

Economics 327: The Global Firm – A Calderwood Seminar in Public Writing
Spring 2018
Thursdays 1:20-4:10 pm in PAC 413

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-11:30am, Wednesdays 2-3:30pm, and by appointment

General Course Information

Description: Students will combine their knowledge of economics, including macro, micro, and quantitative methodologies, with their skills at exposition in a journalistic format, in order to address current economic issues related to firm-level decisions (e.g., where to locate production) and the economic consequences of these decisions at home and abroad for different shareholders. Students will conduct independent research to produce weekly articles. Class sessions will be organized as workshops devoted to critiquing the economic content of student work.

Prerequisites: Students must have already completed Econ 301 and Econ 302.

Class format: The course will be organized around a series of writing assignments. Roughly an hour of each class meeting will be devoted to class discussion and lecture related to the week's readings. This lecture will help to clarify the theories, concepts, methodologies, etc. used in the readings. The remainder of each class period will be dedicated to students discussing their work and the work of their classmates. Each assignment will be done in pairs with one student in the role of writer and the other in the role of editor.

Attendance policy: This class will be conducted in a workshop format. Attendance at these meetings is required. It is essential that students make a sincere effort to attend every class.

Writing assignments: Each student will be expected to complete six written assignments due, roughly, every other week. On those weeks when a student does not have an assignment due (i.e., he/she is not acting as a "Reporter"), the student will serve as an "Editor" on another student's news story. Each student also will be expected to submit rewrites of his/her most recent assignment in the weeks when he/she is an "Editor". These pairings will change for each assignment but your assignment to a particular group (A or B) will not change during the semester. Writer-editor pairings will change each week so that you all have an opportunity to read the work of different writers and give feedback on different writers' work. Assignments will range in length, roughly, from 800 to 1200 words.

Policy on extensions: Extensions will not be granted in this course. Each student's work is dependent upon every other student faithfully completing the assignments according to the deadlines. If you do not turn in your work on time, I will initiate a conversation with you about dropping the class.

Grading: Grading will be based on the quality of written assignments including rewrites, editorial work and classroom participation. The emphasis on evaluating student work, first, will be on its economic content and, second, on the quality of its exposition. There are no examinations in this course. A portfolio of the semester's work is due on the last day of classes.

Course readings: All readings will be posted to the course moodle except for the two books, which students are expected to purchase online. Students are expected to make use of their relevant texts from previous courses (e.g., 300-302). Course assignments may relate to material in multiple applied fields of economics (e.g., trade, finance, labor, development).

Honor Code: In accordance with the Honor Code, submitting another person's work as your own constitutes plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Although public writing assignments do not include academic citations, students should integrate acknowledgment of sources into their assignments as necessary. If you have any questions about proper attributions, please let me know.

Students with Disabilities: Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Accessibility Services, located in North College, Rooms 021/022, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

Course Mechanics

Students enrolled in this course will be randomly assigned to one of two groups, Groups A and B. Throughout the semester, each group will serve on alternate weeks as either Reporters or Editors. Editing assignments will rotate weekly enabling each student in Group A (B) to serve as an Editor to a student in Group B (A). Two assignments will not follow this format – the first and the last. In these cases, students may submit articles with a joint by-line.

Class meetings will be devoted to analyzing student articles. It is essential that the following system is adhered to. Each week's Reporters must file their stories in Word (not Google Docs) in the course's moodle forum by 9:00 am on the Wednesday prior to the class meeting devoted to their assignment. Penalties will be imposed on late or missing work.

Editors will be assigned to Reporters one week in advance of a story's deadline. Reporters must submit a draft of their article to their Editors no later than the Monday prior to the Wednesday morning deadline. The Reporter must have time to rewrite the news story in response to the Editor's comments. A "marked-up" draft (using Word's track changes) of the Reporter's story should be submitted to the Reporter and to me by the story's Editor.

