

## **EC295.01**

# **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY SEMINAR**

## **Syllabus**

### **Spring 2013**

#### **Meetings:**

This seminar meets on Mondays, 4:00-5:30pm, Stokes Hall, Room 195S,  
unless otherwise noted in the schedule.

The seminar meets only when there are scheduled presentations.

The updated schedule is available at  
<http://fmwww.bc.edu/EC-J/SemS2013/ec.ILA.s2013.php>

#### **Organizer:**

### **Fabio Ghironi**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 3:30 – 5:30 pm, and by appointment

### **Welcome**

Feel free to address me as Fabio. You can of course address me as Professor Ghironi if you prefer to do so. You can find out a lot about me by visiting my website.

### **Seminar Objectives and Description**

This interdisciplinary seminar series focuses on topics of relevance for current economic policymaking, including analysis of political and strategic dimensions. The series features speakers from the academic world with experience in policymaking and/or a record of policy-relevant research as well as speakers from policy institutions. The seminars will focus on the substantive insights that the speakers will offer on present-day policy questions rather than technique. The target audience includes undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty in economics, political science, international studies, finance, and history.

You can access information on the seminar speakers by clicking on their names in the seminar's web page. The papers they will present (and/or other background material) will also be accessible

from that page by clicking on the titles of the presentations. (Note that, in most cases, speakers will send me title and material only few days before their presentations.)

### **Seminar Assistant**

Marco Macchiavelli (Marco.Macchiavelli@bc.edu) will assist me in the organization of the seminar this semester. Once I have heard from the speakers on their arrival and departure times and organized the outline of their schedules, you will receive an e-mail from me some days before each seminar to schedule meetings, lunches, and dinners (see “Requirements” below), and you will be asked to send your reply to Marco. Make sure there is room for messages in your inbox, and check your e-mail regularly during the semester.

### **Requirements**

**1. Attendance:** Students who are taking this seminar course for credit are not allowed to miss more than one seminar presentation. (This requirement applies to presentations scheduled at the regular course time of Monday, 4:00-5:30 pm. There will be no consequence if conflicts in your schedule cause you to miss presentations scheduled at other times. However, I strongly encourage you to attend also these presentations if your schedule allows it. The series features very high-profile speakers, and an empty seminar room reflects badly on the series and Boston College.)

**2. Reading:** Whenever possible, the paper or other material on which each presentation will be based will be posted online in the seminar’s web page at least some days before the seminar. You must read these materials in advance to be able to follow the presentations and contribute to the discussions with comments and questions.

**3. Summaries:** Students taking this seminar course for credit are required to write summaries of no more than 600 words of each Monday seminar presentation and associated discussion. Each summary must be concluded with a question that you would have liked to add to the discussion. Summaries must be typed as Word documents and e-mailed to Marco by 5:00 pm on the Thursday following each seminar. Important 1: It will not be acceptable to submit summaries that are simply copied from the abstracts or introductions of the papers on which the presentations are based. These should really be your summaries of the presentations and discussions. Important 2: You are not required to write summaries for presentations that are scheduled at times other than the regular course time—although it would be a good exercise for you to do it. Important 3: If you missed a Monday presentation, you are still required to write a summary of the reading material available from the seminar’s web page.

**4. Meetings with speakers:** Depending on speakers’ availability, I will schedule half-hour appointments for them to meet with students (undergraduate and graduate) and faculty on seminar days, as well as post-seminar, small-group discussions. I will reserve some of these meeting slots (and some seats in the post-seminar gatherings) for students who are taking the seminar for credit (whenever possible, at least one slot in the afternoon and one in the morning). These meetings will be arranged so that the speaker will meet with a small number of students, who will have the possibility of asking him/her questions on the topic of his/her presentation (or related topics). Students taking the seminar for credit must have participated in at least one such meeting (or post-seminar discussion) by the end of the semester.

**5. Lunch or dinner with speakers:** Again depending on speakers’ availability, there will be lunch and dinner with speakers on seminar days. Faculty and students (undergraduate and graduate) will join these lunches and dinners (covered by the seminar budget). I will reserve some space at these

occasions for students who are taking the seminar for credit. These students must have participated in at least one lunch or dinner by the end of the semester.

**Note 1:** Obviously, your ability to fulfill requirements 4 and 5 will depend on the availability of speakers to spend time at Boston College in addition to the seminar presentation and the actual number of seminars that we will have (cancellation or rescheduling is always a risk with high-profile speakers). I will keep this in mind at the end of the semester, but it is in your interest not to procrastinate fulfilling these requirements when you have the opportunity.

**Note 2:** Even if you are not required to attend the presentations that are not scheduled at the usual Monday time, if your schedule makes it convenient, you can use also those speakers' schedules to fulfill requirements 4 and 5. Note that, if you sign up for lunch, dinner, the post-seminar discussion, or a meeting, it looks odd/bad if you are not attending the presentation too. (This obviously applies also to Monday presentations.)

**Note 3:** Unless you choose to fulfill both requirements 4 and 5 with the same speaker because of a special interest in his/her work, you should fulfill them with different speakers. These requirements are meant to give you opportunities for conversations with the outstanding speakers in this series. You should take advantage of the opportunity to meet more than one of them. You are also allowed to sign up for more than one meeting and meal during the semester, although students who have not yet fulfilled the requirements will be given priority in assigning seats.

**Note 4:** When you ask to be put on a speaker's schedule for a meeting, lunch, the post-seminar discussion group, or dinner, make that a binding commitment. You should not cancel your participation in the speaker's schedule unless it is for a real emergency.

**Note 5:** There is no exam for this course.

### **Some Other Information**

As you will see, the number of seminar presentations is smaller than the number of weeks in the semester, and some of them may not be scheduled at the regular course time. The seminar budget constrains the number of speakers that I can invite, and their availability constrains my ability to schedule them at the regular time.

Last-minute cancellation is always a risk with high-profile speakers who are actively engaged in policymaking and/or advising. Unfortunately, when this happens, it is usually impossible to replace speakers on short notice, as the schedules of virtually all research- and policy-active scholars (including your professors at Boston College) fill months in advance.

I try to make sure each semester's series covers a wide range of topics, but speakers ultimately choose the topics of their presentations. When this results in several speakers addressing the same topic, it usually is because the topic is a very pressing one in the world of policymaking, and it gives you the opportunity to learn from different perspectives on the topic.

As noted above, we will have no meetings other than on scheduled presentation days. This seminar course is entirely based on the speakers' presentations and your commitment to doing the readings and participating in discussions and speakers' schedules.

Finally, this seminar series is funded by the Institute for the Liberal Arts, whose support is gratefully acknowledged.