

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD2324S

Date of Senate Approval 02/08/2024

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 16 (ECON): Add new course, ECON 265 Race and Economic Opportunity;  
Add new course, ECON 359: Climate Finance**

**Effective Date: Fall 2024**

**1. Add:** On page 135, new course, **ECON 265, Race and Economic Opportunity:**

**265 Race and Economic Opportunity (4)**

Economics and policy course on race and economic opportunity in the United States. Course is oriented around an examination of how de facto and de jure institutions shape economic opportunity in the United States and how current opportunities and economic outcomes are the result of extractive and exclusionary policies, programs, and markets layered throughout American history. Course begins with a critical examination of the social construction of race and its role in developing and spreading capitalism across the globe, followed by study of exclusionary institutional arrangements enacted during key periods in American history. We trace the impacts of these policy decisions to the present. In addition to learning about contemporary racial disparities, we analyze policy solutions for fighting racial inequality and achieving true equality of opportunity in the United States. Fall.

**Impact Statement:** The Department of Economics is proposing this addition to the Course Catalog to meet student needs and thus support recruitment and retention of students. In addition, it aligns our elective course offerings with current University missions and goals surrounding diversity.

1. This course serves as an elective for the Economics major or minor and also satisfies the LAC - Social Science and DI-R requirements.
2. Course information
  - a. Student Learning Outcomes:
    - 1) Students understand how history and policy shape contemporary racial economic inequality in the United States.
    - 2) Students understand various measures for economic well-being and are able to describe key dimensions of racial economic inequality in the United States.
    - 3) Students gain familiarity with census data, data visualization, and correlational analysis.
    - 4) Students gain familiarity with the policy options for remedying racial disparities in the United States and are able to analyze and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.
    - 5) Students understand the socially constructed nature of race in the United States. (DI-R, SLO#1)
    - 6) Students understand the significance of individuals' differing relationships to race and power in the United States, and how structural racism undergirds institutions. (DI-R, SLO#2)
    - 7) Students understand how individuals, organizations, and institutions create, perpetuate, or challenge racial inequality in the United States. (DI-R, SLO#3)

- 8) Students are better equipped to reevaluate their ideas about racial diversity and difference. (DI-R, SLO#4)
  - 9) Students understand the nature of race and racism, systemic and institutional racism, racial injustice, and what it means to be an anti-racist. (DI-R, SLO#7)
- b. Anticipated class size: 18 students/offering.
  - c. This course will schedule 200 minutes of class time per week.
  - d. This course's primary instructional format is Lecture.
  - e. This course will not require any specialized space, faculty resources, or materials needs.
  - f. This course is 4-contact-hours per week and counts as any other 4-contact-hour course offered by the Economics department in terms of workload.
3. This proposed course will be taught by one faculty member, Dr. Kathleen Lawlor, who has expertise in public policy and applied microeconomic data analysis and experience teaching this course.
  4. We propose offering this course annually each Fall.
  5. The proposed course will not affect the ability of the department to deliver its existing curriculum since this class will substitute for an existing elective course that can be offered with less frequency. This course will enable an additional course option for students seeking an LAC social science course in Economics and thus may enhance the department's ability to meet its commitments to the LAC. In addition, since Race & Economic Opportunity is a DI-R course, students will have an additional course through which they may complete the DI-R requirement of the LAC. Exposure to Economics via the LAC could potentially recruit additional minors or majors.
  6. We do not believe this course is required to be part of UNC CNS as it is an elective course that is not offered at every UNC campus.

### **Rationale**

- This course has been offered the past two Fall terms and enrolled at just under or at capacity both semesters, indicating that there is likely to be adequate student demand to support an annual offering. Enrollment grew from 15 students in Fall 2022 to 18 students in Fall 2023.
- This course meets the DI-R requirement for students and contributes to the LAC.
- This course serves as an excellent introductory course into applied data analysis, a strength of applied economists. Applied data analysis is increasingly in demand in professional spheres, and an area of increasing interest among students, so we believe this offering will support student success in career-visioning, career-readiness, and job placement.
- The subject matter of the course will support greater student engagement and success by aligning course applications to an area of frequent interest among our students (the links between race and economic opportunity).
- This course has the potential to be of interest to students across campus, as demonstrated by Fall 2023 enrollments, which include not only Economics majors but also majors in Health and Wellness, Business, Computer Science, Sociology, Political Science, Biology and others, therefore offering students interdisciplinary learning opportunities on campus.
- This course also has the potential to interest first-year and transfer students, current Economics students, as well as UNC Asheville's population of student athletes, many of whom elect to major in economics.

