

ECON 4999 – 005 (CRN: 14238) - CTW
SENIOR CAPSTONE IN ECONOMIC POLICY
Spring 2012

Instructor*

Glenwood Ross
Department of Economics
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies #659
(404) 413-0166 (Phone)
(404) 413-0145 (Fax)
gross@gsu.edu
Office hours: T/R, 11:00am-12:30pm; or by appointment
Class time: 5:30 pm- 6:45 pm in GCB #231

Catalog Course Description:

This course serves as an integrative capstone course for the economics major and should normally be taken during the student's last two semesters of study. Basic tools and methods of economics are used to understand and analyze a variety of contemporary economic problems and policy issues. The course will be organized by research modules that cover at least five of the following six broad economics topics: business policy analysis; economic history and thought; social policy and human resources; international economics and globalization; government fiscal, environmental and urban policies; and behavioral economics. This course has been designated as CTW (Critical Thinking Through Writing) course.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of the course are to integrate and solidify the student's knowledge of economic theories, methods and reasoning and their application to contemporary economic problems and policy issues. Basic microeconomic and macroeconomic theories are applied to topics drawn from a variety of the field courses in the economics major, such as industrial organization, international trade and finance, public finance, labor economics, and urban and regional economics. Students will learn how economists conduct basic research and the theoretical and empirical tools they use to test hypotheses and analyze economic problems. In addition, emphasis is given to critical thinking skills, individual and team projects, effective oral and written communication, and effective use of computers and other modern information technology.

Prerequisites:

ECON 3900; ECON 3910; two 4000-level Economics courses; or permission of the instructor

* This course will be taught jointly by G. Ross and P. Kagundu. Contact information for P. Kagundu is as follows: Tel. (404) 413-0149. E-mail: pkagundu@gsu.edu. Office hours: TR, 9:30 – 10:30 am and by appointment (AYSPS 661).

General Learning Outcomes:

Goal I. Communication

1. Students communicate effectively using appropriate writing conventions and formats.
2. Students communicate effectively using appropriate oral or signed conventions and formats.

Goal II. Collaboration

1. Students participate effectively in collaborative activities.

Goal III. Critical Thinking

1. Students formulate appropriate questions for research.
2. Students effectively collect appropriate evidence.
3. Students appropriately evaluate claims, arguments, evidence and hypotheses.
4. Students use the results of analysis to appropriately construct new arguments and formulate new questions.

Goal IV. Contemporary Issues

1. Students effectively analyze contemporary issues within the context of diverse disciplinary perspectives.
2. Students effectively analyze contemporary multicultural, global, and international questions.

Goal V. Quantitative Skills

1. Students effectively perform arithmetic operations, as well as reason and draw appropriate conclusions from numerical information.
2. Students effectively translate problem situations into symbolic representations and use those representations to solve problems.

Goal VI. Technology

1. Students effectively use computers and other technology appropriate to the discipline.

Learning Outcomes for the Economics Major and for this course:

1. To understand basic theories, concepts, and analytical methods of microeconomics and macroeconomics.
2. To be able to apply theories, concepts, and analytical methods of microeconomics and macroeconomics to specific fields of economics.
3. To be able to identify the relevant benefits and costs to consider when comparing policy choices.
4. To be able to communicate, using appropriate writing and oral conventions, basic economic theories, concepts, analytical methods, and policy choices.

Course Requirements

There will be an exam to track general student progress at mastering basic economic principles in the beginning and end of the semester (5% of the course grade), an exam after the first four modules (20%), and a second exam after the last module (20%). A group project that includes an oral presentation will be required (20%). A Critical Thinking Through Writing (CTW) individual book review (20%) will be required. A student portfolio (5%) that will help prepare the student for the job market ahead and class participation and quizzes that involve Critical Thinking Through Writing (10%) are also course requirements. Missing more than two classes may adversely affect your grade.

