Global Perspectives on Labor Markets

Spring 2027 – DIS Stockholm

Semester & Location: Spring 2027-DIS Stockholm

Type & Credit: Elective course-3 credits

Faculty: David Munro

Class Schedule: Monday/Thursday at **13:15-14:35**

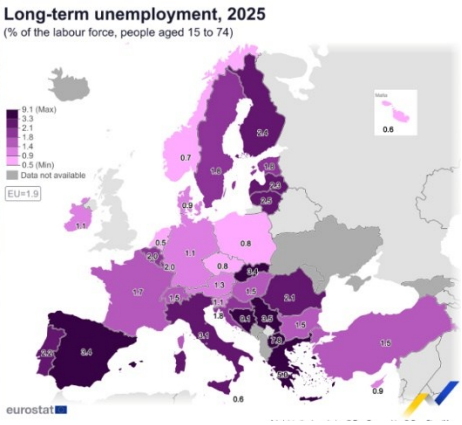
Classroom: TBD

Major Disciplines:

This course is designed for students in Economics, Business, or similar majors.

Prerequisites:

One course in either introductory microeconomics or macroeconomics, and one course in statistics at the university level.



Course Description:

This course explores the functioning, structure, and outcomes of labor markets around the world, with a focus on comparative and international perspectives. Students will examine how institutions, policies, and economic forces shape labor markets across different countries and regions. Topics include wage determination, employment and unemployment trends, labor market regulation, migration, gender and racial disparities, and the impacts of globalization and technological change. Cross-country case studies will provide a foundation for understanding key similarities and differences in labor market experiences worldwide. Through empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and policy

analysis, students will develop tools to critically evaluate labor market policies and outcomes in a global context.

Course Objectives:

Labor markets offer one of the most revealing windows into the health of the macroeconomy — and into the everyday lives of workers around the world. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Interpret key labor market measures — including employment, unemployment, wages, and labor force participation — and critically evaluate how these statistics are constructed and what they do (and do not) capture.
- Compare labor market institutions and policies across countries, identifying how differences in regulation, collective bargaining, social insurance, and other institutions shape labor market outcomes.
- Apply frameworks from labor economics to analyze the causes and consequences of real-world phenomena, including wage inequality, unemployment, migration, and the effects of globalization and technological change.
- Evaluate causal evidence in empirical research, understanding the key challenges of causal inference in economics and the methods researchers use to address them.
- Use statistical programming tools to work with labor market data, replicate empirical findings, and conduct original analysis.

Faculty:

David Munro received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and has been a faculty member at Middlebury College since 2016, where he is currently an Associate Professor. His research spans macroeconomics, labor economics, and experimental economics. His research focuses on inflation and price setting behavior, unemployment and labor market dynamics, financial crises, among others, and has been published in leading journals including the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, the *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*, and *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*. He has been a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Banks of San Francisco and Atlanta and the Federal Reserve Board of Governors and is a research fellow at the Global Labor Organization.

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Readings:

The is no required textbook for the course. Course readings will be comprised of articles from academic journals and the popular press. Please see course schedule below for a preliminary list of required readings.

Field Studies:

(Tentative)

- Visit Statistics Sweden
- Visit Swedish Trade Union Confederation

Evaluation:

Aside from submitted materials, you will also be evaluated on your in-class work and engagement with in-class activities. Students should also show an openness and curiosity to understand and critically engage with core questions in labor economics.

Grading

Participation	20%
Labs	40%
Paper Presentations	10%
Final project presentation	10%
Final project paper	20%

DIS Academic Regulation:

Please be sure to read the Academic Regulations on the DIS website. There you will find regulations on

- Course Enrollment and Grading

- Academic Expectations and Honor Code

Other information:

Late submissions will be penalized 5% per day. Use of phones is not permitted in class. During lectures and class discussions I'd like us to avoid the use of laptops. During in-class work/labs laptops will be used for data work, coding, etc.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Lecture 1: Course Introduction

Overview of the course and major themes in global labor markets. Introduction to the final project and course software.

Lecture 2: Measuring Labor Markets

How economists measure employment, unemployment, and labor force participation across countries.

Lecture 3: Lab – Constructing Labor Market Indicators

Using microdata to calculate and visualize basic labor market statistics.

Lecture 4: Unemployment, Search, and the Beveridge Curve

Why unemployment exists and how labor market frictions shape aggregate outcomes.

Lecture 5: Discussion and Lab – Labor Market Tightness Across Countries

Constructing Beveridge Curves and exploring job finding and separation rates.

Required Readings:

- Domash, A., & Summers, L. H. (2022). A labor market view on the risks of a US hard landing. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 44(4), 758-767.
- Figura, A., & Waller, C. (2024). What does the beveridge curve tell us about the likelihood of soft landings?. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*, 169, 104957.

Lecture 6: Minimum Wages

Theory and evidence on the effects of wage floors.

Lecture 7: Causal Inference I: Difference-in-Differences

Introduction to the research design behind modern minimum wage studies.

Lecture 8: Discussion and Lab – Replicating Card & Krueger (1994)

Using data to estimate the employment effects of minimum wages.

Required Reading:

- Card, D., & Krueger, A. B. (2000). Minimum wages and employment: a case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. *American Economic Review*, 90(5), 1397-1420.

Lecture 9: Unemployment Insurance and Job Search

The tradeoff between income insurance and work incentives.

Lecture 10: Causal Inference II: Regression Discontinuity Designs

How economists use policy thresholds to identify causal effects.

Lecture 11: Discussion and Lab – Replicating Nekoei & Weber

Analyzing the impact of unemployment benefit duration on labor market outcomes.

Required Reading:

- Nekoei, A., & Weber, A. (2017). Does extending unemployment benefits improve job quality? *American Economic Review*, 107(2), 527-561.

Lecture 12: Unions and Collective Bargaining

How labor market institutions shape wages and inequality.

Lecture 13: Lab – Union Wage Premiums and Cross-Country Comparisons

Estimating union effects using U.S. data and comparing institutions internationally.

Lecture 14: Education and Human Capital

Education, skills, and the determination of earnings.

Lecture 15: Technology, Automation, and AI

How advances in technology impact the labor market

Lecture 16: Discussion and Lab – Automation, Job Polarization, AI

Estimating the effects of technological change on wages and employment.

Required Reading:

- Autor, D. H. (2015). Why are there still so many jobs? The history and future of workplace automation. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 29(3), 3-30.

Lecture 17: Discrimination in Labor Markets

Theories and evidence on wage gaps and labor market discrimination.

Lecture 18: Discussion and Lab – Measuring Wage Gaps

Using microdata to examine gender and racial earnings differences.

Required Reading:

- Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2017). The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations. *Journal of economic literature*, 55(3), 789-865.

Lecture 19: Audit Studies and Hiring Discrimination

Discussion and in-class replication of Bertrand & Mullainathan (2004).

Required Reading:

- Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 94(4), 991-1013.

Lecture 20: Family Policies and Labor Supply

Parental leave, childcare, and female labor force participation.

Lecture 21: Migration and Labor Markets

Immigration, labor demand, and the global allocation of workers.

Lecture 22: Discussion and Lab – Migration and Local Labor Markets

Empirical analysis of migration and labor market outcomes across countries.

Require Reading:

- Clemens, M. A., Lewis, E. G., & Postel, H. M. (2018). Immigration restrictions as active labor market policy: Evidence from the Mexican bracero exclusion. *American Economic Review*, 108(6), 1468-1487.

Lecture 23: Student Presentations