



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

GRA 6634 Business Cycles

Programme

Master of Science in Business and Economics, Master of Science in Business and Economics (Economics), Master of Science in Financial Economics, Specialization Course

Responsible for the course

Department

Department of Economics

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Language of instruction

English

Introduction

Business cycles refer to swings in aggregate economic activity. Booms are times of high activity, while busts are times of low economic activity. These swings have great impact on sales, employment, profit and investments. To stabilize the business cycles is an important objective of economic policymaking. A greater understanding of the sources behind the cycles may lead you to be better prepared for them as a business man or woman, and thereby be able to minimize the harmful effects.

Learning outcome

The main goal is to give course participants a deeper theoretical and empirical understanding of the nature of business cycles in industrialized countries. Another goal is to introduce the participants to empirical methods designed to measure trends, cyclical movements and co-movements in macroeconomic data.

Prerequisites

Bachelor's degree in Business or eq, with SØK 2300 or a similar intermediate undergraduate macroeconomic course.

Compulsory reading

Books:

Birch Sørensen, Peter and Hans Jørgen Whitta-Jacobsen. 2005. Introducing advanced macroeconomics : growth and business cycles. Maidenhead : McGraw-Hill. Chapters 1, 14-20, 23-25.

Other:

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.

A list of compulsory readings will be provided on Blackboard or in class.

Kai Leitemo. Articles supplementing the book may be distributed

Recommended reading

Course outline

Business cycles (macroeconomic fluctuations) refer to booms and recessions in aggregate economic activity. In some periods, economic growth is fairly smooth, but business cycles triggered by macroeconomic shocks have always returned, despite serious attempts by governments and central banks to stabilise the macroeconomy. Most firms are affected by business cycles. Typically, many firms expand sales and increase profits in booms, while recessions trigger losses and increase the rate of bankruptcy. Business cycles therefore involve substantial macroeconomic risks for many business firms, households, banks and other financial institutions. Particular attention will be paid to how firms and households make investment and consumption decisions. Theories explaining business cycles as the combined result of unpredictable shocks and the behaviour of households, business firms, financial institutions and governments/central banks will be presented along with the empirical evidence. We will also address measurement issues and demonstrate empirical methods of measuring trends, cyclical movements and co-movements in macroeconomic data.

An outline of the course:

Part I: Introduction to macroeconomics. Long run versus the short run. Stylized facts about the business cycles. (IAM, Chapter 1 and 14)

Part II: Modern consumption and investment theories. Aggregate demand and aggregate supply. (IAM, Chapters 15-18)

Part III: The theories at work: explaining business cycles. Stochastics. Stabilization policy. (IAM, Chapters 19-20)

Part IV: Extensions to the open economy. Role of the exchange rate. Choice of policy regimes. (IAM, Chapters 23-26)

Computer-based tools

Blackboard/homepage

Learning process and workload

36 hours of lectures.

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/Blackboard or text book.

Examination

Written mid-term exam (1 hour, 20%) and final written exam (3 hours, 80%). This is a process evaluation during the course.

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for tempapers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one for several elements of the overall evaluation.

Exam code(s)

GRA 66341 accounts for 100 % of the final grade in the course GRA 6634.

Examination support materials

A bilingual dictionary and BI-approved exam calculator.

Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in our web-based Student handbook. Please note use of calculator and dictionary.

<http://www.bi.edu/studenthandbook/examaids>

Re-sit examination

Re-takes are only possible at the next time a course will be held. When the course evaluation has a separate exam code for each part of the evaluation it is possible to retake parts of the evaluation. Otherwise, the whole course must be re-evaluated when a student wants to retake an exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee.

Additional information

Honor Code

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.