Course Description
This capstone course for the IBS MA program is a highly interactive class. Students apply the tools and concepts from international trade, microeconomics, statistics, and economic development to analyze current challenges facing policymakers, firms and international organizations. The focus will be on trade agreements, trade barriers, global firm production networks, and firm access to finance. Using rigorous analysis and research, students will evaluate key global issues in-depth. They will present their views persuasively, in class discussion, two short policy memos, and a team mock consulting project, involving oral presentation and a written report.

Learning goals
1. Present well-articulated, in-depth economic analysis of current global policy issues, using concepts and tools from international trade, economic development, microeconomics, and statistics.
2. Research, present and defend a position on a current global policy issue, with a well-reasoned and compelling economic analysis that reveals knowledge of both sides of the issue.
3. Write a well-argued policy analysis evaluating a current global issue, using in-depth economic analysis.
4. Analyze and present data effectively in discussions, oral presentations, and written analyses.

Course Structure
The first part of this module will cover four current policy topics in international trade and development. For each topic, we will study two papers that introduce the broad policy debate, take different viewpoints, and provide economic arguments and evidence to support these viewpoints.

In the second part of the course, student teams will present and defend a position paper, as part of a mock consulting project. There will be mock hearings on current major policy controversies. Each team will “testify” in a mock hearing before a “review panel” of students. The team will then be challenged with questions from the review panel, and from the rest of the class.

Prerequisites
Econ 260a or equivalent undergraduate course, or permission from the instructor. This course assumes the student has taken a full semester international trade course at undergraduate or MA level.

Required reading
Required reading will include professional studies by scholars and by international organizations, and professional journal articles (via Brandeis Scholar or online) posted on LATTE.

Optional textbooks for reference
There are no textbooks for this class. However, students may wish to consult a standard textbook, such as: R. Feenstra and A. Taylor, International Economics or S. Husted and M. Melvin, International Economics.
Grading
1. Short Policy Memos (2) (30%)
   - Consulting Team hearing presentation
   - Consulting Team written report

2. Mock Hearing Consulting Project (30%)
   - Consulting Team hearing presentation
   - Consulting Team written report

3. Mock Hearing Student Review Panel (15%)

4. Class participation (25%)
   - Class discussion and attendance

Overview of Assignments
1. **Short Policy Memos (30%)**. Students will write two short policy memos (3 pages). Each memo will take a position on a topic, and argue that position using the two papers discussed in class. Instructions and due dates will be posted on LATTE.

2. **Mock Hearing Consulting Project (30%)**. Each student will serve on one Consulting Team, “hired” by a firm, and will research a controversial policy question for their “clients.” Dates and topics are listed in the Course Outline.
   - **Oral Presentation.** Each team will “testify” at a mock hearing in the last 2 weeks of the module before a Student Review Panel. The Panel will challenge the team with prepared questions.
   - **Final Report.** The team will submit a written final report. Due date announced in class.

   Student consulting teams will be formed within the first week of class. A student’s grade will be based on the oral presentation and the written report. The grade will be a weighted average of the student’s individual performance (40%) and the team’s performance (60%). Instructions will be posted on LATTE.

3. **Mock Hearing Student Review Panel (15%)**
   Each student will serve on one Mock Hearing Student Review Panel. The Panel will do research on the topic, and challenge the consulting team with both prepared questions and responses to the team’s presentation.

4. **Class Participation (25%)**. Student participation in class is crucial. Participation will be a weighted average of class discussion comments (90%) and attendance (10%). An absence will mean a score of zero for attendance and zero for classroom contribution that day.

   In each class meeting, classroom contributions will be scored as follows: an excellent contribution that moves the discussion forward significantly (3); a good contribution that provokes some discussion (2); a standard contribution (1); no contribution (0). Final grades will be based on both quality and quantity.

Policy on Use of Computers, Tablets and Phones in Class
- **Laptop or tablet** usage is allowed in class to review the paper being discussed that day and/or your notes on that paper only. During mock hearings, no electronic device usage allowed, except by the hearing team/panel.
- **Phone** usage is not allowed. Phones must be **closed and in your bag** at all times.
- **Violation of these policies will be equivalent to an absence.**
Class Preparation.
Preparation prior to each class meeting is mandatory. The goal for each class is to (1) thoroughly and rigorously discuss the economic issues raised in the readings and (2) achieve involvement of most of the students in the classroom discussion. Everyone must be prepared to participate.

Discussion Structure:
1. THE QUESTION. What is the main question examined in this paper? Why is it important? What is the authors’ answer to the main question?

2. THE ARGUMENTS. What are the key economic arguments the authors use to build their case?

3. THE ANALYSIS. What economic analysis do the authors give to support each of their arguments? What evidence? What are the strengths and weaknesses in the analyses? The evidence?

Workload
Success in this two-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Academic Honesty
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. This is your responsibility. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty—such as plagiarism—can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

Disabilities
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
Draft Readings and Course Outline-subject to change
(* indicates required reading)

OVERVIEW

Class 1: January 13

The battle over international trade

Overview of course and requirements

TOPIC 1: Free Trade Agreements: do they really harm the economy?

Class 2: January 15

Class 3: January 22

TOPIC 2: Lost Jobs: a new argument for protection?

Class 4: January 27

Class 5: January 29

SHORT MEMO #1 DUE: Monday, February 3, 2020, 11:59 p.m.

TOPIC 3: Global Value Chains (GVCs): a new source of comparative advantage?

Class 6: February 3

Class 7: February 5
TOPIC 4: Trade and FDI: the engine of sustainable development?

Class 8: February 10

Class 9: February 12

SHORT MEMO #2 DUE: Monday, February 17, 2020, 11:59 p.m.

MOCK Consulting Projects: team presentations
Hearing topics are below. For each class, the required class reading (*) and some team resources are posted on LATTE. Consulting team presentations are due at 11:59 p.m. the day of the team’s hearing.

Class 10: February 24
Hearing: The US-China trade war
Client: Chinese Ministry of Commerce
Complaint: This war is generating only welfare losses for both sides
Venue: World Trade Organization

Class 11: February 26
Hearing: Technology theft
Client: Chinese Ministry of Commerce
Complaint: Trade barriers are the wrong way to stop technology theft
Venue: World Trade Organization

Class 12: March 2
Hearing: Auto tariffs
Clients: Ford Motor Co. and General Motors
Complaint: Auto tariffs will harm both US auto producers and US consumers
Hearing: US International Trade Commission

Class 13: March 4
Hearing: Steel and aluminum tariffs and quotas
Clients: the governments of India, the EU, Mexico, Canada, and China
Complaint: these policies do not improve national security, but only reduce welfare
Venue: the US International Trade Commission

CONSULTING TEAM WRITTEN REPORT DUE: Thursday, March 12, 2020, 11:59 p.m.