

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

School of Economics and Finance  
ECON 3803/4200 – Senior Seminar in Economics and Finance  
Fall 2016

Semester	Subclass	Instructor	Email
1	A	T.C. Lin Tuesday 13:30-16:20 TT 404	tsechunlin@hku.hk
1	B	S. Ching Tuesday 15:30-16:20 Friday 15:30-17:20 KKLG 102	steve.ching@hku.hk
1	C	H. Chen Friday 09:30-12:20 MW T6	hengchen@hku.hk
1	D	H. Qiu Thursday 13:30-16:20 MWT6	hqu@hku.hk

Prerequisite: ECON1001/ ECON1210 Introductory microeconomics

Remarks:

- (1) Open only to final year students majoring in economics and/or finance.
- (2) This is a required/core course for all students who major in economics and/or finance.

Course Website: available through HKU Portal e-learning

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course applies core theoretical knowledge in economics and/or finance acquired throughout the undergraduate curriculum to research a real issue. The student may select and match core theoretical concepts with significant applications in the world, which could be of local, regional and global relevance, both contemporary and historical. The selection will include an application of these concepts to either the making of public policy or the strategic management of the firm. The choice of research topic should be selected to help students consolidate and integrate the concepts and tools learned in economics and/or finance through an analysis of the nature of the problem, its causes and consequences, the choice of feasible solutions, their tradeoffs, and also normative and political economy considerations.

Each student will conduct faculty directed policy analysis in form of collaborative group or individual projects. The exact area of policy analysis may vary, depending on the general interests of class AND instructors in charge of the class.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Students should apply the reasoning they learn from the discipline to analyzing policy issues and make recommendations accordingly. Students should integrate their whole corpus of knowledge through application of concepts in economics and/or finance, including the strategic management of organizations. In any context, the potential economic impact of policy-oriented proposals on various affected agents and parties can be properly assessed.

2. Meanwhile, students' discussion, debating, presentation and teamwork skills should be developed.
3. Students' leadership qualities will be enhanced by strengthening their ability to integrate their knowledge through application. They will learn to appreciate the challenges of developing and undertaking an independent project.
4. Throughout the course, students will be aware of the challenges and responsibilities a leader has to contemplate in making decisions, and taking into consideration ethical concerns and political economy constraints.

### COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Learning Outcomes	Faculty Learning Outcomes (FLO)*
CLO1. Identifying and analyzing real economic problems with theoretical knowledge	FLO1, 2
CLO2. Assessing the political economy aspects of policy proposals	FLO 1, 2, 4
CLO3. Conducting research project with appropriate approach and methodology	FLO 1, 2
CLO4. Integrating the whole knowledge base acquired in the study of program	FLO 2
CLO5. Development in discussion and team work skills	FLO 3, 5
CLO6. Effective presentation and communication in research	FLO 2, 3, 5
CLO7. Improvement in leadership quality	FLO3
CLO8. Awareness of ethical concerns in conducting research	FLO3
CLO9. Capability of writing report on research findings	FLO 2, 3, 5

**\* Notes:**

- FLO1 Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of economics & finance
- FLO2 Application and integration of knowledge
- FLO3 Inculcating Professionalism and Leadership
- FLO4 Developing global outlook
- FLO5 Mastering communication skills

### COURSE TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Course Teaching and Learning Activities	Expected contact hour	Study Load (% of study)
T&L1. (Lectures) Instructor will give lectures on major concepts and issues at the beginning.	18	15%
T&L2. (Research projects) Students will meet during allocated class time to work on the project under the guidance of instructor. Students will also work on individual or group research projects outside class time.	66	55%
T&L3. (In-class presentation and peer assessment) Students are expected to present their proposal and midterm progress during	24	20%

allocated class time. Most in-depth learning takes place when students actively engage themselves in discussions through presenting and sharing their ideas.

T&L4. (Consultation) Professor holds weekly consultation hours to answer students' questions. Students are also encouraged to discuss questions with the instructor by email or a forum in the class website.

Total 120 100%

Assessment Methods	Weight	Aligned Course Learning Outcomes
A1. Attendance (compulsory, at least 80%)	0%	CLO1-5
A2. Online quizzes	10%	CLO1-5
A3. Proposal Presentation	20%	CLO 1-6
A4. Midterm Presentation	30%	CLO 1-6
A5. Final Report	40%	CLO 1-4, 6-8
Total	100%	

### Attendance:

Class meetings are scheduled weekly. Attendance will be taken in each class meeting. Exceptions are presentation days (proposal presentation and midterm presentation). Instructors may require non-presenters to do peer assessment of the presentations on presentation days. In this case, attendance will be taken on presentation days as well.

