ECONOMICS HONORS SEMINAR

Fall 1993
Economics 4309

Prof. Ann Carlos

Office: Rm 121
Office Hours: TR 11.00-12.00
and by appointment

Economics 4309 is a required seminar and critical thinking course for economics honors majors. The course is designed to provide you with a forum in which you can discuss some current economic issues, using the theories and methods learnt in prior courses. Because this is a seminar course, each student is expected to have done the required readings and to be ready to enter into the discussions. Each week two or three students will be assigned the task of leading the discussion of the relevant chapter and/or reading. The course will also entail frequent writing assignments through which you can improve on your ability to present economic argument. In order to provide a basic structure, three books will be used. These are


These books are available in the bookstore. In addition, some readings, applicable to the individual topics will be assigned. As we cannot cover any topic in great depth, each reading is designed to show how some economist(s) analyzed one issue relevant to the material under discussion.

Along with the critical thinking aspect of the course, Economics 4309 is also designed to allow you the opportunity to get started on your honors thesis. Therefore, over the course of this term, each student will be required to present his/her work-in-progress. In order to obtain maximum feedback and assistance from the other members of the group, each student will hand out a two or three page summary to the other members prior to the presentation. In addition, each student will be expected to give a short progress report at the beginning of each class. This can cover both new ideas or new frustrations.

Having laid out the rules for the course, I would also like to lay out my expectations or objectives. This course provides you with a unique opportunity. It gives you the chance to think about economics and to ask to what extent you agree or disagree with the material you have learned over the past few years. It also gives you the chance to do your own economic analysis on a topic that interests you. My hope is that you will learn that the doing of, instead of the learning of, economics can be both very satisfying and fun.
Course Outline


September 1 Research techniques, writing style, suggestions for leading discussions. Guidance on using the library for economic research from one of the Norlin reference librarians.

September 8 Carson, Introduction
Library visit

September 15 Carson, Issue 1 - American Agriculture.


September 22 Carson, Issue 7 - The Productivity Problem

September 29 Carson, Issue 5 - Government Regulation of Business

Sketch of Thesis Proposal presented in class and submitted to Prof. Carlos.

October 6 Carson, Issue 4 - The Giant Corporation and Government.


October 13 Carson, Issue 8 - Income Distribution and Public Policy.

David T. Ellwood and Jonathan Crane, "Family Change Among Black Americans: What Do We Know?", Journal of Economic Perspectives, Fall 1990.


November 10, 17, 24 will deal with Laura Tyson’s book, Who is Bashing Whom?

December 1 and 8 class presentation of papers. Your paper is due in my office one week after the presentation or by December 15 (whichever comes first).

Students who submit their honors thesis during the fall semester will receive a grade based on the thesis. Those who are submitting a thesis during the spring semester will receive a grade for the course based on submitted paper.
Attached is a list of dates from the honors office. Please make a careful note of all the dates that are relevant.

In previous years, during the spring semester students worked independently on their honors thesis, meeting with their advisor and myself at (ir)regular intervals. I personally felt that this structure or lack of the same made it more difficult for students. They often felt that they were out in the wilderness by themselves. In order to facilitate the thesis writing stage and to provide greater structure and support, the department is offering Economics 4110 - Honors Seminar 2, in the spring semester. This is solely for honors students. I encourage you to enroll. The focus of 4110 will be on macro economic issues; the deficit, unemployment, military spending, and the social budget, health care. Thus, 4110 is intended to complement the micro economic focus of 4109.