CTW Designation – Individual Book Review

The individual book review will require the student to explore topics in economics that he or she is interested in and choose a book to read and thoroughly review. The review should be done in 5-6 pages (using one-inch margins, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 font). The review should incorporate 2-3 economic concepts and provide a detailed, thoughtful analysis of the book, not simply a summary. A sample book review will be provided with instructions on the format. The instructor must approve of the book first (**January 26th**). An outline for the book review will be due on **February 2nd**. Three versions of the book review will be handed in by the end of the semester. The first draft is due **February 23rd**; the second is due **March 20th**; and the final version is due on **April 19th**. You will be required to address any concerns the instructor has in subsequent versions of your book review in order to improve your book review grade. Concerns will be based on the bullet points outlined in the sample book review outline that will be made available on uLearn. In particular, the student will be graded on the following components of the book review: the introduction, explanation of the book, application of at least two economic concepts to the book explanation in the body of the text, structure of review, valid opinion and conclusion, and references (graded also through citing sources accurately and not plagiarizing).

The Table below shows the penalty (points lost) for failure to submit each of the book review versions as well as late submission.

Email submissions will NOT be accepted. Students must submit hard copies of their papers during class time on the due dates.

<i>Version</i>	Penalty (points lost)	
	<i>Late Submission</i>	<i>No Submission</i>
1st Draft	5	10
2nd Draft	5	10
Final	10	100

Quizzes and class participation will also involve thinking critically. The quizzes will often require the students to critically evaluate classical economic assumptions and provide real-world examples of how and why these assumptions may not be valid.

Description of the Tracking Exam

An exam of 20 multiple choice questions testing basic principles of micro and macroeconomics will be given the first week of class. This exam will be given again during the final exam period for the class. The higher of the two scores on this exam will count as 5% of the course grade.

Description of the Group Project

The group project will allow students to work together to analyze how the benefits and costs of a particular public policy are to be evaluated. The topic will be chosen by the group and should not be one covered in class. Groups consisting of no more than five students (and no fewer than two) will be assigned during the second week of the semester. Group presentations will take place during the last two weeks of classes, and should last about 15 minutes each. Groups must use PowerPoint for their presentations, which they will hand in at the time of the presentation. (A paper is *not* required for the group project.) Library research is required for the group project, and sources should be carefully noted within the presentation. The presentation should be about ten minutes long, and should be followed by a Q & A session lasting approximately five minutes. The group can choose who speaks during the presentation. The group may have more than one of the group members speak during the presentation if the group feels it would enhance the presentation. All group members must be present at the time of the presentation, even if they do not plan to speak. Each individual must also hand in the evaluation sheet provided on the last page of the syllabus.

Description of the Student Portfolio

The student portfolio, due on the day the final exam is scheduled, aims to prepare the student for the job market and encourages the student to look back at economics courses taken and assess what he or she has learned. In creating the portfolio, the student should: (1) Put together a résumé (possibly getting help from the Georgia State University Career Services Center); (2) Research the job market for economists and summarize the typical jobs and starting salaries for economics majors (also providing this information in a table embedded in the paper created using a spreadsheet), including a page with a basic description of what economics is, how economists think, and what economists do; (3) Summarize his/her skills and how they can be applied; (4) Provide a list of all economics courses taken, including information about when and whom the course was taken with; (5) Summarize what he/she learned in the economics program. Students will especially be graded on the presentation of their student portfolios.

