

Utility Maximization: Majors Newsletter

Wesleyan Economics Dept • Sept. 2025

Please read our roughly monthly newsletter
and follow our instagram account ([wes_econ](#))!

1. New faculty and staff

Professor Koru



Professor Koru is an Assistant Professor of Economics. He is a macroeconomist, and is teaching Econ 302 both semesters this year and also a spring 300-level macro elective.

His research focuses on macro, labor and public economics, and his research papers explore topics such as automation, income and wealth inequality, and inflation.

He received his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania and comes to us from Penn State University where he was a visiting assistant professor of economics.

Professor Jo



Professor Jo is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics. She is a microeconomist who will teach 200-level electives on labor economics, gender economics, and public economics.

Her research focuses on gender, labor, education and health economics, and her research papers explore topics such as the effects of state budget cuts on higher education, maternity leave, and gender earnings gaps.

She received her PhD from the University of Kansas and comes to us from Oberlin and Macalester Colleges where she was a visiting assistant professor of economics.

Mrs. Launder



Mrs Launder is our new Administrative Assistant. She is in the Departmental Office, Frank 106.

Her responsibilities are supporting all aspects of the department for faculty and students.

She is joining us after years at Wesleyan's Writing Center, English Department, and now-defunct Green Streets Arts Center.

(Yes, Mrs. Mascaro retired over the summer.)

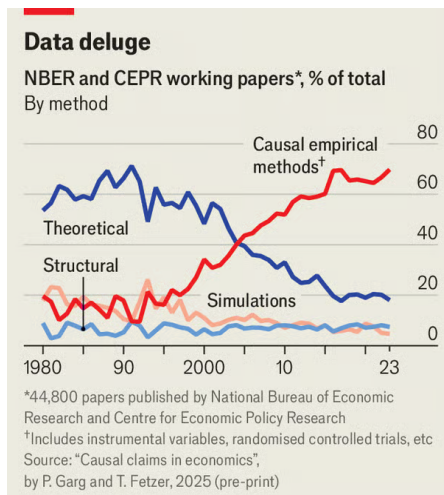
2. Curricular Reform

This was announced in a spring 2025 email to all majors and pre-majors.

Details

- **In 2025–26 only: 300, 301 and 302 can be taken in any order** once students have
 - Passed Econ 110 OR completed the 110 bypass (4 or 5 on both AP Micro and AP Macro or IB exam equivalents), met the math requirement for 110, and taken a 200-level elective
 - And for 300 and 302: stats requirement (e.g., 103 or other listed option)
 - Prefer all this info in flow chart or handout form? [Go here!](#)
- Note that in 2025–26 only: students can declare the econ major after completing one or more of 300–302 and 110 and earning a grade of C+ or higher in at least one of those classes.
 - If students had a grade of C+ or higher in 110 they can declare the major while enrolled in one or more of 300–302
 - If students did not have a grade of C+ or higher in 110, they cannot declare the major until they meet the entry requirement in at least one of the classes, 300–302
- Because Econ 110 must be taken for a grade to enter the major, effective fall 2025 Econ 110 can only be taken for a letter grade (no more student option)

Ex post motivation from [The Economist](#)



3. Grading policy

This was announced in a Fall 2023 email to all majors and students enrolled in Econ courses numbered 101-299. This will be emailed once again to all such students to ensure that everyone knows the department policy. The following statement was adopted unanimously by the Economics Department faculty in fall 2023.

A fundamental premise of grading is to provide an evaluation of student performance that has a consistent meaning across instructors and classes. This premise was challenged by the reality that some faculty changed grading procedures and/or course workload expectations during the pandemic and that some of those faculty have already returned to their pre-pandemic expectations. To make sure all students experience a fair and equitable learning environment, the Economics faculty have collectively agreed that all of us will return to our traditional grading standards and workload if we haven't already done so.

The economics department has restored the traditional meaning of each letter grade. The department has returned to our traditional median grade of roughly B+.

4. Wesmaps changes

Fall



Added a course on gender economics ([Econ 238](#)) with our new visiting assistant professor of economics, Professor Jo

Spring



These changes are not yet in Wesmaps but will be entered before planning period for spring courses (early Nov). They are being announced now to help students think about their entire academic year.

- Econ 238 (gender) will be offered and Econ 233 (discrimination) will not be offered
- All 300-level electives will have pre-requisites changed by the spring as students may have taken 301 or 302 without first taking 300.
 - Thus, please note that any course that is now listed with a prereq of 301 or 302 *might* require both 300 and either 301 or 302 *or* would require just 301 or 302

5. Study Abroad Credit

Advice from the Fries Center for Global Study on **"How to get study abroad courses approved for the ECON major or toward graduation"**

Did you know that not all courses abroad are transferable to Wesleyan? **To ensure that you get credit for courses you want to take abroad, enter them in the Course Approval System, found at Wesportal – Academics – Study Abroad Information and Application – Course Approval System.** The appropriate department and the Office of Study Abroad will receive messages to approve the courses.

Pro tip: business courses, such as marketing or management, do NOT transfer, even toward graduation, unless you get them approved by a department other than ECON. They are not economics courses. Rarely, another department such as CSPL or PSYC may approve a business course, if it is interdisciplinary enough in nature.

Econ addition: to receive credit at the 200-level the course must have a prereq for the equivalent of Wesleyan's 101 or 110. To receive credit at the 300-level the course must have prereqs equivalent to Wes requirements at that level (some combo of 300, 301, and 302) and require a research project. As a result most classes transfer in only at the 200-level.

Note: most approval requests are reviewed within a calendar week, usually faster. If the department chair needs additional information, they'll reach out directly.

Mark your calendar!

This list only includes already confirmed events in the coming weeks. *There are more events coming!*

To get info about our events, please read emails from Mrs. Launder *and* follow our instagram account: [wes_econ](#)

Event	How to participate	Target audience
Academic Forum Thursday 9/4, 11-12:30 Tent on Andrus Field	Visit our table in the corner closest to Exley and Clark to meet with faculty and majors	New students
Week of Welcome Econ Afternoon Tea Wednesday 9/10 4:30-5:30pm Frank 101	Come to meet faculty and students in the department. Got questions? We've got answers! Just want to socialize? We're social!	New students
Masters in Public Policy: A Conversation with Prof Jaeger of St Andrews Friday 9/12 11:30am-12:30pm Frank 101	Come with questions as broad as why an MPP or as narrow as why <i>this</i> MPP program	Majors
Jeff Cheung '21 seminar Wednesday 9/17 4:30-5:45pm Frank 101	Our first research seminar of the year will feature Jeff Cheung '21 who will receive his PhD in Economics in Spring '26 from UC Davis	Majors