

Welcome to Senior Seminar

ECON 4200 – Student Debt

The objective of the Senior Seminar course is to help you continue developing your analytical ability and your written and oral communication skills. Senior Seminar is the capstone course for economics majors. It is your opportunity to apply the theories and ideas you've learned to a new area of study.

A seminar is fundamentally different from the other courses you have taken. You are required to prepare for each day's class so that you can participate in discussions. In addition, this course assesses your written and oral communications skills as applied to analyzing problems and current issues. Please be sure you read the introductory information emailed to you and posted on Canvas.

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Senior Seminar is an integrative capstone course for the economics major that should normally be taken during the student's penultimate or last semester of study. The primary objective is to provide a framework in which senior economics majors can review and solidify their understanding of economic concepts by applying those concepts to specific economic issues. Topics vary. Analytical ability and written and oral communication skills are assessed.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

To take this course, you must have declared an Economics major and have achieved Senior standing. You also must have earned a grade of C or higher in ECON 3112 (Econometrics), ECON 3122 (Intermediate Microeconomics), and ECON 3123 (Intermediate Macroeconomics).

SET YOUR GOALS

There are many things you can accomplish in this course. It is up to you to choose your goals to suit your purposes. Your primary objective may be making progress toward graduation.

You can develop expertise. Student debt is a many faceted topic. The demand for debt is derived from the demand for higher education. Expected future earnings, alternative paths to higher income, costs of colleges, and graduation rates affect the demand for debt. The supply of debt is a complex policy issue, including the link between the availability of debt to the increases in tuition.

You have the opportunity to become a more independent learner. You will gather and present data on one aspect of student debt and you will read, present, and lead a discussion about two articles.

You have the opportunity to make progress in your written and oral communications. Throughout your life, you will be judged on your ability to present yourself as an educated professional. Your communications skills are part of the first impression you create and so they deserve focused effort.

This course will give you experience relevant to your career. You will work in a group working with a partner in developing a paper and your work in evaluating your peer's work have the potential to be part of your job interviews for the next several years.

With many possible goals, which will you choose?

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Carol Swartz
cswartz1@uncc.edu
217 A Friday Building

Office Hours:
Tu W 11 am to 1 pm
and by appointment

COURSE MATERIALS

This course uses Canvas for assignments and class communications. Canvas is accessed at <https://uncc.instructure.com/>. Read your email and class announcements in Canvas faithfully.

There is no required text for this course. You are encouraged to study Strunk and White's Elements of Style.

THIS IS YOUR EDUCATION.

It is important to your future success that you build and strengthen habits of self-reliance. You must learn to work through problems on your own.

Learning is an inherently cumulative and self-managed activity. It is important to develop problem-solving skills, including the ability to:

- identify resources and leverage them to your benefit,
- identify your knowledge gaps and fill them, and
- evaluate the proposed solution for its correctness and relevance to the problem.

PATH TO SUCCESS: COURSE GROUND RULES

1. Be prepared for each class meeting. Complete the assigned reading and any other assigned tasks. Bring questions and applications of the material to class. Be ready to participate in discussions.
2. Use your best manners. You are expected to refrain from side conversations during the class. Do not leave the class to visit the vending machines, kill an enemy, check Facebook, rob a bank, try a new margarita recipe, or any other reason. Your actions have consequences for you and for others, so limit your footprint, please.
3. Your use of electronic devices during class will be limited. Taking photos or making recordings is expressly forbidden. Bring your notes for discussion on paper as you will not be able to refer to an electronic device.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

It is **your** responsibility to be fully and accurately informed of University policies, including, but not limited to, rules regarding dropping and adding courses, graduation requirements, and student conduct. The Dean of Students Office is the authoritative source for these policies.

The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity will be actively enforced in this course. The code forbids cheating, fabricating or falsifying information, submitting academic work for multiple requirements, plagiarizing, abusing academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Be sure you know the meaning of these

terms. "I didn't think THAT was plagiarizing." is not an acceptable defense. Any special requirements or permissions regarding academic integrity will be stated by the instructor and are binding. You are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

If you have a disability that affects your ability to do the work in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services to obtain a Letter of Accommodation. The office is 230 Fretwell; phone 7-4355.

The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to, ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

Work in this course is assigned to a group of 3-4 students. The group will receive a grade. Each member of the group will have the opportunity to assess the relative contribution of other group members.

The first task the class will take on is to develop a robust understanding of the state of student debt. This will draw on the Environmental Scan sent by email and posted on Canvas. Your research will result in a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation (including original graphs not copied from any source) and a class discussion.

We will have two rounds of presentations on assigned articles. The entire class reads the same article in preparation for that day's discussion. The presenting group develops a one-page summary of the article for the class and completes a 30-minute presentation on the article. They lead the discussion following their presentation. On the day of the presentation, the non-presenting groups will turn in three questions related to the article. Additional guidelines will be provided closer to the beginning of the article presentation.

At the end of the semester, each group will develop a five-page polished paper on their Environmental Scan and the work completed during the semester. Graphs are in addition to the five-page limit. There will be time in class for peer-review of these papers.

GRADES

Graded Events

| Activity | Date Due | % of Final Grade |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Environmental scan presentation | Jan 23 – Feb 8 | 20% |
| First article presentation | Feb 13 – March 1 | 20% |
| Second article presentation | March 20 – 29 | 20% |
| Environmental scan paper | 20 April | 20% |
| Questions for article presentations | Due day of the presentation | 10% |
| Class participation | Ongoing | 10% |

Attendance: In a seminar course, attendance is essential. You will be allowed 3 absences for any reason. Coming to class after the roll has been taken will count as 0.5 absences. Plan your schedule accordingly. Attendance counts beginning January 18 to accommodate anyone who adds the class late.

Points will be deducted according to the following scale:

| Number of Absences | Course Grade Penalty |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 0 – 3 | None |
| 4 – 5 | 0.5 letter grade |
| 6 – 7 | 1 letter grade |
| 8 or more | 2 letter grades |

Course Grades: Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

| A | B | C | D | F |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| 90% or higher | 80 – 89% | 70 – 79% | 60 – 69% | Less than 60% |