Notes

1. This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.
2. Georgia State University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek academic accommodations must first take appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services located in Suite 230 of the new Student Center.
3. If you require special accommodations for exams (e.g., "time and a half"), you must provide documentation from GSU Disability Services¹ and make arrangements with me at least two days before the first exam.
4. Incompletes will only be given to students who are passing the course, and even then, only in very special circumstances. In the case where an incomplete is awarded, it must be removed by the end of the next term that the student is enrolled (and within two terms regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled) or it will automatically turn into an F.
5. Students who withdraw after the midpoint of each term will not be eligible for a "W" except in cases of hardship. A student who withdraws after the midpoint of the term is assigned a grade of "WF," except in those cases in which (1) hardship status is determined by the Office of the Dean of Students² because of emergency employment, or health reasons, and (2) the student is doing passing work, as determined by the student's instructor(s).
6. Effective Fall 2001, all instructors must, on a date after the mid-point of the course (to be set by the Provost) give a WF to all those students who are on their rolls, but no longer taking the class and report the last day the student attended or turned in an assignment. If you plan to drop the class, let me know.
7. Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.
8. Students must be aware of the university's Policy on Academic Honesty (Section 409).
9. Attendance will only be taken to verify course enrollment, and will not directly affect your grade.
10. No make-up exams are provided except for documented health or business reasons arranged with the instructor (in advance if at all possible).
11. NO extra credit projects are available under any circumstances
12. Please check Ulearn (formerly WebCT Vista) and your Georgia State University email regularly. Note that if you send an email from a non-GSU email account, I may not receive it.
13. **February 24, 2012 is the last day to withdraw and possibly receive a "W"**

¹ See <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwods/>

² See <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/>

Course Outline

Week 1 (Jan. 10 & 12): Introduction / Student Progress Tracking exam

Reading:

- Siegfried, John J. "The Goals and Objectives of the Economics Major." In *Teaching Undergraduate Economics* (William B. Walstad), 1998, Chapter 6: p59-72.

Week 2 (Jan. 17 & 19): Module I: Urban Issues: Housing and Housing Policy

Readings:

- O'Sullivan, Arthur; *Urban Economics*, 7th ed, 2009.
 - o Chapter 13: Why is Housing Different, p339-357.

Week 3 (Jan. 24 & 26): Module I: Urban Issues: Housing and Housing Policy

(Book approval due on Jan. 26)

Readings:

- O'Sullivan, Arthur; *Urban Economics*, 7th ed, 2009.
 - o Chapter 14: Housing Policy, p358-379.
- Goering, John. "The Impact of New Neighborhoods on Poor Families: Evaluating the Policy Implications of the Moving to Opportunity Demonstration." *Federal Reserve Bank of New York Policy Review*, (June 2003), p113-40.
- "The 2009 Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative Homeless Census." *Pathways*.

Week 4 (Jan. 31 & Feb. 2): Module II: Urban Issues: Poverty

(Book review outline due on Feb. 2)

Readings:

- O'Sullivan, Arthur; *Urban Economics*, 5th ed, 2003.
 - o Chapter 14: Urban Poverty, p351-371.

Week 5 (Feb. 7 & 9): Module III: Health Economics: Health Insurance

Dr. James Marton will lecture on Tuesday the 9th

Readings:

- Folland, Sherman; Goodman, Allen C.; Stano, Miron. *The Economics of Health and Health Care*, 3rd ed, 2001.
 - o Chapter 7: Demand and Supply of Health Insurance, p141-163.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Moral Hazard Myth." *New Yorker*, 29 August 2005, p44-49.

Week 6 (Feb. 14 & 16) Module IV: Labor: Wage Differentials and Earnings Inequality

Dr. Barry Hirsch will lecture on Thursday the 16th.

Readings are forthcoming:

Week 7 Exam I: Feb. 21st.

(Feb. 23): Switch to Dr. Kagundu

Week 7 (Feb. 23): Module V: Public Finance: Deficit Finance

Readings:

- Rosen, Harvey and Ted Gayer; "Public Finance"; 8th Ed, 2008
 - o Chapter 20: Deficit Finance
- CBO; "The Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on Employment and Economic Output from April 2011 to June 2011"
(*First draft of book review due on Feb. 23*)

Week 8: Spring Break --- February 27th – March 4th

**Week 9 (Mar. 6 & 8): Module Public Finance: Deficit Finance
(Continued)**

Week 10 (Mar. 13 & 15): Module VI: Financial Crises

Readings:

- Dan Richards. "The Subprime Crisis Explained"; October 2008
- Lucian A. Bebchuk; "A Better Plan for Addressing the Financial Crisis" Economists' Voice, September 2008
- WS Journal; "The ECB Moves to Prop Up Italy, Spain" August 2011.

