UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS COFFEE HOUR

– Please join us –

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Friday, November 15
Main Conference Room, SSH 2102
(Coffee and light refreshment provided)

Meet the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Honors Thesis Students in Managerial Economics and Economics!

For more information contact: Kristin Kiesel (thesis coordinator)
e-mail: kiesel@ucdavis.edu
Office: SSH 2147
George Anagnostou

Thesis topic:
Who is the canary in the coal mine? This research project seeks to identify and analyze the response of investors, regulators, and consumers of PG&E throughout the recent wildfire and bankruptcy crisis. My research will also look into the embedded risk of PG&E stock, and if there has been historic seasonality associated with the company, stemming from this risk of wildfires and other disasters.

Faculty Advisor: Jeffrey Williams

Katelyn Banh

Thesis topic:
I am conducting an analysis on movie box office predictors. Predicting box office numbers has been a staple in the film industry and economy ever since now-widely used theories were developed in the 1970s, but my contribution to this practice is the introduction of a new variable: streaming. My study aims to analyze if streaming services, specifically Netflix, are complements or substitutes to going to the movies by predicting box office revenue. Streaming has yet to be included as a variable in a major study conducted on predicting the theatrical box office revenue because of its very recent introduction to the movie industry's consumer base. I am interested in seeing what the recent onset of streaming implies for access to goods and services, if more entertainment choices affect what kind of products are offered, and if we can view the regression outcomes through a consumer behavioral lens.

Faculty Advisor: Kristin Kiesel

Kathy Huang

Thesis topic:
In current society, it is imperative to understand both the Chinese and US stock market given how closely these economies are to one another. This research study aims to identify how effective technical indicators –MA and RSI– can help forecast risk and volatility in both the U.S. and Chinese markets. More specifically, I will assess the correlation between pattern recognition and returns on investment in two markets, and then I will compare the effectiveness of technical analysis in two markets. The ultimate goal is to understand how rewarding technical analysis is and how investors can apply it to reduce risk and increase returns.

Faculty Advisor: Jens Hilscher
**Fabio Kammler**

**Thesis topic:**

The exit of the United Kingdom out of the European Union is one of the most interesting economic contemporary phenomena. This development is unprecedented and will no doubt have major economic impacts inside and outside the UK. Economic concerns were noted as a major reason UK citizens voted to leave the EU, so this study will focus on measuring and analyzing the UK’s economic performance before and during the EU membership. Using comparisons with other nations and forecasts of the health of the UK economy, this thesis will assess whether EU membership was beneficial or detrimental to the UK, and if leaving will likely be a good or a bad choice for the economy.

*Faculty Advisor: Colin Carter*

**Kajal Raju**

**Thesis topic:**

In the face of the rising prevalence of chronic conditions, increasing treatment costs, and worldwide doctor shortages, digital health platforms and telemedicine are lauded as revolutionizing the healthcare industry. My research will explore different aspects within digital health technology and the business of digital healthcare that allow for an empowering and inclusive platform. I plan to examine the effectiveness of B2C marketing strategies and engagement models implemented by various digital platforms, along with the technology that enables the platform. My goal is to understand their implications for the holistic development of an empowering platform, so that good health is not merely an aspiration but rather a viable reality for everyone.

*Faculty Advisor: Dalia Ghanem*

**Ranjini Srikantan**

**Thesis topic:**

My thesis question is – What is the impact of access to microfinance to women on social and demographic indicators in different regions across India? In this paper, data on savings and loans disbursed to women self-help groups in India are used as indicators of access to finance for women. Further, unemployment rate, literacy rate, and poverty rate in each region help to understand the impact of microfinance.

*Faculty Advisor: Ashish Shenoy*
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS (AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS):

Lucas Epstein

Thesis topic:
In 2018 Californians voted no on Ballot Proposition 6 which would have repealed the gas tax. My research uses OLS to examine how regional variations of ideology, road quality, and estimated tax exposure impacted a community’s decision to vote in favor of keeping the gas tax. Tax exposure was estimated by combining drive time to work from the American Communities Survey (ACS) with average gas price in the month leading up to the election. In order to compare election data and ACS data (tax exposure, demographics), precinct level election results reported by the CA Secretary of State’s office were reorganized to match with census block groups. As expected, low tax exposure and liberal/progressive ideologies are correlated with more support for the gas tax. However, counter to my expectations, good road quality seems to have a strong relationship with high support for the gas tax. My research over the next few months will attempt to explain this unexpected and significant relationship.

