Economics Course Enrollment Policies: Implementing Preferential Access for Seniors and Concentrators

In order to offer a better quality course experience to upperclassmen, the Department of Economics has begun to limit enrollment in its advanced undergraduate courses to no more than 100 students while also creating a set of senior seminar courses capped at enrollments of no more than 30. Senior seminars (ECON 1185, 1420, 1465, 1485, 1759, and 1765) are restricted to senior concentrators in Economics, Applied Math-Economics, Mathematical Economics, BEO (formerly COE) Business Track, and Computer Science-Economics, which in the remainder of this page are called “economics-related concentrations” (ECON 1420 is also open to urban studies concentrators). A student can take more than one senior seminar for credit only with written permission from the instructor.

Another set of courses are traditionally offered in multiple sections each year and are not affected by the enrollment policies described here. Those are ECON 1110, 1130, 1210, 1620, 1630, 1710, and 1720. These are called intermediate-level courses, and they constitute prerequisites for the advanced courses.

Apart from the courses listed above, all other 1000-level economics courses will have their enrollments capped at 100 students and preference will be given to seniors in economics-related concentrations by opening registration to them before it is opened to other students. More specifically, the registration procedures will give first preference to seniors in our own concentrations, then to seniors in other related concentrations such as International Relations which require students to take some economics courses, and finally to juniors in our own and related concentrations. If there are remaining places, they can be taken by any student having the listed pre-requisites. Instructors are also able to override any restriction other than the 100 student cap if they see reason to do so.

The restrictions are designed to maximize the chances that concentrators can take the courses that they wish to before they graduate, but they will work only if you are pro-active about registering during the first days of the pre-registration period that are open to the category you are in. If for some reason you miss the pre-registration period, there will be a second chance to register preferentially during the first days of the semester, but only if spaces are still available.

A possible danger with this new system is that students might register for many advanced economics courses before deciding which ones they wish to take, simply in order to keep their options open. This would prevent other students from registering in the meantime, given the caps. To avoid such “hoarding” of registration slots, we ask you to pre-register for no more than two advanced economics courses in a given semester. This will be enforced as a rule by monitoring the number of advanced economics courses for which a student pre-registers, and asking the registrar to keep the first two courses only, if a student has registered for more than two in the advanced courses group. We will try to send a warning e-mail to anyone to whom this applies so that you can select for yourself which two courses to stay in, but there will be only a short window of time in which to respond, so it is best not to pre-register for more than two of the classes concerned in the first place. A third or higher class can be added if there are additional places left in the “shopping period.”

The exact days and categories of students for whom pre-registration and registration will be open, for the set of advanced courses, are as follows:
Preregistration period:


- Days 3 and 4 of preregistration. Advanced courses open only to all seniors.


- Anti-hoarding rule: Throughout the entire preregistration period each student in the above categories should preregister for at most two classes in the advanced economics category.

“Shopping period”: a re-run of the different stages in preregistration, but at a faster pace and with no anti-hoarding rule, as follows:


- Day 2: Advanced courses open only to all seniors.


- Rest of shopping period: all restrictions above are lifted, except the cap at 100.

As usual, each instructor retains the right to issue overrides to individual students.

Note about 2000-level classes: these classes are intended primarily for students in the Ph.D. program in economics. Undergraduates may register for such classes only with the specific approval of the instructor. Beginning in Spring 2012, undergraduates receiving permission to register for a graduate class will be required to choose the regular grade (ABC/NC) option due to concern that past use of the S/NC option in these courses was not inducing the required effort by undergraduates taking the classes. Again, the Economics Department’s position is that these classes are mainly for our Ph.D. program. Students wishing to apply to graduate programs in economics are advised that taking and doing well in the full set of courses required by the Mathematical Economics or the Applied Math-Economics concentrations are the best way to be in a good position to enter a graduate program.