ECONOMICS HONORS SEMINAR

Economics 4309  
Prof. Ann Carlos  
Fall 1995

Office: Rm 121  
Office Hours: TR 1.00-2.00pm  
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 both orally and in written form 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. This can cover both new ideas and/or new frustrations. In addition, every two to three weeks, each student will be expected to give me 5-8 typewritten pages documenting continuous progress on the thesis and a paper at the end of the semester.

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

August 29  
Introduction: discussion of criteria for honors, advice on the selection of thesis topics and selection of dates for presentations. Research techniques, writing style, suggestions for leading discussions.

Sept 5  
Library visit - for those commencing their theses. Wyrick, chs 1 and 3

Sept 12  
Carson, Introduction; Wyrick, ch. 2.

Sept 19  
Carson, Issue 1 - American Agriculture; Wyrick, chs 4 and 5.


Sept 26  
Carson, Issue 3 - The Acid Rain Crisis; Wyrick, chs 6 and 7.


Oct 3  
Sketch of Thesis Proposal - presented in class and submitted to Prof. Carlos.

Wyrick, chs 9 and 10.

Oct 10  
Carson, Issue 4 - The Giant Corporation and Government; Wyrick, ch 11.


Oct 17  
Carson, Issue 5 - Government Regulation of Business; Wyrick, ch 12.

Noll and Owen, The Political Economy of Deregulation, ch.2

Oct 24  
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.
October 31, November 7, 14 and 21 will deal with Esty’s book, *Greening of GATT*.

November 28, December 5 and 12 are for class presentation of papers. Your paper is due in my office one week after the presentation or by December 13th (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 the submitted paper, class attendance and oral participation. The breakdown of the grades will be 20% attendance, 40% participation (where participation shows thoughtful questions, queries or comments) and 40% for the paper. Written work done during the term will not be formally graded, as I view that work in the light of earlier drafts of the paper/thesis.

In previous years (except last year), 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 4139 - Honors Seminar 2, in the spring semester. This is solely for honors students. I encourage you to enroll. The focus of 4139 will be on macro economic issues; the deficit, unemployment, military spending, and the social budget, health care. 4139 is intended to complement the micro economic focus of 4109. All the students who enrolled in the class spring semester saw it as invaluable in getting the thesis finished.