

**THIS ISSUE***Important Dates**Faculty Spotlight**Request for EC Tutors Due Jan. 22nd**CSS Scholarship App. Due Feb. 1st**EC Scholarship App. Due Mar. 1st**Campus & CSN Events**London Study Abroad Summer 2021***IMPORTANT DATES**

- GRADUATION APPLICATION FOR SPRING AND SUMMER 2021 DUE JAN. 15TH
- READING AND REFLECTION WEEK JAN. 11-19TH
 - REVIEW MATERIAL
 - CREATE A PLAN FOR SUCCESS
 - SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSES BEGIN JAN. 19TH
- OPEN ADD PERIOD ENDS JAN. 25TH AT 8:00 PM

NEW ADVISING**APPOINTMENT SYSTEM**

If you have questions about enrollment please schedule an Advising Appointment
student.msu.edu

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: JEFF BIDDLE

Economics 380 focuses on various government programs and policies intended to help workers, policies like the minimum wage and programs like Unemployment Insurance. In addition to learning how these programs work, students learn how analyze them the way an economist would, to determine how effectively they are achieving their goals and to understand some of their unintended consequences.

Economics 499 is the department's research seminar course, which gives interested students the opportunity to design and carry out an independent research project. In my version of the course, students use econometrics to explore a question related to the effects of some government policy or program. Recent projects have looked at questions like the relationship between financial aid generosity and tuition costs at community colleges and how taxes on e-cigarette products have affected the sales of those products. Students can expect a lot of help from me and the TA in getting and analyzing the necessary data, but the final product is very much their own, and I am often impressed by what the students discover in their research.

In my 35 years of research, I have turned up lot of things that were interesting, or at least interesting to me. If you read one of my most recent papers, you would learn that, holding constant age and education, people with higher incomes watch less TV and sleep less than people with lower incomes. This is true in both the US and in Europe, and it is not because people who work harder and earn more have less time for sleep and TV, because it is true among non-workers, too.

I think that all of us in the Department are learning a lot from the COVID experience. One rather general thing we are discovering is that some aspects of higher education that we did not imagine could be handled online or remotely actually can be handled pretty effectively. At the same time, we are learning the limits of online or remote interaction, that is, what we lose when we cannot have in-person interactions - things that maybe we did not realize were so important before COVID. Both these types of knowledge will be useful going forward.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: JUSTIN KIRKPATRICK

EC420 is a key course for economists because it gives us the tools we need to test economic theory in the real world. We may have a neat model of labor demand with a minimum wage, but does it hold in actual labor markets? We also focus on causal relationships versus correlation, so students who may not go on to produce original economic research will be savvy consumers of research, and will be able to analyze, criticize, and assess causal claims. In today's climate of misinformation, these skills are vital to understanding the world.

My research examines how households make energy decisions - investing in energy efficiency improvements like new windows or insulation or purchasing solar panels - and how large swings in household decisions change the operation of the electricity grid. For instance, I studied a unique program in California that allowed homeowners to borrow money to install solar panels from their local city with repayment coming from a new property tax assessment on their property. The interest rate was about the same as most solar lending programs, but if a person sold their home, the panels and the payments would stay with the home. I showed that the program had a large positive effect on the rate of solar installation in the participating cities, despite not being any less costly to the borrower. This suggests that non-monetary issues may dissuade people from installing solar panels.

I've learned to look for academic silver-linings during COVID. While online courses can be fun, they just aren't the same as in-person. However, in some ways, online courses can have positive aspects. For instance, I teach EC420 using the open-source statistical software "R". When students come to office hours, it is much easier to just share screen in Zoom and work on their coding issues. While I look forward to returning to the classroom as soon as we can do so safely, I think we'll be surprised at the aspects of remote learning that we choose to retain.

REQUEST FOR EC TUTORS DUE JANUARY 22ND AT 5:00 PM

We periodically receive requests for EC Tutors. The Tutor arrangement is between the student and Tutor. This is not a department sponsored program. To be considered for the list, you must have earned a minimum of 3.5 for any MSU EC course you identify (transfer or Advanced Placement credits may not be included) and have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA. If you are interested please email the information below to Nicole Gekeler at nicoleac@msu.edu.

- Name and MSU e-mail
- Number of credits completed
- EC Course(s) for which you would consider being a tutor
- Instructor you had for the course(s) identified above
- Grade received
- Hourly rate-of-pay you are requesting or indicate your willingness to negotiate the rate.

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE FEB. 1ST

<https://socialscience.msu.edu/undergraduate/current-students/scholarships.html>

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAR. 1ST

<http://econ.msu.edu/undergraduate/scholarships.php>

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CENTER WORKSHOPS

Registration:

<https://tinyurl.com/CLCwksp>

Academic Time Management: Jan. 13-14th

Effective Note Taking: Jan. 13-14th

Online Learning: Jan. 13-14th

D2L Basics for Students: Jan. 15th

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

[Good Trouble: Reclaiming our Democracy, & Demanding Social Justice.](#)

Jan. 19th from 9:00-10:30 AM

OCAT "WHEN THEY SEE US: EXPERIENCES OF MSU BLACK MALE STUDENTS."

Friday, Jan. 22nd (9:00 AM-Noon) [Register here.](#)

PEER PROGRAM SIGN-UP

<https://tinyurl.com/y3tzutp> by

Friday, Jan. 22nd.

RCPD COMMUNITY GROUPS

<https://tinyurl.com/y23zt9u9> by

Friday, Jan. 22nd.

CAREER SERVICES NETWORK EVENTS:

[HTTPS://CAREERNETWORK.MSU.EDU/EVENTS/](https://careernetwork.msu.edu/events/)

- Navigating Virtual Career Fairs Jan. 19th 4:00-4:45 PM & Jan. 25th 6:00-6:45 PM
- Preparing a Federal Resume Jan. 19th 11:00-11:20 AM & 4:00-4:20 PM
- New Year New Resume Jan. 21st 2:00-3:00 PM
- [Diversity Career Fair](#) Jan. 26th 4:00-7:00 PM
- How to Make Your Personal Statement Stand Out Jan. 27th 3:00-4:00 PM
- Considering a Gap Year? Jan. 28th 4:00-4:30 PM

SUMMER 2021 LONDON STUDY ABROAD TRIP CANCELED UNTIL SUMMER 2022