Econ 642: Topics in Applied Macroeconomics
Course Information and Syllabus
Winter 2014/2015

Professor Lauren Bresnahan
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Phone: (612) 860-0326
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Lecture: Tuesdays, 6:45-9:30 p.m.
Location: 1400 16th Street, Washington D.C.

Teaching Assistant: Christy Zhou
E-mail: zhou@econ.umd.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Objectives

In this class we will develop models to explain the performance and structure of the economy as a whole in both the long and short run. These models will provide a set of tools to understand the determinants of gross domestic product, inflation and unemployment and the effects of monetary and fiscal policies on these variables. By the end of the course you should be able to analyze the economic effects of government policies and identify and interpret key leading and lagging economic indicators.

Required Text and Supplemental Materials

The main focus will be on the readings and lecture materials. The only required text for class is N. Gregory Mankiw, Macroeconomics, 8th edition, Worth Publishing.

Supplemental materials for those interested in pursuing a PhD include David Romer’s Advanced Macroeconomics, 4th edition, McGraw-Hill Irwin and listed journal articles. Note the supplemental readings are beyond the scope of this class.

Course Requirements

The course grade will be summed together with the following weights:

- Midterm: 35 percent
- Final: 40 percent
- Presentations: 15 percent
- Problem Sets: 5 percent
- Online Discussions: 5 percent
The midterm will be 90 minutes long. The final exam will be 2 hours long held the last class session and will be comprehensive.

Students are responsible for two presentations and corresponding reports. The first presentation relates to economic indicators released the week of the presentation and is worth 5 percent of the total grade. The second presentation will require students to identify current economic issues, outline the debate and relate it to theory learned in class. The second presentation and report is worth 10 percent of the total grade. More detail regarding presentations and reports is on the ELMS site.

There will be several short problem sets due at the beginning of class. You may work together on the problem sets, but please write up and submit your answers separately.

We will also hold a weekly online discussion under the “Discussion” tab on the class ELMS site. Discussions will generally occur on Thursday or Friday and stay open for 24 to 48 hours. More detail regarding discussions is on the ELMS site.

**Final Course Grades**

Final letter grades are based on the weighted score and performance relative to the class. I generally do not grade on the curve unless the exam averages are very low for the whole class. Numerical course grades will be translated into letter grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grades</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>70-79</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
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<td>50-59</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
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<td>20-29</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>10-19</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>0-9</td>
<td>F</td>
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Assignment and Test Dates

Homework assignments and test dates are below. Students are also responsible for presentations and corresponding papers on selected dates identified on ELMS site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Homework/Exam Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 9, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 16, 2014</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 23, 2014</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 30, 2014</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 6, 2015</td>
<td>Homework 1</td>
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<td>January 13, 2015</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20, 2015</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27, 2015</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 3, 2015</td>
<td>Homework 3</td>
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<td>February 10, 2015</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17, 2015</td>
<td>Homework 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24, 2015</td>
<td>Final</td>
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</tbody>
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Course Overview and Schedule

This schedule is subject to revisions.

December 2: Introduction, Data and Methodology and Simple Long-Run Models
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 1-3
Supplemental:
- Romer, Introduction

December 9: Money, Prices and Inflation in the Long Run
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 4-5
Supplemental:
- Romer, Chapter 11, Sections 1, 2, and 9

December 16: Small Open Economy; Unemployment in the Long Run
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 6-7
Supplemental:
- Romer, Chapter 10

December 23: Models of the Short Run
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 10-11
Supplemental:
- Romer, Chapter 6, Part A

December 30: Holiday Break – Class Cancelled

January 06: Models of the Short Run (continued)
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 12-13
Supplemental:
- See previous

January 13: Models of the Short Run and Dynamic Short-Run Models
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 14-15
Supplemental:
- Romer: Chapter 6, Part B, and Chapter 7

January 20: Midterm Exam and Consumption and Intertemporal Choice
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 16
Supplemental:
• Romer, Chapter 8

January 27: Money, Banking, and Financial Markets
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 17, 20
Supplemental:
• Chapter 9, Epilogue

February 3: Monetary and Fiscal Policy
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 18-19
Supplemental:
• Romer: Chapter 11, Sections 3 and 7, Chapter 12, Section 1

February 10: Visiting Scholar and Economic Growth
Reading:
Required: Mankiw, Chapters 8-9
Supplemental:
• Romer, Chapters 1, 3-4

February 17: Economic Growth (continued)
See previous class for readings.

