

# ECON 3513 (FA01) - Economics of Transportation

Department of Economics

Acadia University

Fall 2023

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Instructor	Dr. Justin Beaudoin
Email	justin.beaudoin@acadiau.ca
Office Location	BAC 346 & Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
Office Hours	Mon/Wed/Fri: 9:30 - 10:30, 1:00 - 2:00; and by appointment
Course Website	<a href="https://acorn.acadiau.ca/course/view.php?id=30272">https://acorn.acadiau.ca/course/view.php?id=30272</a>
Class Location	BAC 201
Class Times	Mon/Wed/Fri, 10:30 - 11:20

## Course Description

ECON 3513 applies concepts from microeconomics (including utility theory, supply and demand, pricing, public goods, and market failures) to the study of urban transportation issues. Examples of topics covered include traffic congestion, cost-benefit analysis and investment evaluation, and the regulation of transportation systems. Prerequisite(s): ECON 1013 with a minimum grade of C-.

ECON 3513 involves an experiential learning component. In particular, we will be collaborating with The PIER (Port Innovation, Engagement and Research) and the Halifax Port Authority to produce a report that will be delivered and presented at the conclusion of the course.

The objective of this project is to develop and deliver a work-integrated learning experience related to authentic challenges and opportunities facing the marine transportation and supply chain sector as we evolve towards a net zero economy.

## Course Learning Objectives

The objective of the course is two-fold: (1) to develop students' ability to apply concepts from microeconomics to issues related to transportation and public policy, and (2) to develop research, writing and presentation skills that can be applied in a wide variety of potential career paths.

## Class Format

It is anticipated that the course will be conducted "in person" throughout the semester, and students are expected to be able to attend classes in person.

Classes will *not* be recorded, though I will save and post my written notes from class, to the extent possible. These notes will not be a perfect substitute for seeing the material in person.

Given that article discussions and group work are the foundation of the course, consistent attendance is required to obtain a high grade in the course.

## **Course Materials and Websites**

ACORN is the primary source for class announcements and will contain all course materials: syllabus, class notes/slides, video recordings, and reading materials.

Microsoft Teams will be utilized as an option for office hours and for group meetings.

## **Technology Issues & Support**

If you are having technological issues, please contact the Service Desk for support. The Consultants will help you work through any issues that you're having. There are several contact methods:

Live Chat: [ts-chat.acadiau.ca](https://ts-chat.acadiau.ca)  
HUB Service Portal: [hub.acadiau.ca](https://hub.acadiau.ca) or [ts.acadiau.ca](https://ts.acadiau.ca)  
Phone: 902-585-4357 or 1-888-609-3330  
Email: [helpdesk@acadiau.ca](mailto:helpdesk@acadiau.ca)

## **Office Hours**

I will hold office hours on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays from 9:30 - 10:30 and from 1:00 - 2:00. Please feel free to stop by my office any time, but I encourage you to send me an email to schedule a time to meet as well. Office hours may be held in my office or over Teams.

Should any issues or concerns arise throughout the course, you are encouraged to consult with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to find the resources to help you succeed.

## **Textbook**

There is no required textbook for the course. Assigned readings will be made available on ACORN. I am happy to suggest supplementary materials as needed throughout the course.

## **Grading**

Article Discussion	20%
Report: 3 drafts	30%
Report: Final version	30%
Presentation	20%

*No extra credit opportunities will be offered.* There is no midterm and final exam in the course.

The grade scale for the course is below:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>% Range</b>	<b>Rating</b>
A+	4.33	90 - 100%	Excellent
A	4.0	85 - 89%	
A-	3.67	80 - 84%	
B+	3.33	77 - 79%	Good
B	3.0	73 - 76%	
B-	2.67	70 - 72%	
C+	2.33	67 - 69%	Average
C	2.0	63 - 66%	
C-	1.67	60 - 62%	
D+	1.33	57 - 59%	Pass
D	1.0	53 - 56%	
D-	0.67	50 - 52%	
F	0.0	0 - 49%	Failure

### **Article Discussion**

Throughout the course, news articles will be used to facilitate discussion of current events and the introduction and application of course concepts. These articles will be posted a few days before they are discussed and several questions will be included with each article. Students will be evaluated on their contribution and participation in these discussions; this participation can occur verbally in class or through the optional submission of written answers prior to the class discussion. The focus is not on having the “correct” answers, but rather on effort and critical thinking.

Students’ grades for this activity will be posted on ACORN on a rolling basis and will be adjusted as the course proceeds. It is expected that there will be approximately 8-10 articles discussed throughout the semester.

### **Report: 3 drafts**

The primary assessment for the course will relate to the contribution to the overall group project that will be completed throughout the semester. Following an overview of the project and initial brainstorming, students will be assigned into groups where they will be guided through the completion of separate sub-sections of the overall report.

For this assessment, groups can be evaluated collectively or individually; this will be discussed separately with each group and agreed to with the instructor at the beginning of the project.

For group assessment, each individual will be required to provide a brief summary of their contribution to each draft of the report. Each group member will be required to evaluate

themselves and their other group members in order to provide an incentive for each group member to contribute their agreed upon work.

For both group and individual assessment, students will be assessed relative to the expectations and objectives set out in Draft 1 of the report. This assessment will focus on three aspects: (1) effort made, (2) quality of economic analysis conducted, and (3) the professionalism of the written submissions.

