Syllabus

Instructor

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Teaching Fellow

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Logistics

Lecture days and time: Tuesday-Thursday 9.30am-10.45pm
Lecture location: CAS 201
Course Webpage: on Blackboard

Course Overview

This course is an advanced course in International Economics, targeted to MA students with a background in International Trade at the master or at the undergraduate level. We study various aspects of globalization, both theoretically and empirically, using standard tools from trade theory.

After reviewing background material, we will focus on the drivers of trade at the firm-level. What determines if firms export, and which foreign markets they enter? More generally, what is the role of firms’ heterogeneity in shaping export decisions? The emphasis on firm-level behavior will be useful to introduce important alternative modes of foreign operations: multinational production, foreign direct investment and offshoring. We will introduce multinational production as an additional/alternative possibility for firms to serve foreign markets. We will study the classical theory of multinational firms, based on
the proximity-concentration trade-off, and the firm-level decision between trade and multinational production. We will then move to more recent theories of the international organization of the firm, vertical specialization, outsourcing, and offshoring. We will explore the effects of multinational production on the labor markets and on welfare.

The last sessions of the semester will be devoted to other topics related to globalization, like migration, international technology diffusion, and global banking.

The starting point of the analysis of each topic will be the understanding of past and current events in the world economy, often by reading articles from the press. We will then use formal modeling to understand these events, and we will outline empirical procedures to test the theories. The lectures will attempt to make the papers, which are sometimes advanced, accessible to the students.

**Background and Prerequisites**

Students should have completed the following courses:
- EC391 or EC591 or equivalent (International Trade)
- EC201 or EC501 or equivalent (Intermediate Microeconomics)
- MA121 or MA123 or MA127 or EC505 or equivalent (Calculus)
- EC 203 or EC305 or EC507 or equivalent (Statistics).

Grounding in microeconomic theory and a previous course in international trade are required, since the course is built on the main models of trade usually taught in intermediate level courses. Calculus is used to develop the theories covered in this course; in particular, the techniques of unconstrained and constrained optimization will be used extensively. Basic knowledge of Statistics is required for the understanding of some empirical aspects of the subject; further knowledge of Econometrics (EC414 or EC508 or equivalent) is desirable. Prerequisites may be waived by the instructor.

**Readings**

There is no textbook assigned for this course. The papers and newspaper articles which we will cover will be posted on the Blackboard website. Most papers are also available at [http://www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) and may usually be found using [http://scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com). I will sometimes distribute class notes, also via Blackboard.

For those who feel the need of refreshing the main background concepts in trade theory, good references are:
Grading

The course grade will be based on problem sets, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

Problem Sets: 25%
Midterm Exam: 35%
Final Exam: 40%

Class participation will be also evaluated at the end of the semester and will be taken into account when assigning grades in borderline cases.

If you have questions about the grading of a problem set/exam, please contact the teaching fellow within a week after you have received the graded work. Re-grading requests may raise or lower your score.

I will not accept submissions of homework past the due date, and I will not offer make-up exams. The Midterm exam will take place on Thursday, March 3rd. The Final exam’s date has not yet been announced by the College.

Academic Conduct Statement

It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. The encouragement to collaborate on homework assignments is not extended to tests. Read the CAS Academic Conduct Code, which you can download on https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/. Misconduct can involve subtler acts than direct cheating: for instance, submitting the same work for several courses without the consent of instructors. I will report all cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Deans' Office.

Course Outline and (Tentative) Time Schedule

This schedule is tentative and will be adjusted depending on speed of progress and students' interests.

♦ Introduction: Some Ideas about Trade and Globalization. (Jan 20)

❖ **Background in International Trade: Comparative Advantage, Technology, and Factor Endowments. (Jan 25- Feb 8)**
- Feenstra, Chapter 2-4, or Salvatore, Chapters 2 and 5.

❖ **Background in International Trade: The “New Trade Theory”. (February 10-15)**
- Feenstra, Chapter 6, or Salvatore, Chapter 6.

❖ **The “New” New Trade Theory: A Firm-Level Perspective. (Feb 17- Mar 1)**


♦ MIDTERM EXAM (Mar 3)

♦ Multinational Firms, Foreign Direct Investment, Intrafirm Trade (March 15-24)

♦ Outsourcing, Trade in Intermediates, Vertical Specialization. (March 29- April 5)


♦ Offshoring. (Apr 7-12)


♦ Knowledge and Technology Diffusion (Apr 14)


♦ Globalization and the Labor Markets. (Apr 19-21)


♦ Migration (Apr 26-28)


♦ Global Banking (Mar 3)


♦ FINAL EXAM (to be scheduled between May 9 and May 13).