**Summary Syllabus**
Economics 395
Effective Writing in Economics


Dr. Bennett                                              Spring 2020
TR 10:30-11:45                                           Mason Hall D180

**Course Objectives**:
The course has two objectives. The first is to develop your critical thinking skills, i.e., to teach students to effectively use economic concepts to solve realistic problems. The second, and equally important, objective is to teach students how to express their ideas effectively through writing.

**Required Text**: None

**Course Requirements and Grades**:


This course is writing intensive. Ninety percent of the final grade is based on a series of brief (1.0 pages MAXIMUM) papers on various topics. Papers must be typed double spaced using 12-point font with one-inch margins. ***Late papers are not accepted under any circumstances; the grade of zero is assigned to a late or omitted paper; papers must be handed in during class -- not after class has been dismissed***. Aside from the first assignment which may be e-mailed to me by January 20, 2020, e-mailed papers are not accepted, nor are faxes. (Another student can hand in your paper during class if you make such an arrangement for when you cannot attend.) In addition to content, papers will be graded on punctuation, organization, spelling, diction, and grammar. There are no exams. Ten percent of the final grade is based on a book review presented in class and on participation. ACTIVE class participation is required in addition to *punctual (if door is closed, don't open it) and consistent attendance*. You should expect to contribute to the discussion and prepare accordingly.

I will communicate with the class by e-mail; you will benefit by checking your e-mail frequently. *Office Hours*: Tuesday, 9:00 to 10:30; other times by appointment. NOTE: My office is only a short distance from the class room; you can come in before or after class easily. e-mail: [jbennett@gmu.edu](mailto:jbennett@gmu.edu); phone: 703-993-1155.

The first two assignments are set out below. I want (1) to give you an idea of the nature of the assignments; (2) to give you every dollar's worth of your tuition; and (3) to "hit the ground running", i.e., get off to a fast start.

**Assignment 1 Due in Class on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 C the first class session.... Or E-mailed to me by January 20, 2020**

 **The Prompt:**

Several years ago, I established a public policy think tank, the Reagan Institute for Public Policy (RIPP) that advocates limited government, low taxes, free markets, deregulation, and individual liberty. As RIPP's president, I spend almost all of my time and energy seeking donations from individuals and grants from companies and foundations to support RIPP's research, publication, and advocacy agenda. I hired you as Director of Research to manage the work of our of interns who write RIPP's position papers and to direct our research and studies program.

One day, I ask you, "In the 2020 presidential election, who do you think I want to win and why?" Answer this question in a paper that conforms to the Summary Syllabus requirements and give the reasoning behind your choice.

[Note: You aren't required to limit your choice to the "usual suspects", e.g., Trump, Sanders, Warren, Biden, Harris, Buttigieg, et al. Anyone eligible to serve as POTUS can be selected.]

**Assignment 2 Due Only in Class on Tuesday, January 28, 2020**

**Prologue**:

Allan Sloan, former senior editor-at-large at *Fortune*, is now a *Washington Post* columnist who has been writing about business issues for almost 50 years. He has won seven Loeb Awards, business journalism's highest honor, in four different categories (including lifetime achievement) in four different decades for five different employers. Sloan, a prolific writer, has published widely in prestigious financial outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Money*, and *Barron's*. He is highly respected as a savvy and insightful business journalist with impressive credentials. The attached file contains Sloan's article that appeared in the Business Section of the *Washington Post*.

**Prompt**: Grade the content of this article (A, B, ... F), and explain why you assigned this grade.