Each student must read and be prepared to discuss all stories written for every class session. Each student should come to class with a list of substantive comments or questions concerning the economic arguments raised in each submission. Class discussion, in part, will be organized around your comments on the economic content of your classmates' articles.

This system of Reporters, Editors and classroom review of student articles can only work if each individual acts in a responsible manner. Reporters must write the first draft of their stories in time for their Editors to be able to review them. Editors must return stories in a timely manner enabling their Reporters to rewrite their drafts. Reporters must file their final stories in time for the rest of the class to carefully review them prior to class meetings. All class members must read all assigned material and

allocate time between our press deadline, Wednesday at 9:00 am, and Thursday at 1:20 pm to read, take notes and formulate specific questions about the contributions of other class members. Finally, all students must be willing to engage **actively** in discussion during class meetings. The success of this course depends upon the class' interdependence and on each student's commitment to making the course a worthwhile experience.

With our rigorous writing schedule, the readings assigned for each class are very short, typically 1 academic article to be read carefully. Some assignments, however, will require a longer commitment of time due to their length (the two books) or your personal reaction to the reading (unpredictable!).

Please note that *all assignments* will assume a knowledge of the subject matter that cannot be limited to the assigned reading, and that requires a larger knowledge of economic theory, current events and issues, and public discussion (in newspapers, magazines, websites, and media) of such matters. Students should keep tabs on materials that appear in the national media during the semester – for example, the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc. We may read a few recent article and op-eds together in class, but canvassing current examples of articles, critiques, reviews, and op-eds will help you understand better how to enter the public conversation. In addition, many of our assignments will also require a certain amount of research, sometimes on the internet, sometimes in print sources, in order to produce intelligent op-eds as well as critical essays.

All assignments will benefit from your creativity, inventiveness, originality, and initiative.

The following is a preliminary schedule of our workshop sessions, which may be modified.

Date	Topic and readings	Assignments
Jan. 25	Writing for the general public, course overview; Global backdrop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video of panel presentation titled “TrumpEconomics: A First Year Evaluation,” delivered during the 2018 American Economic Association meetings. Please watch the Dominick Salvatore introduction (0:00-10:29) and the Joe Stiglitz segment (56:03-1:19:10) in the roughly 2 hour panel webcast. (https://www.aeaweb.org/webcasts/2018/trumpeconomics-first-year-evaluation). 	A, B: paragraph
Feb. 1	What are firms and MNEs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holmström, Bengt, and John Roberts, 1998, “The boundaries of the firm revisited,” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 12(4). <u>Aggressive</u> skim of Ch 2 of Cohen, Stephen D., 2007, <i>Multinational Corporations and Foreign Direct Investment: Avoiding Simplicity, Embracing Complexity</i>, Oxford University Press. 	A: 1
Feb. 8	Why firms go international <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conconi, Paola, André Sapir, and Maurizio Zanardi, 2016, “The internationalization process of firms: From exports to FDI,” <i>Journal of International Economics</i>, 99. 	B: 2
Feb. 15	How FDI affects economic growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borensztein, Edudardo, Jose De Gregorio, and Jong-Wha Lee, 1998, “How does foreign direct investment affect economic growth?,” <i>Journal of International Economics</i>, 45. 	A: 2

