**C*alifornia State University Channel Islands***

**Economics 499 – Capstone – Spring 2013 – Dr. Claudio Paiva**

Meetings: We 12 pm – 2:50 pm at Broom Library 2490 Final Project Due: May 15 at 12:30 PM

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 pm – 2:15 pm; Thursdays 1:30 pm – 3:45 pm; and by appointment

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**Course Description**

This is a required upper division course in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics. The course is a culminating experience for economic majors that integrate material from previous economics courses. Students will develop a topic for a senior paper in consultation with the instructor. The paper will address a contemporary economic issue or problem or could be based on an experiential learning experience.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to: define an issue using economic concepts, tools and methods; analyze the issue using economic concepts, tools and methods; present analyses orally and in writing to their peers and to a larger audience.

**This Offering of Capstone**

Students will prepare a term project after choosing one of the options below.

*Option 1* – *In-depth empirical (econometric) study of a relevant economic issue*

Students choosing this option will identify an interesting economic issue and produce an original, comprehensive paper whose hypothesis must be corroborated by in-depth statistical analysis and/or sound econometric modeling.

A comprehensive paper should contain the motivation for the topic (why it is relevant or interesting), a brief review of the literature (summary of studies published on the issue), a well-developed and testable hypothesis, and a skillful application of statistical methods and/or econometric techniques to support that hypothesis. While sound empirical work is required, it is not sufficient to generate a good paper - context, logic reasoning, well-crafted arguments, and simple charts and tables are extremely important as well.

*Option 2* – *Adopt a Country: Macroeconomic Projections and Assessment*

This option is only recommended for students who took Eon 311 with me and earned at least a ‘B’ grade.

Students who choose this option will (1) use Microsoft Excel to formulate a set of consistent macroeconomic projections for a country of choice over a three-year horizon; (2) identify the main macroeconomic issues emerging from these projections; (3) propose a set of policy actions to improve the country’s macroeconomic outlook. The methodology that will be employed to formulate these projections has been extensively used by national governments, financial institutions, and international organizations like the International Monetary Fund. It basically consists of applying and integrating the theoretical and behavioral relationships among macroeconomic aggregates that are taught in the economics curriculum (mainly in the areas of macroeconomics and international economics).

*Option 3* – *A creative, original application of economic thinking and empirical methods to the analysis of a local issue*

Students choosing this option will identify an interesting issue related to our campus or the Ventura region and produce an in-depth analysis of this issue through the application of economic principles and the use of original field research, surveys, and/or other empirical methods (statistical analysis, econometric techniques).

The paper should contain the motivation for the topic (why it is relevant or interesting for our campus or region); a brief review of the related literature (summary of studies published that could relate to your study); a well-developed methodology and policy message; and a skillful combination of field research, surveys, and/or other empirical methods to support that message. While sound empirical work is required, it is not sufficient to generate a good paper - context, logic economic reasoning, well-crafted arguments, and simple charts and tables are extremely important as well.

**The Capstone Project and Deadlines for Each Stage**

A *detailed outline*, including a summary of the methodology and strategy to be pursued in the preparation of the project, is due on February 20. For options 1 and 2, the outline should be accompanied by an excel file with all the data needed for the project. A *first draft* of your project is due on April 10. The *final product* expected from you consists of (1) one file, in Microsoft Word or PDF, with your comprehensive analytical paper, including the key tables, charts, graphs, etc. necessary to effectively present your hypothesis and/or your findings; (2) a file with all the data and empirical work supporting your project. The final product is due on May 15 at 12:30 pm.

**Weekly Meetings and Progress Reports**

I expect a high-quality product from you, and I am willing to work with you to help deliver it. That includes discussing ideas, concepts, providing reading suggestions, support material, help finding data, and reviewing any part of your work as you complete it. I expect you to work on the project throughout the entire semester, not only a few days before the deadlines. I expect you to come to our Wednesday meetings on a regular basis, and I will not grant special appointments to students who do not come to these meetings.

After each one of our Wednesday meetings, you must prepare and submit a progress report on your project. These reports should be sent to me via e-mail before 11:59 pm and indicate (1) if you were present in class; (2) what kind of work you did on your project during the preceding week; (3) any steps you accomplished or any difficulties you encountered during that week; (4) whether you sought any feedback from me in the period; (5) what feedback or suggestions you received from me. These reports can be very short and informal (think of entries in a diary or your Facebook postings, except that the reports should be written in proper English).

**Course Grade**

PROGRESS REPORTS = 10% OUTLINE = 15% FIRST DRAFT = 25% FINAL PROJECT = 50%

The final course grade is based on the percentage of total points earned throughout the semester calculated as the ratio of the weighted sum of all points earned to the weighted sum of all points possible. While the distribution of grades may vary with class performance, I expect the average score to earn a grade of C+. Let me emphasize that I want you to learn and prepare a high-quality project. Hence, I will be glad to provide you with extra help if needed: please don't hesitate to drop by during office hours or to make an appointment with me for another time.

**Academic Honesty**

*1. Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. It usually involves an attempt by a student to show possession of a level of knowledge or skill that he/she does not possess.*

*2. Course instructors have the initial responsibility for detecting and dealing with academic dishonesty. Instructors who believe that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred are obligated to discuss the matter with the student(s) involved. Instructors should possess reasonable evidence of academic dishonesty. However, if circumstances prevent consultation with student(s), instructors may take whatever action (subject to student appeal) they deem appropriate.*

*3. Instructors who are convinced by the evidence that a student is guilty of academic dishonesty shall assign an appropriate academic penalty. If the instructors believe that the academic dishonesty reflects on the student's academic performance or the academic integrity in a course, the student's grade should be adversely affected. Suggested guidelines for appropriate actions are: an oral reprimand in cases where there is reasonable doubt that the student knew his/her action constituted academic dishonesty; a failing grade on the particular paper, project or examination where the act of dishonesty was unpremeditated, or where there were significant mitigating circumstances; a failing grade in the course where the dishonesty was premeditated or planned. The instructors will file incident reports with the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and for Student Affairs or their designees. These reports shall include a description of the alleged incident of academic dishonesty, any relevant documentation, and any recommendations for action that he/she deems appropriate.*

*4. The Vice President for Student Affairs shall maintain an Academic Dishonesty File of all cases of academic dishonesty with the appropriate documentation.*

*5. Student may appeal any actions taken on charges of academic dishonesty to the "Academic Appeals Board."*

*6. The Academic Appeals Board shall consist of faculty and at least one student.*

*7. Individuals may not participate as members of the Academic Appeals Board if they are participants in an appeal.*

*8. The decision of the Academic Appeals Board will be forwarded to the President of CSU Channel Islands, whose decision is final.*

# Disability Accommodations:

# *Cal State Channel Islands is committed to equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The mission of Disability Accommodation Services is to assist students with disabilities to realize their academic and personal potential. Students with physical, learning, or other disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Accommodation Services office at (805) 437-8510 for personal assistance and accommodations.*

**Notice:** Information contained in this syllabus, other than that mandated by the University, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.