students, faculty, and staff. Although applications to join the club occur for the 2025–2026 year have passed, they shall reopen in Spring of 2026.

Meet the “Economintonists” at UW

ALEXA HALLIWELL

There is a specific texture to a university campus in the lull after midterms, when the pace of classes settles into something quieter but no less demanding. It seems like Econ students at every stage of the major have already found their footing into the rhythms of their routines: studying, working, attending class. With winter in Washington, we have come to expect dusk in the early evenings and for the days to be short, cold, and brisk, and while snow has never been a reliable visitor to the UW campus, this year's February has been especially sodden and rainy. For most of us, this is perhaps the perfect time to find the excuse to stay comfortable inside and study for final exams.

A small group of Econ students had other ideas, and didn't let the cold weather dissuade them. Each Saturday at the IMA, they gather to play low-stakes badminton together in what has become a weekly ritual as a form of social connection within the department beyond the typical classroom setting. What follows are their words.

“Who are the Economintonists?”

“Economintonists (n.) economists who play badminton together.

Essentially, we are just some like-minded Economics majors who enjoy playing badminton.”

—Raymond Lei, founder of the Economintonists

"Has Econominton changed how you relate to your peers outside of class?"

“Econ classes can be pretty intense, so having a more relaxed, social setting to interact with people has been a great change of pace.” — Ben Nguyen, Economintonist and dual Econ and Math major

“I talked about econ classes and their culture and played sports with econ peers (mainly Economintists) routinely [;the weekly sessions] de-stress me.” — Shun Nakajima, Economintonist and exchange student from Hitosubashi University, Japan

“Does one have to be skilled at badminton to join? Do you keep score the way you would in a formal match?” “There are absolutely no [skill] requirements to join this club...The only way to win in our games is to have fun.” —Raymond Lei

"Have you noticed any crossover between the classroom and the court?"

“ In ECON 300, when two equally powerful parties are to play a game and make decisions at the same time, the best strategy is to assign probabilities to your different options so that the expected payoff of every option of your opponent's is the same, and they don't have a better strategy to use against you. You randomize to remove patterns, and in equilibrium the opponent can't effectively counter you because no response gives them a strictly higher expected payoff. That's basically the mixed-strategy Nash equilibrium idea for simultaneous-move games applied to badminton.”

- Raymond Lei

“What else does the group get up to beyond the courts?”

“We are also having a cultural-culinary, rotational, weekly meal-sharing. Based on the diverse background of our group members, we have tried Vietnamese and Japanese with authentic guidance from naturalized and international Economintonists. Later, [we'll be trying] Jamaican and then Chinese food. We plan to call [this section of our hangouts] “Econogourmet”. - Raymond Lei

Meet the “Economintonists” at UW

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“Are the Economintonists welcoming new members now?”

“[We would] love to invite more econ major peers for connections!” - Shun Nakajima

Want to join? The Economintonists meet every Saturday at **1pm** at the IMA. Rackets are available to rent. Cultural meals (Econogourmet) rotate weekly, typically weekends or weekdays around **4pm**. Interested parties can contact **Raymond** at **ylei6@uw.edu** for more information or to request to join.

This piece was reported with the contributions of Raymond Lei, Ben Nyguen, and Shun Nakajima.

****The group welcomes anyone with a genuine interest in economics, whether or not it is their only major. ****

Economics Department Introduces New Option Majors

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The required courses within the Economics department (ECON 481 Data Science Computing for Economics, ECON 482 Econometric Theory and Practice, and ECON 484 Econometrics and Data Science) familiarize undergraduates with data science through economic concepts.

For Economics students that want to understand how to utilize economics analysis for “real world decision making,” the Economics Strategy option is for you. This option puts an emphasis on using strategy for complex problem solving with the department stating that students will “learn to think in terms of incentives, anticipate outcomes, and design strategies that drive effective decision-making.” This major requires courses like ECON 485 Game Theory with Applications to Economics, ECON 411 Behavioral Economics, and ECON 487 Data Science for Strategic Pricing.

Finally, Financial Economics concentrates on financial decision making using statistical and econometric analysis. Courses within this major include ECON 421 Money, Credit, and the Economy, ECON 427 Central Banking, and ECON 464 Financial Crisis.

These new major options give Economics undergraduates the opportunity to specialize within the wide umbrella of economics. If you’re interested in learning more, the EUB is hosting an event with the founders of the major options, Melissa Knox, Patrick Pineda, and Dennis O’Dea, on March 3rd from 4–6 PM in Smith 102 to introduce and answer questions about the new options.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Economics Tutoring

The EUB offers free tutoring every weekday at various times every quarter! Check the schedule on the EUB website to see tutoring times. If you need help with an upper-level class, however, make sure you check the website to see which tutor can help.

Contribute to the Economizer

The Economizer will be seeking guest writers for our Winter quarter issue. Interested writers should check their emails from the department in the early Winter quarter for submission instructions.

The Economizer is a quarterly newsletter published by the Economics Undergraduate Board. The articles herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the department or its faculty.

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