

Economics Special Topics Courses for 2011-12

The Department of Economics is pleased to present the following courses as Special Topics for the coming academic year.

Economics 3390G, 3396B, 3399F and 4496G are intended for those of you in any of the Economics Honors Specialization and Major modules.

Economics 3390G-001 – The Economics of Human Behavior

This course examines economic theories of human behavior and how those theories can be used to understand some of the major economic/social problems in developed countries. First, we examine the rise in earnings inequality by education and ability that has taken place over the past few decades. Second, we discuss the role of discrimination in modern economies. Third, we discuss recent trends in criminal activity and explanations for those trends. Throughout the course, we use basic economic theory and empirical evidence to shed light on these issues and to evaluate different policy alternatives.

Some familiarity with calculus will be expected in addition to the pre-requisites Economics 2261A/B and Economics 2223A/B. This course is considered an essay course.

Pre-requisites: Economics 2261A/B, Economics 2223A/B

Economics 3396B-001 – The Economics of the Family

This course studies various economic theories of household behavior and examines how they can be used to understand economic/social issues around the world. We will consider various theories of family formation and decision making, looking at how households form and how they make fertility, investment (human capital and physical capital), and labor supply decisions. We will use these models to account for trends over time and across countries and groups. Lastly, we will evaluate the effects of various governmental policies that affect fertility and family formation within these frameworks.

Some familiarity with calculus will be expected in addition to the pre-requisites Economics 2261A/B, Economics 2221A/B, and Economics 2223A/B. This course is considered an essay course.

Pre-requisites: Economics 2261A/B, Economics 2221A/B, and Economics 2223A/B

Economics 3399F-001 – China in the World Economy

This course examines China's emergence as a world economic power and its place in the world economy.

Pre-requisites: Economics 2261A/B, Economics 2221A/B, and Economics 2222A/B

Economics 4496G-001 – Financial Economics and Financial Crisis in Historical Perspective

This course examines the historical evolution of financial systems and financial crisis. A key topic explored in this course is how the financial sector has evolved and developed over the past 200 years in Western countries. To better understand these historical trends, we use economic theory to examine the relationship between financial structure and the economic environment, as well as what drives financial innovation. A second key focus of the course is historical episodes of financial crises. Financial crises are a recurrent feature since (at least) the industrial revolution. This course examines the major bubbles, financial crises, banking panics and sovereign defaults of the past 200 years, with particular focus on the Interwar period (especially the Great Depression) and the recent Financial Crisis. To better understand these historical episodes, we will make use of current economic theory on financial crisis and default.

Familiarity with calculus will be expected in addition to the pre-requisites Economics 2261A/B, Economics 2220 A/B and Economics 2223A/B. This course is considered an essay course.

Pre-requisites: Economics 2261A/B), Economics 2220A/B, Economics 2223A/B.

Economics 3320A/B and Economics 3382A/B are recommended (can be taken concurrently).