The Economics faculty and staff are pleased to welcome you back to Brandeis for the fall semester. We hope you had a great summer and are ready for the new school year.

New Economics Department Coordinator

The Department would like to welcome Leslie Yancich (lesliy@brandeis.edu) as the new department coordinator for Economics. Leslie will be working closely with Meredith Robitaille to provide faculty and student support in the coming academic year. Leslie will be located in the Economics office along with Meredith. Please stop by to welcome her!

New Faculty

Zhuan Pei: Zhuan Pei will be joining us as an assistant professor during the fall of 2013. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton in 2012. His undergraduate degree is from Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Zhuan has spent the current year on a post-doc at the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research researching Medicaid and the CHIP program. He will teach two sections of Econometrics in the fall.

Michael Bertini: Michael Bertini is a Ph.d. student at Brandeis and will be teaching Financial Economics in the fall. He has had extensive teaching experience both in the summer program at Brandeis and as an instructor at Boston College.

New UDRs (Undergraduate Developmental Representative) for 2013-2014

Sara Shanaghi ‘14 will be continuing as an Econ UDR next year. In addition, we have appointed three new UDRs: Uri Yahil ‘14, Felix Liu Ku ‘15 and Peter Walton ‘15. Visit the Economics Department website to learn more about them.

Fall Registration and Waiting Lists

Registration for fall courses begins on Thursday, August 15. Although many Econ courses are already closed, additional students may be able to register for these courses as other students change their schedules.

If a fall course you hope to take is closed, please email the Department’s
Coordinator, Leslie Yancich (lesliy@brandeis.edu); she will place you on the course’s waitlist. As space becomes available, professors will permit additional students to register. In most cases, seniors will be given priority over juniors, and juniors over sophomores. If you are on the waitlist and hoping to enroll, it is important to attend all the class meetings (as long as they do not conflict with another course you are taking). Adding a course late does not excuse you from completing all required work.

Any student who is on the wait list and cannot be accommodated this term will receive priority in the same course the next time it is offered; for all of our core courses, that will be next semester.

Advising

Professor Redenius and Professor Coiner have prepared a detailed advising memo that answers many of the basic questions you may have about your academic program. Please take time to read it before meeting with your advisor or our Undergraduate Advising Head, Prof. Redenius. Important information about recent changes in departmental requirements appears later in this newsletter.

Course Notes

Master’s courses. One advantage of the close association between the Economics Department and the International Business School is the availability to undergraduate majors of a range of master’s-level IBS courses. Although these courses are designed primarily for students in the three IBS master’s programs, junior and senior Econ majors may enroll, with permission of the instructor, when space is available. Students interested in taking IBS classes to satisfy requirements for the Economics major should check in advance with Professor Redenius. Many IBS courses cannot be used as upper-level Econ electives, and some cannot be used as Econ electives at all.

Ph.D. courses. Juniors and seniors who have already completed Econ 80a, 82b, and 83a, and have a strong math background (minimum of multivariate calculus and linear algebra) may wish to consider enrolling in a Ph.D. course. These are highly mathematical courses intended for first-year Ph.D. students but are also good choices for advanced undergraduate students planning to apply to a Ph.D. program. Strong performance in a Ph.D. course increases the chance of acceptance to a selective Ph.D. program.

Please note that first-year Ph.D. courses are offered in alternate years; consequently, the first-year Ph.D. courses are being offered next academic year (2014-2015). A set of second year courses – mostly field courses and advanced econometric courses – will be offered this year.

To learn more about taking a Ph.D. course, contact Professor Blake LeBaron
(blebaron@brandeis.edu) or me (kgraddy@brandeis.edu).

**Senior Honors Program**

Econ majors with a GPA of at least 3.5 in the major and who have completed econometrics are eligible for the Department's honors program, which involves writing a thesis under the supervision of a member of the faculty. For details, see the “Senior Honors Program” link on the Economics Department website. Seniors who plan to participate in the honors program should consult the Senior Honors Thesis Coordinator, Linda Bui (ltbui@brandeis.edu).

**Requirements for the Major**

Since this is the beginning of a new academic year, let me take this opportunity to highlight several critical requirements, some of which are relatively recent, that are important for current and potential majors. Please consult your advisor or Prof. Redenius if you are not sure how these requirements affect you.

**Enforcement of the calculus requirement.** Every student must satisfy a calculus requirement before enrolling in Econ 80a, 82b, or 83a, or 184b. Specifically, students must establish competence in calculus in any one of three ways: completion of Math 10a (or equivalent course) with a grade of C- or better; scoring at least 4 on the AP Mathematics AB test, or at least 3 on the AP Mathematics BC test; or passing a placement exam the Econ Department administers at the beginning of the semester. Email Leslie Yancich (lesliy@brandeis.edu) as soon as possible if you plan to take the placement exam on September 3, 2013 at 2pm. A sample of the exam can be found here.

If, in one way or another, you have satisfied the basic calculus requirement but are nevertheless concerned that you have forgotten critical aspects of your training, again, please check in with Prof. Redenius to discuss ways in which you might review and strengthen your skills, or for useful higher-level mathematics courses.

**Econometrics as a requirement for the major.** Econometrics (Econ 184b, Econ 185a, or Econ 311a) is now required for all Economics majors. We adopted this requirement for two reasons. First, econometrics provides a bridge between the economic theory that students learn in their courses and economics in the real world. Studying econometrics allows Econ majors to acquire skills needed to evaluate competing approaches used to analyze human behavior and the functioning of economic systems. A second and very practical reason is that graduate programs and employers increasingly expect Econ majors to have a working knowledge of econometrics. Seniors have reported that they were asked about econometrics courses and even asked econometrics questions during job interviews. In order to help econometrics fit into your course planning, we offer Econ 184b in both the fall and the spring semesters.
**Changes to the introductory sequence for majors and minors.** Students entering in Fall 2012 and after will be required to take the new introductory sequence of Econ10a, Introduction to Microeconomics and Econ 20a, Introduction to Macroeconomics. Students who entered prior to Fall 2012 still fall under the previous introductory requirements of Econ 2a and Econ 28b (previously Econ 8b – The Global Economy); however, if these students have yet to take any introductory courses they are encouraged to opt to take the Econ 10a/Econ 20a sequence. Econ 28b will be offered as a lower-level elective for those students taking the new sequence. Students entering prior to Fall 2012 can also petition to have Econ 20a counted as a lower-level elective for their major or minor only if they have taken this course before taking Econ 82b. Students will not get credit for the beginning-level course (Econ 20a) if they have already taken the intermediate level course (Econ 82b).

**Upcoming Events**

As usual, our UDRs (see the section below on this year’s UDRs) are planning an ambitious agenda. Activities for the fall include a welcome back event and an internship information session. Please look out for upcoming information on dates and locations.

**Department Blog**

The Economics department has its own blog! You can find it here: [http://blogs.brandeis.edu/economics/](http://blogs.brandeis.edu/economics/). We will be posting information on department events, faculty news and even some student submitted articles. Interested in submitting a post? Please email it to Meredith Robitaille (morbitai@brandeis.edu) if you would like your submission to be considered for publishing on this site.

**Finally...**

We hope that 2013-14 will be a productive, satisfying, and enjoyable year for our students. We especially urge our senior majors to take full advantage of the course offerings in the Economics Department before leaving campus for the last time in December or next May.

If you have any questions about the department, please stop by or e-mail. Good luck in the coming year!

Professor Katy Graddy,
Chair, Department of Economics
kgraddy@brandeis.edu