

Brandeis University

Department of Economics

January 2009 Newsletter for Majors and Minors

The Economics Department faculty and staff welcome you back to Brandeis for the “spring” semester. We hope you had a good break and are now ready for the challenges of a new term.

Spring courses

A list of all spring Economics classes, with links to preliminary syllabi for most courses, is posted on the Economics Department website:

(http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/undergrad_courses091html.html).

As usual, many courses are already closed. If you wish to register for a course that is closed, you can email the professor or get in touch with Meredith Robitaille (mrobitai@brandeis.edu), the academic administrator for Econ. Meredith will be assisting professors with their waitlists. We add waitlisted students to the courses if places are available, with preference usually given to seniors and others who have already completed more Econ courses. We also guarantee that anyone on a waitlist who does not get into the desired course this term will receive a place the next time the course is offered.

If you hope to enroll in a course if space becomes available, be sure to attend the course regularly and keep up with the assigned work.

Please consult Prof. Coiner (coiner@brandeis.edu) if you have any questions about spring courses.

New faculty

Students will find some new faces among faculty teaching spring Econ courses.

Dr. Barbara Alexander will be teaching Econometrics (ECON 184b section 2). Dr. Alexander was a member of the Brandeis faculty in the 1990s and has also taught at Wellesley College. She is founder and principal of Arguendo LLC, a financial and economic litigation-support firm in Boston. Arguendo specializes in price-fixing cases.

Financial Economics (ECON 171a) will be taught by Tyler Hull, who is now completing his Ph.D. in the International Business School at Brandeis.

Statistics for Economic Analysis (ECON 83a section 2) will be taught by Xia Meng, who is also completing her Ph.D. in the International Business School at Brandeis.

Econometrics requirement for Econ majors

Econometrics is a required course for all majors who entered Brandeis in fall 2006 or later. Students can satisfy this requirement by taking Econ 184b or, for those with good math skills, Econ 185a or Econ 215a, both of which require knowledge of linear algebra. We usually offer Econ 184b each semester. Econ 185a and Econ 215a are offered in alternate years. Econ 185a will next be offered in spring 2010. Econ 215a is being offered this semester. Please consult Prof. Hong Li before registering for Econ 215a.

In a year when job search may be especially challenging, seniors who have not already taken econometrics should bear in mind that many employers value candidates with advanced number-crunching skills.

Math requirement for Econ 80a, Econ 82b, and Econ 83a

Students enrolling in the intermediate theory courses must have demonstrated basic proficiency in calculus. Every student planning to enroll in these courses must satisfy this requirement in one of three ways: a) completing Math 10a with a grade of C- or better; b) scoring at least 4 on the AP Mathematics AB test, or at least 3 on the AP Mathematics BC test; or c) passing a placement exam administered by the Economics Department at the beginning of each semester.

Advising

Prof. Coiner, the Undergraduate Advising Head, has prepared a detailed memo that answers many of the basic questions students may have about their academic program (<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/files/advisingmemo-websiteversion%207-08.pdf>). This memo can also be accessed from the Economics Department website (click on "Advice for Students"). Please take time to read it before meeting with your advisor or Prof. Coiner.

Professor Carter honored by the American Economics Association

Professor Anne Carter has been selected to receive this year's Carolyn Shaw Bell award. The award was created in January 1998 as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the founding of the American Economics Association's Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. It is given annually to "an individual who has furthered the status of women in the economics profession, through example, achievements, increasing our understanding of how women can advance in the economics profession, or mentoring others." In a long and distinguished career, Prof. Carter has accomplished all these things. She was honored at a ceremony on January 3 at the American Economic Association's annual meeting in San Francisco. In addition to current Econ and IBS faculty members, numerous Econ alumni and former Brandeis professors attended the ceremony and reception.

Undergraduate Departmental Representatives (UDRs)

Our UDRs now have pictures and bios up on our website. If you don't know the UDRs and their function, you can learn more by following this link:

(<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/udr2007.html>) or just click on the "UDR" link on our website.

Women in Economics and Business

On Thursday January 15 the Economics Department is co-sponsoring a "Women in Economics and Business" event with the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. The purpose of this event is to stimulate Brandeis women's interest in Economics and Business and to build community with those who are already part of these programs. The event will be held at 2:00 p.m. in Olin-Sang 207. All Econ majors and Econ and Bus minors are cordially invited to attend.

Finally...

We hope this will be a productive, satisfying, and enjoyable semester for all our students. We especially urge senior majors to take full advantage of the spring course offerings in the Economics Department.

Rachel McCulloch
Chair