

ECONOMIC STIMULATION

ON AN AFTERNOON IN LATE MARCH, International Monetary Fund economist Ayhan Kose crisscrossed the front of a lecture hall in Devlin Hall, gesturing broadly as he made a case that the economies of emerging-market nations experiencing rapid industrial growth—such as Turkey, Brazil, Poland, South Korea, and South Africa—are “decoupling” from advanced economies such as that of the United States. The trend was underscored during the recent Western financial crisis, when emerging markets kept chugging along while the West faltered, contended Kose.

Kose’s lecture was one of eight offered during the spring by the International Economic Policy and Political Economy Seminar. The series, conceived and coordinated by Associate Professor of Economics Fabio Ghironi, brings prominent representatives and practitioners from finance, political science, and international affairs to campus for face-to-face lectures, seminars, and discussions with students and faculty.

The seminar, which covers such matters as monetary union in Europe and global greenhouse-gas emissions,

is a departure from most economics courses, which tend to be theory-oriented, says Crane, the ILA director. Eager to expose undergraduates to the stellar assembly in the series, the ILA organized and funded it as a one-credit spring semester course for undergraduates. “This seminar brings in practitioners from all over the world and students and faculty from a variety of departments. It’s interdisciplinary, it’s global, and it enriches the curriculum,” says Crane.

In the lecture hall, Kose called for discussion. “What does this structural change mean for the global [economic] cycle?” he asked. His question hung over a room that looked and sounded much like the world itself, with accents that spanned the globe from the Far East to Eastern Europe. A young Russian student argued that the “decoupling” seems less a fact of economic life than a transient symptom of the recent Western meltdown.

The guest speaker held his ground. “It’s a slow-going, structural change. It hasn’t happened overnight,” Kose noted. Then he asked, “Thirty years from now, will we be asking if the United States has decoupled from China?”

Conversation was at the heart of the seminar. Before his afternoon talk, Kose met individually with a

International Monetary Fund economist and guest lecturer Ayhan Kose consults with Xiaoping Chen (left) and Alessandro Barattieri (far right), both graduate students in economics.



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half-dozen Ph.D. students in economics to offer guidance on their dissertation topics, then had lunch with graduate and undergraduate students. When his lecture ended, he headed to dinner at a local restaurant with six students and Ghironi. Dinner conversation ranged from opportunities in finance and in graduate school to fertility rates in Western Europe. Noting that his dinner companions included a fellow Turk, an Italian, an Indian, a Brazilian, a Chinese-born Canadian, and an American, Kose smiled and said, “All of the players are here. We could have a conversation about global [trade] imbalances.” And they did.

CONTACT LENS

FOUNDED IN 2009 TO PROMOTE interdisciplinary study of constitutional government, Boston College’s Clough Center for the Study of Constitutional Democracy is well-versed in the conventional ways of exploring government. The center during the past academic year offered a series of public lectures and forums on immigration and national security.

But in April, with the co-sponsorship of the ILA,

the Clough Center turned a different sort of focus on the often-overlooked workings of state legislatures, presenting a screening of the 2006 documentary *State Legislature*, by the renowned documentary-maker Frederick Wiseman. The octogenarian director was on hand to greet visitors and lead an after-film discussion in the Cushing lecture hall.

Celebrated since the 1967 release of his groundbreaking *Titicut Follies*, which exposed the maltreatment of inmate patients at the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, Wiseman has made more than 30 full-length feature films. He has explored American institutions in such films as *High School* (1968), *Hospital* (1969), *Basic Training* (1971), and *Public Housing* (1997). *State Legislature* trains an unblinking eye on yet another institution, this time in Idaho’s capital city of Boise.

Like most ILA programs, the screening, which began at 10 a.m., had a goal of bringing in students and faculty from divergent disciplines. Among some 30 filmgoers who turned up was Katherine Galle ’11, a history major with a minor in American Studies, who said she came out on a Saturday morning in April (two days before she was to run the Boston Marathon) to get a filmmaker’s

