UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS COFFEE HOUR

— Please join us —

12:00–1:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 16
DeLoach Conference Room, SS&H
(Coffee and light refreshments provided)

Meet the 2022–23 Undergraduate Honors Thesis Students in Managerial Economics!

For more information contact:
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2022–2023 Undergraduate Honors Thesis Students

Andy Li

Thesis topic:
I will be gathering data on current usage of blockchain technology in the developing world, as well as proposed future uses of blockchain from an innovation perspective. I will study whether blockchain technology increases the velocity of money, and thereby increase economic output and productivity over a period of time. Additionally, I will also study how blockchain technology can be used for more futuristic uses to address current limitations to address poverty in the developing and third world. I will also analyze whether the trading of cryptocurrencies and NFTs has increased financial and crypto literacy among the impoverished, and whether there is a generational gap in this regard. Finally, I will be studying the impact of DAOs (distributed autonomous organizations) as an innovative alternative model for employment that emphasizes worker ownership and flexible employment arrangements.

Faculty Advisor: Ed Taylor

Zhongyan Lin

Thesis topic:
I hope to evaluate a hypothesis such as “investing in metaverse is cost-effective nowadays” to help answer several questions: how to obtain optimal solutions upon uncertainty? How can ordinary people break information asymmetry and industry barriers to make a profit on metaverse? Since poverty traps stem from asymmetric information, can ordinary people avoid being exploited by capitalists and falling into poverty traps in the metaverse? How can people manage risks and expectations of ROI? How to protect people’s rights, privacy, and digital assets? Introduction of government supervision and regulation seems to be necessary for equality, which betrays the core of the metaverse: decentralization, however. If choosing not to invest, how can the overflow effect benefit mankind? By technology innovation? Just as the textile industry stimulated the industrial revolution, metaverse also has much room to make tremendous growth, high demand for entertainment, a long industry chain on which each relevant link is profitable, necessary tech innovation can spur a domino effect benefiting everyone.

Faculty Advisor: Ed Taylor
Ben Simon

Thesis topic:
I am going to be examining four oil price shocks over the past fifty years, looking into resulting inflation and industry response. To evaluate resulting inflation, I will be looking at percent changes in monthly CPI, running regressions to see how the shocks have affected industries like food, transportation, energy, etc. I will then use Ken French’s portfolio data to review industry returns. The return data will give me insight on which industries were affected by the shocks and their response, i.e., how long it took for industries to adjust to resulting inflation.

Faculty Advisors: Bulat Gafarov and Jens Hilscher

Ziyuan Lin & Jiayang Wang

Thesis topic:
We want to investigate how markets in different industries respond to the news during the pandemic. We selected several important pandemic news releasing dates as benchmarks and run regressions to calculate abnormal returns across industries for the periods before and after those benchmarks. Also, we will look at the financial reports of specific companies to investigate how the shocks of pandemic news affect individual companies' profits. Finally, we will have a clear picture of how pandemic news is interpreted as positive or negative for different industries, and how efficient those markets are in response to the news.

Faculty Advisor: Jens Hilscher

Jianheng Luo

Thesis topic:
China, along with many countries in the world, faces significant environmental challenges. In 2021, there were 307 million vehicles registered in China, among a population of 1.4 billion people. Due in part to the large amount of population and vehicles, China emits more greenhouse gas than any other country in the world. In addition to cars, pollution from electricity generation is a major contributor to poor local air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. China has seen rapid recent growth in electric vehicle sales. 14.8% of new vehicle sales in year 2021 were electric vehicles, compared to 4.1% in the United States. Changing to electric vehicles shifts emissions from vehicle tailpipes to electric power plants. I plan to study how this change affects emissions in China.

Faculty Advisor: Aaron Smith
Fei Wang & Han Zhao

**Thesis topic:**
Covid-19 severely affected our everyday lives and disrupted both food service and retail food supply channels. As a result, online grocery shopping gained new popularity. We explore how the availability and use of new online grocery services affected food purchases and consumption patterns of different consumer groups segmented by age. Specifically, this paper explores how different age groups differed in their use of online grocery services at the beginning and throughout the pandemic, what type of foods are available and purchased online compared to brick and mortar stores and at what prices, and discusses likely implications for the demand of fresh produce and specialty crops grown in California.

**Faculty Advisor:** Kristin Kiesel

Justin Yu

**Thesis topic:**
Interpreting data from the US government’s “Survey of Consumer Finances” on the correlation between education and stock market participation. Exploring what effect this education and stock market participation has been on total household wealth and income. Exploring if there are differing correlations based on other factors such as race, age, and income. Making an argument of what the impacts of higher financial literacy would be on a portfolio and how this would compare to a portfolio of someone with low financial literacy. The overall goal is to promote the idea that more people should be educated in finance, to improve their lives and fuel an easier retirement.

**Faculty Advisor:** Jens Hilscher

Iris (Jiaxin) Zheng

**Thesis topic:**
The freight rate for containers from Shanghai to LA surged after the pandemic hit due to significant congestion at the LA port, resulting in container shortage for California agriculture exporters. My research will explore the possible causes of the congestion at the LA port from aspects including the port’s inefficiency, container queueing problem, lack of coordination in the trucking system, and the effect of demand changes. I plan to build a simulation model about the effect of these factors on port efficiency. A better understanding of the supply chain and transportation infrastructure will help carry forward the competitiveness of California agriculture exports in the world market.

**Faculty Advisor:** Jeffrey Williams
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Program

The honors thesis program is designed to assist outstanding, committed and hard-working students majoring in Managerial Economics to think clearly and coherently about economic matters and to develop their analytical skills.

Learning objectives

This program is especially effective for students who want to:

- Develop research, writing and presentation skills for work in a wide variety of business-related fields and careers
- Continue their studies at the graduate level

It gives students the opportunity to work closely with a faculty member over the course of two quarters and get involved in academic research.

Learning outcomes

With the guidance of a faculty advisor, the student prepares an original, independent research paper (honors thesis, typically between 20 and 30 pages) which should be of sufficient quality and interest to present to an employer or a graduate school, and perhaps even be published in some form.

Participating students then present their results to a wider audience.

Prerequisites

In order to apply to the program, interested students must meet the following requirements:

- Major in Managerial Economics
- Senior standing
- A minimum 3.5 GPA (overall)
- ARE 100B
- ARE 106 (may be taken concurrently)
- ARE 155 (may be taken concurrently)
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