



ECON 492 – Senior Seminar, Section 1

Fall 2021 – *Managing the Global Water Crisis: An Economic Perspective*

This course focuses on a key paradox of water resource management: Despite mounting evidence of growing over-use and scarcity of water, why is the world not mobilizing its vast wealth, ingenuity and institutions to avert this crisis? Or, from an economic perspective, if water is valuable and scarce, why is it so poorly managed? To explore this paradox, the course focuses on the role of water in economic development, covering both local, national and global aspects of this relationship, and especially focusing on the role of institutions, governance and incentives in water resource management. It is designed as a senior seminar course, and aims to give students a sense of current theories, debates, historical perspectives and methodologies concerning water and economic development, while also allowing students to develop and utilize their skills in economics to analyze a relevant water-related topic of their choice. The course is divided between lectures and readings, and a group project. Students will work together in groups to survey and analyze various central considerations in the economics of managing the global water crisis. The course will culminate in a poster session in which students share with each other the findings of their research.

Instructor: Dr. Edward Barbier

Prerequisites: Senior status, ECON 304, 306 and 335 (or concurrent registration)

Section 1, CRN: 67434: 1:00-2:15PM TR, MICRO A101



ECON 492 – Senior Seminar, Sections 2 & 5

Fall 2021 - *The Economics of Climate Change*

However you look at it, the prospect of human-caused climate change presents an enormous policy challenge that has been the subject of intense international debate for almost 30 years. While uncertainty persists regarding many features of the problem, the possibility of dire consequences cannot be ruled out. Meanwhile, despite numerous efforts to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping greenhouse gases, global emissions continue to increase at a rate of several percent per year. The field of economics provides powerful conceptual and empirical tools for understanding the key policy obstacles and for devising a response that addresses these obstacles in a realistic way. In this class, students will work together in groups to survey and analyze various central considerations in the economics of climate change. The course will culminate in a poster-sharing session in which students share with each other the findings of their research.

Instructor: Prof. Terry Iverson

Prerequisites: Senior status, ECON 304, 306 and 335 (or concurrent registration)

Section 2, CRN 61936: 2:00-2:50PM MWF, EDDY 100

Section 5, CRN 64228: 11:00-11:50AM MWF, CLARK C251



ECON 492 – Senior Seminar, Section 6

Fall 2021 – *Analyzing Denver’s National Western Center as a Bridge Across Colorado’s Rural/Urban Divide*

Economics can be useful. Yet in the crunch to understand t-statistics, elasticities, and exchange rates, this fact can often get lost. The final course in the economics program is therefore designed to apply your economics toolbox to the challenges and opportunities facing both Colorado and the rest of the nation. Colorado’s economy has long been among the most dynamic in the country, due in large part to the state’s mix of highly productive and amenity-rich rural areas and innovative, attractive urban corridor. But Colorado, like much of the country, is experiencing uneven growth. Rapid urban growth is a key driver of the state’s economic expansion, as the Front Range in particular benefits from strong inflows of educated, creative workers. But this same growth has put upwards pressure on housing prices, led to infrastructure congestion, created a more skill-intensive labor market, and shifted neighborhoods’ cultural and demographic makeup.

Colorado’s rural areas also face a mix of opportunities and challenges. The state’s agricultural sector is among the most productive in the country, and is also highly diverse, comprising not only crop and livestock production but also substantial employment in marketing, wholesale, and innovative research in crop and animal sciences. Beyond agriculture, many of Colorado’s rural areas benefit from natural resource amenities. The state’s rural areas are also highly entrepreneurial, with self-employment rates substantially higher than the Front Range – and a third greater than rural areas nationwide. Yet many rural Colorado counties, especially those heavily concentrated in agriculture and natural resource extraction, have experienced declining incomes and net out-migration.

Denver’s National Western Center (NWC) redevelopment – in which CSU plays a major role – sits squarely at the intersection of these regional trends. As an urban space with an economic and cultural heritage deeply rooted in agriculture and natural resources - industries more concentrated in the state’s Eastern Plains and Western Slope - the NWC presents a unique opportunity to bridge the so-called “rural-urban divide.” Indeed, one of the main aims of the National Western Center’s development plan is to “serve as a catalyst for the New West and a new way of thinking.”

The capstone will parallel and collaborate with a Communication Studies Department course to analyze NWC’s direct impact on the local neighborhoods that are among the most economically challenged in the city, then explore innovative linkages to the entrepreneurial rural parts of the state. On-site consultations with communities and their leaders are a core part of the course, complemented by classroom work to analyze both local and regional data to find the regions that mesh best with the NWC’s capacities. Colorado is uniquely placed to be a national leader in addressing the now widely-recognized gaps between rural and urban areas, and your work will play a critical role in building these bridges.

Instructor: Prof. Stephan Weiler

Prerequisites: Senior status, ECON 304, 306 and 335 (or concurrent registration)
Section 6, CRN 65364: 2:00-3:15PM TR, Clark A203