Now that most midterm exams are past and finals are just a few weeks ahead, it’s time for sophomores and juniors to plan for the fall semester.

**Fall pre-registration**

Pre-registration for fall 2009 courses begins Monday, March 30th. A list of all fall Economics classes is posted on the Econ website: [http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/undergrad_courses093html.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/undergrad_courses093html.html).

Students who have questions should contact Professor Coiner (coiner@brandeis.edu) or Meredith Robitaille (mrobitai@brandeis.edu), our Academic Administrator for Economics. For information about textbooks for specific fall courses, please contact the instructor directly.

**New faculty**

Students will find one new face among faculty teaching fall Econ courses. “The Economics of Race and Gender” (Econ 69a) will be taught by Dr. Elizabeth Brainerd, who is joining the Brandeis faculty this summer as the first Susan and Burton Winokur Professor of Economics and Women’s and Gender Studies. Dr. Brainerd is a graduate of Bowdoin College and earned her Ph.D. at Harvard University. She is currently a faculty member at Williams College. Dr. Brainerd is a labor economist and economic historian. Much of her research has focused on the economic and health effects for women of the Soviet Union’s transition toward a market economy.

**Reminder: Math requirement for Econ 80a, Econ 82b, and Econ 83a**

Students enrolling in the intermediate micro, intermediate macro or statistics courses must have demonstrated basic proficiency in calculus. Every student planning to enroll in Econ 80a, Econ 82b or Econ 83a 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. Knowledge of calculus is important for success in these courses and most upper level electives. If it has been a while since you completed your last math course, some review over the summer may be helpful.

**Econometrics**

Beginning with students entering Brandeis in fall 2006, Econometrics (Econ 184b, Econ 185a, or Econ 215a) is required for all Economics majors. We have adopted this requirement for two reasons. First, econometrics provides a bridge between the economic
theory students see in their courses and economics in the real world. By learning econometrics, students gain the skills needed to evaluate competing analytical approaches used to explain market behavior and the functioning of economic systems. A second and very practical reason for studying econometrics is that graduate programs and potential employers increasingly expect Econ graduates to have a working knowledge of econometrics. Many seniors report that they were asked about econometrics courses, and even asked econometrics questions, during job interviews.

To help econometrics fit into everyone’s schedule, we are now offering Econ 184b every semester. Students with a strong background in math can also satisfy the econometrics requirement with Econ 185a, an introductory econometrics course intended for students with knowledge of linear algebra, or Econ 215a, an introductory econometrics for Ph.D. students also requiring knowledge of linear algebra. Econ 185a will be offered in fall 2009 and most likely again in fall 2011. Econ 215a is offered only in alternate years because the Ph.D. program admits new students only in alternate years. Most likely it will next be offered in spring 2011.

Please note that Econ 184b has Econ 83a, Econ 80a, and Econ 82b as prerequisites. In some cases, the instructor may allow a student to enroll in Econ 184b after completing Econ 80a or Econ 82b and taking the other concurrently. Students choosing to do this may have to learn some intermediate micro or macro material on their own in order to succeed in Econ 184b. All students must have completed Econ 83a or an equivalent statistics course prior to enrolling in Econ 184b.

Senior honors

To graduate with honors in Economics, a student must maintain a GPA of at least 3.5 in courses in the major and write a senior thesis. Juniors planning to write a thesis are advised to begin the process this term by discussing potential topics with faculty members or with Prof. Carter, who supervises the thesis-writing process and helps to match students with appropriate faculty advisors. Sometimes a term paper for a course is the first step in a successful research project. Many Econ faculty members have suggested potential senior thesis research topics, and these are now available on the Economics Department website. Students who identify their topic early can use the summer to read background material or collect data.

For more information about the senior honors program, go to http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/economics/senior%20thesis.html or access the information from the Econ website (click on Senior Honors Program).

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.
New UDRs for 2009-2010

Elizabeth Setren ’10 will be continuing as an Econ UDR next year. We will soon be selecting at least one new UDR and will announce the name of this student once the application process is complete.

One of the first tasks of the 2009-2010 UDRs for the fall semester will be to organize our fourth annual “Life after Brandeis” event, featuring recent Econ graduates. Last fall nine alumni now working or attending graduate school in the Boston area shared their experiences and provided advice about course selection, internships, job interviews, and grad school. If you are graduating this year and would like to share your experience with Econ majors, please make sure that we know how to reach you! Meredith will be collecting post-Brandeis contact information from graduating seniors.

We extend our thanks to our graduating UDRs, Jonathan Freed ’09 and Mohit Gourisaria ’09, for their outstanding efforts this year.

Rachel McCulloch
Chair