

**ECO 500 - SENIOR SEMINAR - SPRING 2009
CROUNSE 401**

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Office Hours:
MWF 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
(to be safe, call or e-mail first)
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Description: This Senior Seminar is intended to round out the Centre economics experience with opportunities to polish skills in research, writing, job-attainment, and verbal expression. The course will depart from the more traditional, passive paradigm in which an instructor identifies what s/he feels is important and provides information to demystify the topic in question. In this transitional course, *you* are encouraged to identify important questions, seek answers aggressively and resourcefully, and disseminate credible results. In addition to work on original research, each student will be asked to read and discuss seminal articles in the field of economics.

Requirements: Grades will be based on attendance and participation, homework assignments, presentations, and three exams. Attendance at all class sessions is required, with exceptions granted according to Centre College policy. Skipping class will lower your attendance / participation grade by 1.5 points (out of 15) each time, although failing grades will not be given based on truancy alone. The weights and grading scale are as follows:

Attendance / Participation	15%	93-100	A
Presentations / Debates	30%	90-93	A-
Exams (3 @ 10%)	30%	87-90	B+
Paper	22%	83-87	B
Other Assignments	3%	80-83	B- (and so on)

Class	Reading/Topic Assignment (2 nd line)	Location
Feb. 5	Brainstorm Deep Economic Issues, Planning Assignment: write 250-300 words on study strategy, due 2/8	Classroom
10	Writing and Research	Classroom
12	Job Search Skills	Career Development
17	Paper Strategy Roundtable Discussion Outline due,* Format: www.albany.edu/eas/170/outline.htm	Classroom
19	Presentations / Discussion	Classroom
24	Presentations / Discussion	Classroom
26	Presentations / Discussion	Classroom
March 3	Field Trip or Guest Speaker or Movie	TBA

5	Learning Celebration (A.K.A. Midterm Exam)	Classroom
10	Debate 1 / Discussion	Classroom
12	Research Detective Game	Your Call
17	Individual Paper Conferences	Crouse 448
19	Debate 2 / Discussion	Classroom
31	Debate 3 / Discussion	Classroom
April 2	Review of Graphs and Curves 1st 5 pages of paper due, carefully proofread	Classroom
7	In-class Review for Field Exam Including all Types of Efficiency	Classroom
TBA	Economics Field Exam 6:00-8:30 pm	Y101
14	Fun with Math! No reading required	Classroom
16	Debate 4 / Discussion	Classroom
21	Software Education	Computer Lab, Crouse Basement
23	Paper Presentations, Discussion	Classroom
28	Paper Presentations, Discussion	Classroom
30	Movie or Guest Speaker	Classroom
May 5	Paper Presentations, Discussion	Classroom
7	Paper Presentations, Discussion	Classroom
12	Take-Home Exam Distributed, Papers Due (include previous draft),* Closing Discussion	TBA
May 15/20	Hard copies of EXAMS DUE 11:30 A.M.	Crouse 448

* Please hand in a hard copy during class.

“It’s the Economy, Stupid!”

Debate Rules and Roles:

Everyone will be involved in our debates, either arguing for or against a particular policy or as a villager who has come informed and ready to contribute to the discussion.

Those arguing for or against a particular policy will come prepared with a hard copy of the outline of their argument. Try not to blatantly read from your prepared sheet, but you may glance at it to remind yourself of your next point. You will want to give a well-organized, concise presentation that delivers the strongest points in a convincing manner. A good plan for any such presentation is to *tell us what you're going to tell us, tell us, and then tell us what you told us*. Each person should talk for about 2-3 minutes. Divide the territory and talk for a combined total of 8-10 minutes.

The villagers will also come prepared with a hard copy of their own perspective and at least one question *for each side*. A paragraph or two is fine for your perspective. These folks will add their two cents during the discussion period.

Everyone will want to go to the journals and see what wisdom can be found. It is wise to advance your research beyond the Internet. If I know of a particularly juicy article about a particular debate subject, I may assign that for everyone to read.

Order of events:

- Pro arguments (8-10 minutes)
- Con arguments (8-10 minutes)
- Optional rebuttals (1 minute each for each side)
- Questions and Discussion involving Villagers and Formal Debaters

Grades will be based on the quality and depth of your preparation, arguments, presentation, and questions/answers. We will not have any declaration of winning/losing sides—you are all winners to me!

Tips to boost your benefits and grades:

- Be as specific as you can about your proposals and arguments. For example, statements like “government is too big” mean different things to different people and make little progress towards any solutions. Instead, say *exactly* what you would cut, what the costs and benefits would be, and why the benefits exceed the costs.
- Read a few solid articles on each topic to add concreteness to your arguments.
- Use economic reasoning. This is your chance to make use of those econ tools!
- Don't wait until the day before the debate to start your thinking, planning, or research.
- Have fun with these juicy and important topics. These are some of the major issues that you and others in your generation must live through and resolve.

Evaluation Criteria for Paper Presentation

Use of Economics Tools (0 – 2 points) _____

Reference to **Economics Journal** Article 1 (0-1 pt) _____

Reference to **Economics Journal** Article 2 (0-1 pt) _____

Reference to **Economics Journal** Article 3 (0-1 pt) _____

Practiced and Polished Presentation (0 - 1 pt) _____

Presentation of Strongest Arguments For (0 - 1 pt) _____

Presentation of Strongest Arguments Against (0-1) _____

Quality of Visual Aid (0 – 1 pt) _____

Timing of close to 10-12 minutes (0 – 1 pt) _____

Total _____