Syllabus

Honors Seminar - Economics 4309

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Hours: Monday 3-5 Thursday 9:00-11:00

Course Objectives. The primary goals of this course are to launch new Honors students on their theses and to provide a framework for the successful completion of honors theses by those graduating this semester. Most of your thesis work will occur outside our class, but a portion of each class period will be devoted to tracking your progress with the thesis and exploiting the talents of the group for assistance with problems and general suggestions. In addition, several class sessions before the oral exam period will be dedicated to mock thesis defenses by the Fall graduates. These sessions will give each of you practice presenting and defending your work before a friendly and supportive group. To make these sessions productive, presenters should distribute a thesis abstract to the class one week before their presentation.

For students working towards Spring graduation, this seminar will assist you in the initial stages of your thesis project, including choice of a topic and completion of a formal thesis proposal. Those who are at the proposal stage this semester will present their proposals orally during the final weeks of the term. Feedback from the group, especially those who will have completed their theses by that time, will help you move into the next stage of the project.

The secondary objective on the course is to discuss critically several issues in contemporary economics. I have selected topics that are tangentially related to the thesis projects of our Fall graduates. My goal here is to encourage you to think more generally about your topics, putting your research into a broader context. This should be a useful background for your oral examination, when the discussion often ranges beyond the narrow focus of your thesis. Our class discussions will be based on the readings from Foreign Affairs that have been compiled in the course readings packets on sale in the bookstore. Each week two students will be responsible for leading the class discussion, by constructing discussion questions based on the readings and current events.

I have ordered for this course A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker. This guide will be useful to you in the writing stages of the thesis project, including the writing of the proposal. I will supplement this guide, which focuses on writing mechanics and documentation, with other materials covering research strategies and thesis organization.
Evaluation

Students graduating and completing their honors theses this semester will receive a grade based on their honors thesis, oral defense, and class participation. Students who will not graduate this semester will receive a grade based on their thesis proposal and class participation. The proposal should include a literature review, a statement of thesis objectives, and a discussion of how the thesis relates to the literature.

Calendar

Planning Dates:

September 4 - Meeting for all candidates for Fall graduation with honors.

October 12 - Applications for Spring Honors candidates due in the Honors Office

October 26 - Thesis and abstract due in Honors Office

October 26 - November 9 - Oral defenses.

November 9 - Reports on orals and examining committee recommendations due in Honors Office.

November 13 (8:00 a.m.) - Honors designations posted at the Honors Program Office.

December 8 (last class) Proposals Due.

December 18 (9:00 a.m.) - Honors Convocation for Fall graduates, Glenn Miller Ballroom.

Class meetings:

August 25 - Planning meeting. Discussion of thesis topic ideas.

September 1 - Progress reports on theses of continuing students.

Discussion: The American Century.

September 8 - Library instruction

September 15 - Instruction on EViews econometric software.

September 22 - Instruction: The proposal and literature review.

Discussion: Globalization

September 29 - Instruction: Organization and writing the thesis.

Discussion: China in the world economy.

October 6, 13, and 20 - Practice thesis defenses
October 27, November 3 - Oral defenses - no class.

November 10 - Discussion: Global Warming

November 17, 24, December 1, 8 - Proposal presentations.