Brandeis University
Department of Economics

April 2010 Newsletter for Majors and Minors

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 2010 courses begins Monday, April 12th. A list of all fall Economics classes is posted on the [Econ website](http://economics.brandeis.edu). Students who have questions about pre-registering for economics courses should contact Professor Redenius (redenius@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.

**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 or Econ 185a) 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 economics graduates to have a working knowledge of econometrics. Many seniors report that they were asked about econometrics courses, and even asked specific econometrics questions, during job interviews!

To help econometrics fit into everyone’s schedule, we are now offering Econ 184b every semester. We cannot overemphasize the benefit of enrolling in econometrics as soon as possible after you have completed your statistics course. Both students taking econometrics and our faculty who teach econometrics consistently
emphasize the importance of trying to sequence statistics and economics as closely as possible.

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. Econ 185a will most likely be offered again in fall 2011. For students wishing for a yet more challenging version of econometrics, next spring and in two-year intervals thereafter, advanced undergraduates can enroll in Econ 311a. This course requires a minimum of 83a, linear algebra, multivariate calculus, and permission from the instructor, Professor Hong Li. Students interested in pursuing graduate work in economics should consider this course option.

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 prepare properly for 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. Menon, 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 the [Senior Honors Program page](#) of the Econ website.

**Advising**

Prof. Coiner and Prof. Redenius, the current Undergraduate Advising Head, have prepared a detailed memo that answers many of the basic questions students may have about their academic program. This memo is on [the Advice for Students page](#) of from the Economics Department website. Please take time to read it before meeting with your advisor or Prof. Redenius.

**New UDRs for 2009-2010**

Naomi Cohn ’11, Brad Mahlof ’11, and Darren Sandler ‘11 will be continuing as Econ UDRs next year. We will soon be selecting one new UDR and will announce the name of this student shortly.
One of the first tasks of the 2010-2011 UDRs will be to organize our fifth annual “Life after Brandeis” event, featuring recent Econ graduates. This spring seven 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 UDR, Elizabeth Setren ’10, for her outstanding efforts this year.

Gary Jefferson
Chair