

# Economics 257D1

Fall 2025

Russell Davidson

This course in statistics is intended for all Honours students in Economics. The aim is to get students to understand what the discipline of statistics is, why it is important, and how to use it, especially with economic data. The specialised application of statistics to economics is called econometrics, and is the topic of later courses in the Honours program, although majors and even minors students often take these courses.

The mathematical requirements for this course are not very heavy, but students should have reasonable knowledge of, and ability to work with, both the differential and the integral calculus. Some acquaintance with linear algebra, more particularly of matrix algebra, is also desirable.

## Course Materials

Whereas this outline is necessarily made available at the beginning of the term, updates to anything will be posted on the course website:

<http://russell-davidson.research.mcgill.ca/e257>

The most essential text for the course is the online book *Economic Statistics*, by Professor Galbraith. It can be downloaded from the website. As it is intended for the use of McGill students only, you are asked not to disseminate it more widely, but use it only for yourself. Other useful textbooks are listed on the website; one of them can also be downloaded.

## Method of Evaluation

There will of course be an exam in the Christmas exam session, and also a midterm some time in mid-October. There will a number of assignments, probably three, but this is not guaranteed. The official weights are 50% for the Christmas exam, 25% for the midterm, and 25% for the assignments. But if the best of the three marks is that on the Christmas exam, it gets a weight of 100%. If the midterm gets a better mark than the final, it counts for 50%, and, finally, if the assignment mark is better than the midterm mark, the midterm mark is replaced by the unweighted average of the assignment and midterm marks.

This is the first term of a full-year course. The mark for the course is the unweighted average of the marks for the two semesters, fall and winter.

## Transfers

There are special provisions for students who wish to drop out of the honours/joint honours programs and enter the major concentration program during U1 after the course change period in first term:

Such students are permitted to drop 257D and transfer to 227 only at two time periods.

- 1) One week after the October midterm grade in 257D1 has been made available. In such cases, 100% of the grade of the student in 227D would be determined by his/her subsequent performance in that course.

- 2) During course change period in January. For students transferring at that time, their work in the first term of 257 would count for 25% and the grade obtained for 227D2 would count for 75% in computing their grades in 227D.

Transfers would not be processed at other times.

## Supplemental Exams

The whole business of supplemental exams for a year-long course like this one is complicated, because the rules that constrain things were conceived under the assumption that a course lasted only one term. But what appears to be the situation is that there can be only one supplemental exam for Economics 257D, and it must take place in August of the year in which the course finishes. It covers the work of the entire year, and gives 100% of the grade of students who take it. Thus there is *no* supplemental exam for the fall term.

## Generative AI

The university now wants all course outlines to specify rules concerning the use of generative AI for a course. As I explained in class, you are welcome to use AI for help with assignments or take-home exams. The only qualification is that each such use must be acknowledged, just as sources are acknowledged in any research paper. You may use any suitable format for the acknowledgement, but please do acknowledge all uses you may make of generative AI, such as ChatGPT for instance.

## Academic Honesty

You'll have seen the following in all of your course outlines, because the McGill Senate requires that it should appear in all of them. I used to think of it as a pure formality, but a disturbing number of cases of plagiarism have been detected in recent years, not especially at McGill, but in other North American universities. So, please take seriously all the admonitions in the following text.

- 1) Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded [approved by Senate on 21 January 2009]: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This right applies to all written work that is to be graded, from one-word answers to dissertations.
- 2) According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. Please consult the calendar, section 4.7.2.1, General University Information and Regulations, at [www.mcgill.ca](http://www.mcgill.ca).
- 3) Academic Integrity statement [approved by Senate on 29 January 2003]: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

(see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information).

Et en français:

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site

<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>