On days without presentations, students are supposed to meet with the group members to work on the project during class time. Instructors will try to give guidance to student's proposal development and the project analysis. Such meeting time is in fact group consultation hours. The compulsory attendance is meant to give students a nudge to complete the project in time.

### Online quizzes:

Online quizzes are structured to reinforce the learning and revision of major elements that are important for the analysis and writing up the final report.

### Project:

The major task/assessment is a project analyzing regulations and policies.

Depending on the instructor's preference and the number of students enrolled, students may work in group of size no more than three. Other group size is allowed only with special permission from the instructors. Group work allows students to practice teamwork skills, to learn from peers and to produce an analysis of higher quality.

The major output is a final report. The assessment of proposal presentation and the midterm presentation are included to keep the student's progress in check and allow students to progressively incorporate the feedback of instructors and students into their final report.

## STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT

### Course Grade Descriptors

A+, A, A-	Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, and synthesis.
B+, B, B-	Strong evidence of the ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate, and synthesis.
C+, C, C-	Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at low levels of learning such as describe and apply but not at high levels of learning such as evaluate and synthesis.

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D+, D	Evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.
F	Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.

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### **Assessment Rubrics for Each Assessment:**

They are essentially the same as in course grade descriptors, and thus details are not repeated.

#### *Proposal presentation:*

The presentation should show a clear identification of the problem and a clear plan of research (and analysis). Presentation are also graded based on delivery (speak slowly and with emphasis on key points) and poise, including eye contact with the class and instructors. The Powerpoint slides or a short proposal should be submitted as well.

#### *Midterm presentation:*

The presentation should show a substantial progress over the initial proposal, incorporating comments from peers and instructor. Presentation are also graded based on delivery (speak slowly and with emphasis on key points) and poise, including eye contact with the class/professor.

#### *Final report:*

A good report should be around 4,000 words and should never be more than 6,000 words. It should be readable to the general public, with the issues clearly identified, analysis logically executed, and recommendation clearly stated. It should incorporate comments from peers and instructor from previous presentations.

## **COURSE CONTENT AND TENTATIVE TEACHING SCHEDULE**

Week 1-4:

Knowing the requirement about the course.

Discussion for topic development during class time under the guidance of instructor.

Week 5-6:

Proposal presentation.

Week 7-8:

Further development of research during class time under the guidance of instructor.

Week 9-12:

Midterm progress report.

One week after the last teaching day (i.e., last day of revision week):

Report due.

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## **REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS & ONLINE MATERIALS** (e.g. journals, textbooks, website addresses etc.)

Bailey, Stephen (2011): *Academic Writing for International Students of Business*, New York : Routledge (Electronic version available at HKU library).

## COURSE POLICY

### *Attendance:*

Class attendance is compulsory. Except under very special circumstances approved by the instructor, students who have less than 80% of attendance will receive a failure grade.

### *Deadlines:*

All graded materials should be taken or submitted at the stated time unless you have a valid university excuse (death in immediate family, illness requiring you to seek a doctor's care, etc). Unless circumstances preclude it, advance notice is requested. Assignments turned in after the deadline may be accepted with a reduced grade. My sympathy goes out to those who fall victim to a computer crash. However, no extension of time is granted for computer glitches. While you cannot anticipate a crash, you can reduce its serious consequences by making frequent back-up copies as you work, and by not waiting until the last minute to get assignments done.

### *Academic Conduct:*

The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web (<http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/>). Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following types of cases:

**(i) Plagiarism: The representation of someone else's ideas as if they are one's own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one's own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged.**

(ii) Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects: The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort.

(iii) Cheating on In-Class Exams: The covert gathering of information from other students, the use of unauthorized notes, unauthorized aids, etc.

(iv) Unauthorized Advance Access to an Exam: The representation of materials prepared at leisure, as a result of unauthorized advance access (however obtained), as if it were prepared under the rigors of the exam setting. This misrepresentation is dishonest in itself even if there are not compounding factors, such as unauthorized uses of books or notes.

Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement:

(i) The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;

(ii) The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is prima facie evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (i) might be invoked.