Faculty Advisor: Giovanni Peri

ECONOMICS:

Ian Xu

Thesis topic:
A typical offender commits crimes because their utility function is dependent on their personal gain. But unlike normal offenders, those who commit hate crimes do so because their utility function is inversely proportional to their victim’s utility. Most people agree that these crimes, which manifest evidence of prejudice against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, are especially vile offenses. Because of this, most states have statutes that permit for penalty enhancements for the offender if the crime committed was motivated by hate. While certainly in the right direction, these statutes cannot be unreservedly relied on to thwart all hate crimes from being committed. In my study, I seek to uncover the underlying determinants of hate crimes across states using data primarily gathered by the FBI and U.S. Census Bureau. By doing so, I hope that resources can be optimally allocated to put an end to hate crimes on multiple fronts.

Faculty Advisor: Jeffrey Williams
**Stephanie Lu**  
**Thesis topic:**  
The credit-driven household demand channel has been posited as a powerful mechanism by which credit supply expansions, operating largely through household demand, drive boom-bust cycles. Previous literature has focused on investigating the validity of the credit-driven household demand channel, but the source of credit supply expansions is still unclear. I use multiple regression models across countries and within American states to investigate whether increases in inequality might explain increases in household debt. The explanatory variables I am testing include different inequality measures, real interest rates, and financial liberalization measures. I also use an instrumental variable approach to test whether American household debt/income ratios can be explained by exposure to Chinese imports.

**Faculty Advisor:** Giovanni Peri

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**Victoria Fu**  
**Thesis topic:**  
I would like to investigate the factors that influence pollutant emissions and energy consumption in China. I will use data from thirty provinces over the last twenty-two years and analyze how demographic factors, economic factors and technological factors have contributed to the growth of energy consumption and pollutant emissions. The basic model is the STIRPAT model and I will also include the environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis into the model. I will include population density, education, age, household size and urbanization in the demographic factors, real GDP per capita and its squares, in the economic factors, and share of tertiary industry of total GDP, in the technological factors. Through this research, I hope to better understand Chinese environmental problems over the past twenty-two years and determine which factors most contribute to the degradation of the environment.

**Faculty Advisor:** Giovanni Peri
Alyssa Parr

**Thesis topic:**
There has been a considerable amount of controversy in today’s society over whether Roe v. Wade should be overturned. At the state level, some governments have already introduced new legislation to make it more difficult for women to get an abortion. Texas in particular has introduced new legislation that has caused many clinics to close their doors. My research will focus on how these clinic closures in Texas have impacted the female labor force participation rate. I will also be looking at changes in school attendance for young women. My goal is to see whether the lack of abortion access to women in certain communities in Texas will impact their decision to work, or their decision to continue their education.

**Faculty Advisor:** Giovanni Peri

Aydin Schwartz

**Thesis topic:**
How can schools persuade students to access the maximum amount of financial aid possible? Research has shown that receiving financial aid can help increase both college entry and college completion rates. However, many eligible students fail to apply for aid programs that could benefit them. My project seeks to evaluate the effect of a policy change in a California Community College District that required community college students to apply for FAFSA before they applied for other types of financial aid. FAFSA is known as a particularly difficult program to apply for, as it is more complicated than a federal tax return. I seek to discover whether this program increased financial aid receipt in this district or if students were instead discouraged from applying for financial aid due to the additional complexity imposed by the policy.

**Faculty Advisor:** Giovanni Peri
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS

This program presents students with an invaluable opportunity to develop their research, communication and presentation skills, and prepares them for an academic career or leadership positions in industry. It is designed to assist outstanding, committed, and hard-working students majoring in Managerial Economics to think clearly and coherently about economic matters and to improve their analytical competency. Over the course of two quarters and with the guidance of an assigned faculty advisor, students develop a thesis topic and prepare an original, independent research paper (typically between 20 and 30 pages) that is of sufficient quality and interest to be included in job and graduate school applications. Participating students will present their findings to the department, at the UC Davis Undergraduate Research Conference, and can pursue publication in academic outlets. For more information, please visit: https://managerialeconomics.ucdavis.edu/advising/undergraduate-honors-thesis/

ECONOMICS

ECN 194, Honor Thesis, is a unique course. It permits outstanding, committed and hard-working Economics students to complete an in-depth research project with close faculty supervision over two quarters. The goal is to produce an original research paper, typically between 20 and 30 pages, but the length is less relevant than the quality. The paper will be original and a (small) contribution to the field of Economics. Typically this will involve thinking of a problem, reading many papers on it, translating it into a question, and an empirical strategy. The student will also find the data and perform the econometric analysis. Before the course the students are trained in the use of STATA the most advanced statistical package for econometric analysis of data, and during the course they will learn skills of presenting results, illustrating data, engaging an audience in their research. No other course you took teaches you these skills which are crucial both in research and in many jobs.
Managerial Economics Students

George Anagnostou
Katelyn Banh
Kathy Huang
Fabio Kammler
Kaja Raju
Ranjini Srikantan
Ian Xu

Economics Students

Lucas Epstein
Victoria Fu
Stephanie Lu
Alyssa Parr
Aydin Schwartz

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