2017

ECON 494-01 Capstone Experience in Economics

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ECON 494: CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMICS  
Xavier University, Spring 2017

Instructor:
Dr. Hasan Faruq (faruqh@xavier.edu)  
Smith 326; Extension: 3054

Note: For specific questions about paper topics, ECON 421 students should reach out to Dr. Nancy Bertaux (bertaux@xavier.edu), while ECON 450 students should reach out to Dr. Hasan Faruq (faruqh@xavier.edu).

Williams College of Business Mission Statement:
We educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition.

Learning Goals:
Critical Thinking: WCB graduates will be able to think logically, reason quantitatively, and utilize appropriate analytical techniques and technology when evaluating and making decisions.

Effective Written and Oral Communication: WCB graduates will be able to organize, support and communicate ideas clearly and effectively, employ multiple mediums of communication (e.g., written, oral and visual), and adapt communication to audience, context or purpose.

Course Description
This course is designed to help you prepare your capstone paper and presentation, which are required of all economics majors. The capstone course will give you the opportunity to discuss your ideas and practice your oral communication skills through mock presentations.

Course Components
Capstone Paper: You will be pursuing an independent research project from beginning to end this semester in your 400-level economics elective this semester. You may designate the research paper for the class (10-15 pages, double spaced, excluding tables, figures, and bibliography) as your “capstone paper”. The quality of your writing matters more than quantity. The capstone paper is expected to be the pinnacle of your academic experience at Xavier. Therefore, the expectations for the paper are high, i.e. you are unlikely to pass the capstone requirement by doing what may seem like minimally acceptable work in lower level classes. Your instructors are here to provide the necessary guidance. At the same time, please keep in mind that we are not going to suggest a paper idea for you (although we will be happy to help you refine your idea if necessary), nor will we check spelling and grammar in your paper or “chase” you to ensure that you are doing the necessary work to finish your paper on time. Doing so will defeat the purpose of asking you to write your own research paper.

Capstone Presentation: Towards the end of the semester, you will be presenting your capstone paper for 12-15 minutes (followed by a Q&A) to the entire faculty of the economics department, who will grade your presentation. As is customary in academic conferences in economics, you will be asked to stop your presentation as soon as you reach the 15 minute mark. This grade will be included in your overall grade for the 400 level economics class for which you are writing the capstone paper.
Grading Policy

Since this is a zero credit hour course, it will be graded on a Pass/Fail scale. In order to receive a passing grade in this course, you are required to: (a) submit the final draft of your capstone paper by its due date to your instructor (Dr. Bertaux for ECON 421 and Dr. Faruq for ECON 450), and (b) satisfactorily complete the capstone presentation to the economics faculty.

Finally, while the quality of your capstone paper and presentation, as well as timely submission of all material, may not matter for your grade in this course (i.e. ECON 494), they will all be factored into the final grade for your 400 level economics elective course.

Other Information

The final presentations will take place towards the end of April, while mock presentations (it is highly recommended that you do this!) will take place towards the beginning of April. The exact dates and locations of these presentations will be announced by email.

Please note that you should register for ECON 494 (Capstone Experience in Economics) AND have your topic approved by your instructor as soon as possible.

Finally, while writing an independent research paper for your economics capstone can be challenging, it is also a very rewarding experience. Our former students have regularly given us positive feedback about their capstone experiences. Below is an anonymous comment from one of the students who completed the economics capstone last year.

“Now that it's over with, I can say I am glad a final capstone project is required of us. It is something I will proudly look back on in years to come, as annoying and stressful as the process might have been at times. Annoying and stressful is good, though, because it meant we were being challenged, but in ways we could manage! The best part about a capstone is that it IS challenging and a lot is expected of you, because you really want to do well on it as you leave Xavier. Thus, you work to learn a lot. It's like one last hoorah.”