Week 11 (Mar. 20 & 22): Module VII: Global Economics: Aid and Growth

Readings:

- Easterly, William. *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics*, 2002.
 - o Chapter 2: Aid for Investment, p25-44.
 - o Chapter 14: Conclusion: The View from Lahore, p285-291.
- (*Second draft of book review due on Mar. 20*)

Week 12 (Mar. 27 & 29): Module VIII: Global Economics: Globalization

Readings:

- Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents*, 2002.
 - o Chapter 1: The Promise of Global Institutions, p3-22.
 - o Chapter 8: The IMF's Other Agenda, p195-213.

Week 13 (April 3 & 5): Module VIII: Review and Exam 2

EXAM 2: April 5th.

Week 14 (April 10 & 12): Presentations

Week 15 (April 17 & 19): Presentations

(Final version of book review due on April 19st)

FINAL: Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 4:55 AM; Student portfolio hand-in / Tracking Exam.

Important dates

January 26, 2012:	Book Approval due
February 2, 2012:	Book review outline due
February 21, 2012:	Exam I
February 23, 2012:	First draft of book review due
February 24, 2012:	Last day to withdraw and possibly get a “W”
March 20, 2012:	Second draft of book review due
April 5, 2012:	Exam II
April 10, 2012:	Group presentations (Groups 1 & 2)
April 12, 2012:	Group presentations (Groups 3 & 4)
April 17, 2012:	Group presentations (Groups 5 & 6)
April 19, 2012:	Group presentations (Groups 7 & 8)
April 19, 2012:	Final book review due
April 24, 2012:	Student portfolio due and final tracking exam

Summary of Course requirements and Grade Distribution

Tracking exam	5%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Quizzes	10%
Book Review	20%
Group Project	20%
Student Portfolio	5%

Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	GPA Quality Points
A+	96 - 100	4.3
A	93 - 95	4.0
A-	90 - 92	3.7
B+	87 - 89	3.3
B	83 - 86	3.0
B-	80 - 82	2.7
C+	77 - 79	2.3
C	73 - 76	2.0
C-	70 - 72	1.7
D	60 - 69	1.0
F	<60	0.0

AYS Career Services & Student Life Office

The Andrew Young School provides career support & leadership development services to all current AYS students and alumni. Students are invited to attend our career events and workshops, and individualized career counseling appointments can be arranged either with Dr. Maggie Tolan, the Director of Career Services, or with University Career Services in the Student Center. Career Services can help students with résumé writing, interviewing, job searching, internship development, and networking. To see what career panels, career fairs, and events are available this semester, please visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/6455.html>.

The office also supports all AYS student clubs and organizations – so read about the various groups within the college, and join one today: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/student-organizations.html>. Make the most of your education by utilizing these great resources. *The AYS Career Services & Student Life office is located on the ground floor of the Andrew Young Building, in room G47-51.*

Evaluation of Participation in Group Project

Name: _____

Group #: _____

Assume that your group has been given a bonus of \$100,000 upon the completion of your group project. You must allocate this bonus among the group members including yourself. Base your allocation on the participation of each group member in the project. Include the planning stages of the project, the background research, the writing of the PowerPoint, and the oral presentation.

List the names of each member of the group including yourself. Then list a dollar allocation of the \$100,000 bonus beside each member's name. Make certain the allocations add up to \$100,000. *Briefly explain the reasons for your allocations.*

Turn in this sheet immediately after your group project presentation. **I will keep the results confidential.**

Name	Allocation (\$)	Reason