Specific instructions and guidance for each phase of the report will be provided as the course proceeds. Due dates are as follows:

- Draft 1: Nov 5
- Draft 2: Nov 19
- Draft 3: Dec 1
- Final Report: Dec 19

### **Report: Final Draft**

The 3 initial drafts will be edited based on instructor feedback and will be developed into the final version of the draft and will due by the end of the exam period (Dec 19). I will then edit and compile the various sections into a final document that we will submit to PIER and the Halifax Port Authority.

### **Presentation**

We will present our preliminary analysis to PIER and the Halifax Port Authority on a date to be determined (likely a virtual presentation in late November or early December). Each group will have one member present their section, while all group members are expected to contribute to the development of the presentation slides. Presenting students will be evaluated on the quality of their verbal presentation and the slides that they produced, while non-presenting students will be evaluated exclusively on their contribution to the presentation slides.

### **Class Material**

The following list provides examples of *potential* concepts that may be discussed throughout the course. For the most part, material covered will be determined by the focus of the class project.

- Demand for transportation
- Transportation costs
- Market failures in transportation

- Congestion: causes and potential solutions
- Cost-benefit analysis and investment evaluation
- Peak-load pricing
- Public good provision
- Subsidies
- Public transit
- Ridesharing & bikesharing
- Traffic accidents and insurance
- Environmental impacts: regulation and technological innovation
- Financing transportation
- Parking

### Class Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule for the course that may be updated as the course proceeds. Readings will be posted on ACORN and an announcement will be sent out to notify students. The posted class notes will contain any information about any potential changes to the schedule in advance.

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 1</i> .....		
1	Wed, Sept 6	Class Introduction
2	Fri, Sept 8	Lecture
..... <i>Week 2</i> .....		
3	Mon, Sept 11	Lecture
4	Wed, Sept 13	Lecture
5	Fri, Sept 15	Article 1
..... <i>Week 3</i> .....		
6	Mon, Sept 18	Lecture
7	Wed, Sept 20	Lecture
8	Fri, Sept 22	Article 2
..... <i>Week 4</i> .....		
9	Mon, Sept 25	Lecture
10	Wed, Sept 27	Article 3
-	Fri, Sept 29	No class

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 5</i> .....		
11	Mon, Oct 2	Lecture
12	Wed, Oct 4	Lecture
13	Fri, Oct 6	Article 4
..... <i>Week 6</i> .....		
-	Mon, Oct 9	No class
14	Wed, Oct 11	Lecture
15	Fri, Oct 13	Lecture
..... <i>Week 7</i> .....		
16	Mon, Oct 16	Presentation: Mike Davie (Halifax Port Authority)
17	Wed, Oct 18	Lecture
18	Fri, Oct 20	Article 5
..... <i>Week 8</i> .....		
19	Mon, Oct 23	Lecture
20	Wed, Oct 25	Group work
21	Fri, Oct 27	No class (review posted video)
..... <i>Week 9: Study Break</i> .....		
-	Mon, Oct 30	No class
-	Wed, Nov 1	No class
-	Fri, Nov 3	No class
..... <i>Week 10</i> .....		
22	Mon, Nov 6	Lecture
23	Wed, Nov 8	Presentation: Sven Scholtysik (Net Zero Atlantic)
-	Fri, Nov 10	Article 6
..... <i>Week 11</i> .....		
24	Mon, Nov 13	Group work
25	Wed, Nov 15	Group work
26	Fri, Nov 17	Article 7
..... <i>Week 12</i> .....		
27	Mon, Nov 20	Presentation: David Thomas (PIER)
28	Wed, Nov 22	Group work
29	Fri, Nov 24	Article 8

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 13</i> .....		
30	Mon, Nov 27	Lecture
31	Wed, Nov 29	Group work
32	Fri, Dec 1	Article 9
..... <i>Week 14</i> .....		
33	Mon, Dec 4	Student presentation

### Course Policies

Course dates/policies are the student’s responsibility; please communicate any issues, concerns or scheduling conflicts *well before* the relevant deadline so that we can address the issue appropriately.

Please communicate with me if an illness or other issue will cause you to miss multiple classes. I ask that students exercise proper classroom etiquette in respect of their classmates and the instructor.

### Accessibility

Acadia University is dedicated to improving access to campus life for all students with disabilities. While we attempt to ensure that all courses are accessible, we recognize that there are barriers that need to be addressed on an individual basis. Students who require accommodations to complete coursework or otherwise fully participate in class should contact Accessible Learning Services directly as soon as possible.

Please visit the Accessible Learning Services website (<https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/accessiblelearning.html>) or email them at [accessible.learning@acadiau.ca](mailto:accessible.learning@acadiau.ca) for more information.

### Academic Ethics

It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with the University’s policy on academic ethics. Copying, plagiarism and other academic offenses will not be tolerated. Penalties are severe and may result in suspension from a program/course and expulsion. A complete list of Academic Regulations can be found on the Policies page of the University’s website. I strongly recommend that all class members review the sections in the 2023-24 academic calendar dealing with Academic Policy and Regulations. It is a serious offense to engage in academic misconduct.

*Last updated:* October 24, 2023