Volkswirtschaftliches Seminar MW86/MQV10:

Current Topics regarding the Economics of AI

Universität Düsseldorf, Winter term 2026/27

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Artificial intelligence has the potential to change economic relationships whenever tasks can be automated, predictions can be improved, or decisions can be delegated. These developments raise central economic questions. When does AI substitute for labor, and when does it complement workers? How does it affect productivity, wages, employment, and the distribution of income? How do data, computing resources, and access to AI shape firm behavior and market structure? What can public policy do to foster innovation while limiting adverse effects on workers, consumers, and competition?

The course "Current Topics regarding the Economics of AI" discusses selected contributions to the wide-open question as to how artificial intelligence will impact different aspects of the economy. We will concentrate on the economic logic behind the analyses of specific questions, not how artificial intelligence impacts society overall. The goal is for students to understand which economic concern is investigated, how it is modeled and where relevant how the answer is identified from data. Students should then critically reflect on the underlying mechanism and its implications beyond the (sometimes narrow) concrete setting in which it is analyzed.

Students will work closely with one assigned paper within a broader subtopic. The goal is to be able to explain the paper's key insights, and to relate them to other results discussed in the course as well as to economic and policy contexts in which these results are important.

Course requirements and assessment: Each student is assigned one paper in the economics of AI. Throughout the semester, groups of students will present a broader subtopic, with each student taking primary responsibility for one assigned paper. Presentations should focus on the economic logic behind the results and explain the research question, method, main findings, and connections among the three papers. The course concludes with a 20-minute oral examination covering mainly the student's assigned paper and the connections between that paper and other results presented in class.

Preliminary Reading List

The following papers provide a preliminary basis for the four seminar subtopics. The final selection and allocation of readings will be announced following the kickoff meeting.

1. AI markets, platforms, and competition

1. S. Athey and F. Scott Morton. Artificial Intelligence, Competition, and Welfare. NBER Working Paper 34444, National Bureau of Economic Research, Nov. 2025
2. J. Brand, J. C. Castillo, C. Lohani, and L. Musolff. Reliability and Pricing in Cloud Computing. Working paper (November), 2025
3. K. H. Lee and L. Musolff. Two-Sided Markets Shaped by Platform-Guided Search. *Econometrica*, 2026. Forthcoming

2. AI content creation and intermediation

4. I. Reimers and J. Waldfogel. AI and the Quantity and Usage of Creative Products: Have LLMs Boosted Creation of Valuable Books? NBER Working Paper 34777, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2026
5. J. Greubel, H. Guhling, and F. Herweg. AI Persuasion and Financial-Decision Making: Experimental Evidence on Dominated Investment Choices. CESifo Working Paper 12925, CESifo, Munich, Aug. 2026
6. S. Goldberg and H. T. Lam. Generative AI and Creative Goods: Market Expansion, Crowd-Out, and Copyright. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2026. Forthcoming
7. K. He, R. Shorrer, and M. Xia. Human Misperception of Generative-AI Alignment: A Laboratory Experiment, 2025

3. AI, work, and production

7. K. Z. Cui, M. Demirer, S. Jaffe, L. Musolff, S. Peng, and T. Salz. The Effects of Generative AI on High-Skilled Work: Evidence from Three Field Experiments with Software Developers. *Management Science*, 2026. doi: $10.1287/\mathrm{mnsc}.2025.00535$
8. M. Demirer, L. Musolff, and L. Yang. Writing Code vs. Shipping Code: Productivity Effects Across Generations of AI Coding Tools. NBER Working Paper 35275, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2026
9. C. I. Jones. A.I. and Our Economic Future. NBER Working Paper 34779, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2026

4. AI, income distribution, and technological progress

10. A. Korinek and J. E. Stiglitz. Artificial Intelligence and Its Implications for Income Distribution and Unemployment. In A. Agrawal, J. Gans, and A. Goldfarb, editors, *The Economics of Artificial Intelligence: An Agenda*, pages 349–390. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2019
11. A. Korinek and J. E. Stiglitz. Artificial Intelligence, Globalization, and Strategies for Economic Development. NBER Working Paper 28453, National Bureau of Economic Research, Feb. 2021
12. A. Korinek and J. E. Stiglitz. Steering Technological Progress. NBER Working Paper 34994, National Bureau of Economic Research, Mar. 2026

Additional background reading: J. Gans. *The Microeconomics of Artificial Intelligence*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2025. ISBN 978-0-262-38496-4. A. Ramzanali and A. Rajan. AI Neutrality. Technical report, Vanderbilt Policy Accelerator for Political Economy and Regulation, Nashville, TN, Jan. 2026

Important Information

Target audience:	Master students in VWL and Economics
Language:	English
Modules:	MW86, MQV10
Prerequisites:	No formal prerequisites; a good understanding of the material in MV05 (Microeconomics) is taken as given. Familiarity with game theory and empirical methods is recommended.
Preparation:	Students are expected to read all assigned papers before the respective presentation session and to engage actively in the discussion of the readings.
Kickoff Meeting:	21.10.2026, 17:30-18:30, Seminarraum 2
Office Hours:	By appointment with Nico Imenkamp
Presentations:	To be announced. All students present on one day; 30 minutes per student, including time for questions. The presentation covers the assigned paper and its connection to the papers broader subtopic.
Oral Examination:	To be announced. Individual 20-minute oral examination with questions mainly on the student's assigned paper and its connections to the other results presented in class.
Grading:	The final grade is a combination of the presentation and the oral examination.