THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

ECON3803/4200A Senior Seminar in Economics and Finance

GESERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Steven Xu
Email: paixu@hku.hk
Office: K K Leung 1113
Consultation times: By appointment
Lecture time and venue: Semester 1, Friday 14:30 – 17:20 in KKLG105

Pre-requisites: ECON1001/ECON1210 Introductory microeconomics.
Open ONLY to final year undergraduate students majoring in economics and finance.

Course Website: On Moodle in HKU portal

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to give the final year SEF students an opportunity to bring together all the knowledge learned in the program. Each student will conduct faculty directed research in form of either individual project or collaborative group projects. The course will cover various topics in economics and their applications, such as migration and labor markets, market power and competition policy, innovation and productivity, management and firm dynamics, strategic decision making and its applications, procurement and optimal mechanism, trade liberalization and development, property rights and protection, etc. This list of topics is not exhaustive and exact topics covered in class may vary, depending on the general interests of class in the year.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students should adopt a hands-on approach to applying their theoretical knowledge and research methodology to analyzing real problems of the economy in an empirically rigorous manner. Students should integrate their whole corpus of knowledge through application of concepts in economics, including the strategic management of organizations. In any context, the potential economic impact of policy-oriented proposals on various affected agents and parties can be properly assessed. Meanwhile, students’ discussion, debating, presentation and teamwork skills should be developed.

Students’ leadership qualities will be enhanced by strengthening their ability to integrate their knowledge through application. They will learn to appreciate the challenges of developing and undertaking an independent project. Throughout the course, students will be aware of the challenges and responsibilities a leader has to contemplate in making decisions, and taking into consideration ethical concerns and political economy constraints.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Aligned Faculty’s Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLO1. Identifying and analyzing real economic problems with theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>#1, #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO2. Assessing the political economy aspects of policy proposals</td>
<td>#1, #2, #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO3. Conducting research project with appropriate approach and methodology</td>
<td>#1, #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO4. Integrating the whole knowledge base acquired in the study of program</td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO5. Development in discussion and team work skills</td>
<td>#3, #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO6. Effective presentation and communication in research</td>
<td>#2, #3, #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Teaching and Learning Activities</td>
<td>Expected contact hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L1. (Lecture.) Instructor will give lectures on major concepts and issues.</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L2. (Research projects.) Students will be asked to work on individual or group research projects.</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L3. (In-class presentation and discussion) Students are expected to present their progress and engage in discussion during lecture meetings. Most in-depth learning takes place when students actively engage themselves in discussions thought presenting and sharing their ideas.</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L4. (Consultation.) Professor holds weekly consultation hours to answer students' questions. Students are also encouraged to discuss questions with the instructor by email or a forum in the class website.</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Brief Description (Optional)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Aligned Course Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CLO 1 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>CLO 1 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Midterm Report</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>CLO 1-3, 7-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>A4. Final Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>CLO 1-4, 6-8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT**

**Course Grade Descriptors**

- **A+, A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+, D**
  - Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, and synthesis.
  - Strong evidence of the ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, and synthesis.
  - Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at low levels of learning such as describe and apply but not at high levels of learning such as evaluate and synthesis.
  - Evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.
F  Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.

Assessment Rubrics for Each Assessment (Please provide us the details in a separate file if the space here is not enough)

Project Report.
Each group will be required to submit a written analysis of an economic topic. The objective of group project is to give students an opportunity to apply the analytical tools studied to daily life issues. Through this, students will demonstrate their understanding of topics by integrating the tools and concepts covered in the course. The following grading criteria are applied:

Grading Criteria

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CLO</th>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>All key economic problems are identified, insightful and detailed analyses, sufficient supports with relevant data/facts, effective application of concepts and theories, well thought-out and feasible recommendations, and excellent writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
<td>Most of the key economic problems are identified, generally insightful and detailed analyses, appropriate use of relevant data/facts, acceptable application of concepts and theories, generally logical and feasible recommendations, and decent writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C, C-</td>
<td>A few key economic problems are identified, somewhat insightful and detailed analyses, insufficient use of relevant data/facts, limited application of concepts and theories, mediocre and infeasible recommendations, and marginally acceptable writing.</td>
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COURSE CONTENT AND TENTATIVE TEACHING SCHEDULE

Introduction (1-5 weeks)
Midterm Review (6 week)
Progress Report (7-8 weeks)
Consultation and Discussion (9-10 weeks)
Presentation of Final Project Report (11-12 weeks)

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS & ONLINE MATERIALS (e.g. journals, textbooks, website addresses etc.)

Depending on the topics for the class, different textbooks and journal articles may be recommended as the class proceeds.

MEANS/PROCESSES FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK ON COURSE

- Conducting mid-term survey in additional to SETL around the end of the semester
- Online response via Moodle site

COURSE POLICY (e.g. plagiarism, academic honesty, attendance, etc.)

Participation:

Class participation is strongly encouraged and hopefully you will find it extremely worthwhile attending all the meetings. It is entirely your responsibility to determine what you have missed, if you do not attend a class.

Academic Conduct:

The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web (http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/). Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following types of cases:
(i) Plagiarism: The representation of someone else's ideas as if they are one's own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one’s own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged.

(ii) Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects: The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort.

(iii) Cheating on In-Class Exams: The covert gathering of information from other students, the use of unauthorized notes, unauthorized aids, etc.

(iv) Unauthorized Advance Access to an Exam: The representation of materials prepared at leisure, as a result of unauthorized advance access (however obtained), as if it were prepared under the rigors of the exam setting. This misrepresentation is dishonest in itself even if there are not compounding factors, such as unauthorized uses of books or notes.

Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement:

(i) The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;

(ii) The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is prima facie evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (i) might be invoked.

**ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION** (e.g. e-learning platforms & materials, penalty for late assignments, etc.)

**Free-rider Problem on Group projects:**

The free-rider problem, a situation that lazy students do nothing but rely on other group members to do the work, is strictly prohibited in the project report. A confidential peer evaluation will be carried out after the submission of group report to determine students' individual grade of group work. No grade will be given if the student is evaluated as the free-rider by group member.