2. **Add:** On page 137, new course, **ECON 359, Climate Finance:**

**359 Climate Finance (4)**

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the world of climate adaptation finance, essential content for business owners, policy makers, informed voters and citizens, and consumers who wish to understand climate resilience. No prior knowledge of finance or climate change is required. We analyze climate mitigation and adaptation strategies in all sectors of climate-resilient and non-resilient economies and identify possible sources of finance for both local and global adaptation policies. Topics covered in this survey course include economic perspectives of climate change science, the role of climate change adaptations and policies, adaptation costs and benefits, bond and stock valuation for green funds, comparison of alternate investment criteria in financing adaptation strategies, climate and renewable energy finance, climate risk insurance. Odd years Spring.

**Impact Statement:** Climate Finance introduces students to learning economic and financial tools and applying them to understanding the interdisciplinary nature of climate finance. We propose this course to meet student needs for additional applied finance and environment-related courses and thus support recruitment and retention of students. In addition, it aligns our elective course offerings with current faculty expertise, local internship opportunities for our students, and locally available careers in the climate sector. Because it is an elective course for the major and minor, as well as the proposed Finance minor, the course will enhance students' ability to complete their chosen program by enrolling in courses in their interest area.

1. This course serves as an elective for the Economics major or minor and also satisfies the LAC - Social Science requirement.
2. Course Details
  - a. Student learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course a student will
    - 1) Know how climate change is shaping investment strategy and how capital markets adapt to future investment needs for climate change.
    - 2) Be able to evaluate the feasibility of any climate adaptation project by employing various investment criteria such as Net Present Value (NPV) and Internal Rate Return (IRR).
    - 3) Have knowledge about the developments in the green bond market and can read the bonds and stocks quotations of green corporations.
    - 4) Recognize climate change adaptation strategies in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries that can appear with different economic and financial characteristics. Further, they will be aware of the mechanism to finance those adaptations.
    - 5) Understand the difference between public adaptations and private adaptations and sources to moderate and potentially accelerate the financing of private adaptations.
  - b. Anticipated class size: 20 students per offering.
  - c. This course will schedule 200 minutes of class time per week.
  - d. This course's primary instructional format is Lecture.
  - e. This course will not require any new specialized space, faculty resources, or materials needs. The Department's mobile Finance Lab will be used for student projects.
  - f. This course is 4CHR, both contact and faculty workload hours.
3. This proposed course will be taught by one faculty member, Dr. Muhammad Nawaz, who has expertise in finance and environmental economics, including climate finance.
4. We will offer the course every other year initially: [Odd years Spring]. If enrollments suggest an annual offering could be supported, we will consider that at a future time.
5. The proposed course will not affect the ability of the department to deliver its existing curriculum since this class will substitute for an existing elective course that is now being offered with less frequency. This course provides an additional course option for students seeking an LAC - designated course in Economics, thus enhancing their choice set.
6. We do not believe this course is required to be part of UNC CNS as it is an elective course that is not offered at every UNC campus.

## Rationale

- Climate Finance serves as an excellent introductory course into climate change and mitigation and adaptation finance, cross-cutting topics that would otherwise require multiple courses (some of which have prerequisites) to cover. This course thus provides a low-cost (efficient), impactful orientation for students interested in climate change and finance.
- Because the course has no prerequisites, it allows students from ENVR, ATMS and other majors to learn essential finance concepts that are relevant to their career choices, thus promoting career readiness for students who may not otherwise enroll in an Economics or Finance course.
- Until this year, our department hasn't had expertise in Climate Finance. We now have a tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Muhammad Nawaz, who has expertise in Finance and Environmental Finance and an interest in regularly teaching the course.
- The subject matter of the course supports greater student engagement and success by developing their interaction with guest speakers who are experts in their field and come from the World Bank, International Finance Council (IFC), Green Climate Fund (GCF). This course also encourages students to interact with local climate finance policy makers and design a project to understand the climate change issues and financing mechanisms using real-world data.
- This course has the potential to be of interest to students in Business, Accountancy, Mathematics, Economics, Atmospheric Science, Environmental Studies, Political Science, Statistics, Computer Science and others such as Interdisciplinary Studies. Moreover, if any student is interested in Climate Change, Finance, Business, Policy, or being an informed citizen or voter, they will learn basic principles to understand the essential role that finance plays in both understanding climate change drivers as well as efforts to mitigate against and adapt to climate change. In addition, this course will support the proposed Master of Science in Climate Resilience program as well as the Department's proposed Minor in Finance with an additional elective. Students pursuing the pathway to Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) certification will gain exposure to content in the [CFA Institute's](#) Candidate Body of Knowledge ([CBOK](#)).
- Given its novel nature—we have not been able to identify another Climate Finance course offered at the undergraduate level—first-year and transfer students may be drawn to the opportunity to integrate Climate Finance into their undergraduate program. This could enhance recruitment and retention.