Feb. 22	Empirical determinants and effects of FDI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blonigen, Bruce A., 2005, "A review of the empirical literature on FDI determinants," <i>Atlantic Economic Journal</i>, 33. 	B: 1
Mar. 1	Social activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Lunch before class</u> with guest speaker, Marcus Chung '98, Director of Sourcing/Vendor Relations for StitchFix. Marcus will join us for the first hour of today's class. Harrison, Ann and Jason Scorse, 2010, "Multinationals and anti-sweatshop activism," <i>American Economic Review</i>, 100(1). 	
Mar. 8	Bottom of the pyramid (book) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> London, Ted, 2016, "The base of the pyramid promise: Building businesses with impact and scale," Stanford Business Books. 	A: 3
Mar. 29	Impacts of FDI on labor market – wages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haskel, Jonathan, Robert Z. Lawrence, Edward E. Leamer, and Matthew J. Slaughter, 2012, "Globalization and U.S. wages: Modifying classic theory to explain recent facts," <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 26(2). 	B: 4
Apr. 5	Impacts of FDI on labor market – total employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desai, Mihir A., C. Fritz Foley and James R. Hines Jr., 2009. "Domestic effects of the foreign activities of US multinationals," <i>American Economic Journal: Economic Policy</i>, 1(1). 	A: 4
Apr. 12	Corporate social responsibility (book) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bader, Christine, 2014, "The evolution of a corporate idealist: When girl meets oil," Bibliomotion. 	B: 3
Apr. 19	Impacts of ethnic and social culture and history <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siegel, Jordan I., Amir N. Licht, and Shalom H. Schwartz, 2011, "Egalitarianism and International Investment," <i>Journal of Financial Economics</i>, 102(3). 	A: 5
Apr. 26	Government regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Djankov, Simeon, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, 2002, "The regulation of entry," <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>, 117(1). 	B: 5
May 3	Political environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durnev, Art, Ruben Enikolopov, Maria Petrova, and Veronica Santarosa, 2015, "Politics, instability, and composition of international investment flows," <i>Journal of Corporate Finance</i>, 30. 	A,B – 2; can have joint bylines
May 9	Final portfolio due by last day of classes	A/B: Portfolio

Writing assignments

All files should be named as **LastName_#.docx** where the # would be the assignment number (right column on schedule) or **LastName1_LastName2_#** if a joint submission (e.g., Hornstein_1.docx or, if coauthored with "Anonymous", Anonymous_Hornstein_2).

1. **Article for a national newspaper (800 words):** Please write an article for this newspaper on this week's readings. Your goal is to capture the breadth and depth of the article and any important implications for your newspaper's readers.

2. **Op-Ed for a national newspaper (800 words):** Please choose a topic of economic importance related to this week's readings that is controversial or needs attention. This is a much more personal piece of writing, so your excitement for the topic and your personal conviction have to come across and you should be telling a story in a personal voice. However, remember you are writing this as an economist, so make sure to back up your argument with well-researched data. This should be a call to action.
3. **Book Review (1200 words):** Please give the reader a general sense of the topics covered in the book. Make sure to put the book into a larger context and introduce the speaker and his/her credentials. Remember you are writing this review as the economics expert, so make sure to address the validity of the content. Think about how the material does or does not draw on economic theory, the sample of firms and scenarios examined in the book, and what the broader population of firms that could have been examined might look like. In addition, please talk about how effective the writing and the organization of the books are at convincing, educating, and inspiring the reader. Which kind of reader would enjoy the book?
4. **Op-Ed for a regional newspaper (e.g., WesSpeak for Argus?) (800 words):** Same as (2) but with a greater focus on issues of importance to your readership.
5. **Blog post (800 words):** Similar to an op-ed but designed to be a stand-alone piece online. In addition, include a short description of the type of blog you might publish your post.

Portfolio: Please submit your portfolio on moodle, preferably as a Word file. The portfolio should include the 1st and 2nd draft of each assignment along with the final version. The assignments should be compiled in chronological order.

Please add a 1-2 page cover memo to the portfolio containing reflections on your work. In doing so please address the following questions:

- How have your analytical reasoning skills and the depth of understanding of economics concepts developed over the semester?
- Has writing for the general public changed the way you read about and assess research in the economics discipline? Has it changed how you approach assignments in other classes?
- How have your writing skills developed over the course of the semester? What do you see as your biggest area of improvement and what as a continued challenge?
- What do you consider your best piece of work this semester and why?
- How important was peer editing to the development of your writing skills?
- Are there other ways in which you feel your knowledge or abilities developed this semester?

Save the file (including, in order, the memo, and all drafts of all assignments) as **LastName_FirstName_Portfolio.docx** (e.g., Hornstein_Abigail_Portfolio.docx).