

Methods of Analysis for International Commerce and Policy (ITRN 501), Fall 2007
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Office hours before and after class, by appointment

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Welcome to Methods of Analysis for International Commerce and Policy. This new course teaches key concepts and techniques for carrying out analysis of international commerce and policy trends and issues, especially quantitatively. Course content includes: overview of research and analysis approaches; types, uses, and sources of relevant data; and a variety of statistical techniques, both basic and advanced, used in analysis.

Course Materials

Books with selected portions assigned as course readings

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Eugene Bardach, 2000. (PA on schedule)

Understanding the Calculations of Key Economics and Business Statistics, 1st Edition, Daniel Gaske, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 1999. (UC on schedule)

Numbers Guide, 5th Edition, The Economist, 2003. (NG on schedule)

Guide to Economic Indicators, 5th Edition, The Economist, 2003. (GE on schedule)

Other background books

A Pocket Style Manual, D. Hacker, 2000.

The Little Book of Plagiarism, Richard A. Posner, 2007.

Additional Sources

In addition to these books, many concepts covered in course can be found on websites, such as www.wikipedia.com, or through web searches on the concepts. Feel free to use whatever combination of sources that provides you the most understandable and helpful explanations.

Requirements and Grading

Course grade is to be based on performance on 2 in-class open books/notes examinations, 3 take-home problem sets, and a course project. Problem sets and course project may be worked on in groups, but with individual turn-in of results. Examinations are of course to be completed individually.

-- Examinations, problem sets, and course project are to require application of concepts and principles covered in course to actual and hypothetical real world situations, trends, and issues.

-- Points are to be deducted for shortfalls – inaccurate calculations, incorrect interpretations, weak

presentation, etc. – in addressing assignments, and deductions are to be subtracted from total number of points possible.

-- To obtain course letter grade, points obtained, after deductions, are to be calculated as percentage of total points possible, and set against scale of 96-100=A, 92-96=A-, 88-92=B+, 84-88=B, 80-84=B-, 70-80=C, <70=F, to obtain course letter grade.

-- Unless permission is granted in advance, assignments must be turned in in hard copy, not emailed.

Course Project

Course project is to require students to obtain/prepare, for a country of their choice, an instructor-specified set of statistical results, present those results in 2-3 pages of tables and charts, and interpret what the results show for class in a 5-7 minute verbal. Additional details on course project to be provided after start of course.

SPP Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Schedule

Date	Topic	References
	Introduction	
Aug 28	Fundamentals of Research and Analysis	PA Part 1, App C
	International Commerce and Policy Data, Uses, and Sources	
Sep 4	National Income and Product Account (GDP) Data Problem Set 1; Due Sep 11	GE 4,7,8
Sep 11	Other Domestic Economic, Financial, and Economic Policy Data	GE 5,6,12,13
Sep 18	International Balance of Payments, Debt, and Exchange Rate Data Problem Set 2; Due Sep 25	GE 10,11
Sep 25	Economic and Financial Data Search Strategies	GE 1(8-10)
Oct 2	International Trade Data; Industry and Business Data	GE 9
Oct 9	No Class	
Oct 16	Examination 1 on Aug 28 – Oct 2 Materials	
	Calculations Used in International Commerce and Policy Analysis	
Oct 23	Absolute Changes, Percentage Changes, Shares, Ratios, Adjusting for Inflation	UC 1; NG 1 UC 2,4
Oct 30	Calculations with Foreign Currency Values and Exchange Rates, Descriptive Statistics Problem Set 3; Due Nov 6	UC 5 NG 3,4
Nov 6	Presenting Statistical Results in Tables and Charts Regression Analysis	UC 6 NG 5
Nov 13	Using Excel to Carry Out Calculations (In Room 242)	
Nov 20	No Class	
Nov 27	Examination 2 on Oct 23 – Nov 13 Materials	
	Student Applications	
Dec 4	Student Presentations 1	
Dec 11	Student Presentations 2	