February 24: Final Exam

Standard Policies for the Program and the University of Maryland

Course Website: Copies of the course syllabus, your grades, and other relevant links and documents will be posted on the course’s ELMS/Canvas website. You can access the site via www.elms.umd.edu. You will need to use your University of Maryland “directory ID” and password.

Email: Email is the primary means of communication outside the classroom, and I will use it to inform you of important announcements. Students are responsible for updating their current email address via http://www.testudo.umd.edu/apps/saddr/ AND for paying attention to messages I send to the class via ELMS. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding email, and returned email due to “mailbox full” or “user unknown” will not excuse a student from missing announcements or deadlines. I will do my best to respond to email within 36 hours.

Contact Hours: Three credit courses at the University of Maryland require a minimum amount of contact between instructors and students. Our courses’ 12 weekly 3-hour meetings only satisfy 80% of the university’s contact requirement. The other 20% is usually satisfied by mandatory and graded online contact. Instructors have some discretion in how they structure the online component of their course. In principle, the contact hours requirement could also be satisfied by scheduling 3 additional 3-hour meetings per term, or one additional 45-minute meeting per week. The online components of our courses are a more flexible way to ensure that our program’s courses provide the same level of student-instructor contact as a traditional 15-week, face-to-face, 3-credit course at the University of Maryland.

Work Load: Mastering the material covered in this course requires a significant amount of work outside of class. Students should expect to spend more time outside of class than in class – typically at least twice as much time. The courses in our program are 12-week courses that cover all the same material as a traditional semester-long 3-credit course. The compressed schedule makes it possible to complete our degree in just 15 months if you take 2 courses each term. But the compressed schedule also implies an accelerated pace. If we’re going to cover all the same material as a traditional semester-long 3-credit masters-level course, we need to cover the material quickly.

Academic Integrity: The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards applicable to all undergraduate and graduate students, and you are responsible for upholding these standards as you complete assignments and take exams in this course. Please make yourself aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information see www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu.
**Student Conduct:** Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility to one another or myself will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

**Medical Excuses:** If you miss any class meetings for any reason, you are still responsible for all material covered during the meeting you missed. It is your responsibility – not the instructor’s – to get yourself caught up in the course.

If you need to miss an exam or other course deadline because of illness, injury, or some other emergency: Follow doctor's orders and get documentation. Get in touch with the instructor as soon as you’re able – preferably prior to missing the exam or deadline. Communicate with the instructor to make up the course requirement as soon as possible. You are entitled to recover before you make up the course requirement, but you are not entitled to extra days to study beyond the time the doctor's note says you’re incapacitated.

If you are incapacitated for more than a week or so beyond the end of the term, your grade in the course will be an “Incomplete”. Once you make up the course requirement the instructor will change your "I" to the appropriate letter grade.

**School Closings and Delays:** Information regarding official University closing and delays can be found on the campus website and the snow phone line: (301) 405-SNOW (405-7669).

**Students with Disabilities:** The University of Maryland does not discriminate based on differences in age, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, class, political affiliation, and national origin. Reasonable accommodations will be made to students with documented disabilities. I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form.

**Academic Progress:** The graduate school requires that students maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the graduate school. Students on academic probation must ask the program’s director to petition the graduate school if they want to remain in the program. The petition must include a plan for getting the student’s GPA up to at least 3.0. Students who do not live up to their plan can be forced to leave the program without having earned the degree.

**Building Access:** The door to the building at 1400 16th Street is unlocked on weekdays until 7:00 p.m. Students who arrive after 7:00 will find the door locked. The building’s security guard is stationed at a desk just inside the door until 11:00 p.m. and will let you in. You can also call the phone on the security guard’s desk by dialing (202) 328-5158. If the security guard happens to be away from his or her desk when you arrive, you can pick up the black phone to the right of the door at 1400 16th Street. You will be connected to the company that handles security for our building. If you tell them you are with the University of Maryland, they should ask you for a password. The password is “Drawbridge”. When you tell them the password, they will be able to unlock the door for you.