



Institute of Economics
Department of Economic Theory
Prof. Dr. Marten Hillebrand
Tel: +49 761 / 203-2326
E-mail: marten.hillebrand@vwl.uni-freiburg.de
Rempartstrasse 10-16
D-79085, Freiburg im Breisgau
URL: www.macro.uni-freiburg.de

Syllabus for the Master's seminar

Topics in Macroeconomics II: Macroeconomic Models of Asset Pricing

Winter semester 2024/25

- **Content:**

This seminar surveys quantitative models of asset pricing from a macroeconomic perspective. Participants will have the opportunity to present and discuss classical and recent papers representing the research frontier in this field.

- **Grading:**

- To obtain 6 ECTS, participants
 1. deliver a presentation on their topic
 2. write a report on three of the topics presented in class (except their own)
 3. actively participate in in-class discussions.
- The final grade is a weighted average of 1 (45 %), 2 (45%), and 3 (10%).
- Parts 1 and 2 must be completed with a grade of 4.0 or better.
- Attendance and active participation in all seminar meetings is mandatory.

- **Areas of specialization for M.Sc. Economics:**

- Economics and Politics
- Finance
- Information Systems and Network Economics

- **Areas of specialization for M.Sc. VWL:**

- Accounting, Finance and Taxation
- International and Development Economics
- Public Sector Economics and International Taxation

- Prerequisites:
 - Successful participation in Advanced Macroeconomics I or II is required.
 - A strong interest in macroeconomic methods and models of asset pricing.
- Organization:
 - All presentations take place in-person. Remote participation is not possible.
 - The seminar kicks off on **October 16th** at 10:15 am. Participation in the kick-off is mandatory.
 - Presentations take place on Wednesdays from 10:15 to 13:00 starting **October 30th** and ending on **December 11th**. Details will be announced in the kick-off meeting.
 - The kick-off and all seminar talks take place in R01 012 (Rempartstr. 16, 1st level).
- Participation and topic allocation:
 - To sign up for the seminar, please send an email to markus.epp@vwl.uni-freiburg.de no later than **October 9th**
 - In your mail, please include a **transcript of records** and provide a ranked list of your **three favorite seminar topics**. This ranking should be of the form, e.g., 2B > 3C > 1A.
 - We will assign the seminar topics and announce the allocation during the kick-off.
 - While we will do our best to assign topics based on your preferences, we cannot guarantee that everybody will get their most favorite topic.
- Guidelines regarding the reports and presentations are attached to the end of this document.
- All organizational details (ILIAS passwords etc.) will be announced during the kick-off meeting.
- For further information and requests, please contact markus.epp@vwl.uni-freiburg.de.

- Seminar topics:

1. **Basic macroeconomic models of asset pricing and the equity premium puzzle**

1A: Robert E. Lucas (1978). "Asset prices in an exchange economy". In: *Econometrica*, pp. 1429–1445

1B: Rajnish Mehra and Edward C. Prescott (1985). "The equity premium: A puzzle". In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 15.2, pp. 145–161

2. **Rare disasters and aggregate shocks**

2A: Thomas A. Rietz (1988). "The equity risk premium a solution". In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 22.1, pp. 117–131.

Rajnish Mehra and Edward C. Prescott (1988). "The equity risk premium: A solution?" In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 22.1, pp. 133–136

2B: N. Gregory Mankiw (1986). "The equity premium and the concentration of aggregate shocks". In: *Journal of Financial Economics* 17.1, pp. 211–219

3. **Non-expected utility**

3A: Philippe Weil (1990). "Nonexpected utility in macroeconomics". In: *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 105.1, pp. 29–42

3B: Philippe Weil (1989). "The equity premium puzzle and the risk-free rate puzzle". In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 24.3, pp. 401–421

4. **Financial frictions and habit-formation**

4A: Deborah J. Lucas (1994). "Asset pricing with undiversifiable income risk and short sales constraints: Deepening the equity premium puzzle". In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 34.3, pp. 325–341

4B: Martin Lettau and Harald Uhlig (2000). "Can habit formation be reconciled with business cycle facts?" In: *Review of Economic Dynamics* 3.1, pp. 79–99

5. **Capital adjustment costs and long-run risks**

5A: Urban J. Jermann (1998). "Asset pricing in production economies". In: *Journal of Monetary Economics* 41.2, pp. 257–275

5B: Ravi Bansal and Amir Yaron (2004). "Risks for the long run: A potential resolution of asset pricing puzzles". In: *The Journal of Finance* 59.4, pp. 1481–1509

6. **Heterogeneous agents and incomplete risk-sharing**

6A: Kjetil Storesletten, Christopher I. Telmer, and Amir Yaron (2007). "Asset pricing with idiosyncratic risk and overlapping generations". In: *Review of Economic Dynamics* 10.4, pp. 519–548

6B: Francisco Gomes and Alexander Michaelides (2008). "Asset pricing with limited risk sharing and heterogeneous agents". In: *The Review of Financial Studies* 21.1, pp. 415–448

- Prerequisite readings for all participants:

John H. Cochrane (2017). "Macro-finance". In: *Review of Finance* 21.3, pp. 945–985

- Guidelines for reports:
 - The reports summarize and discuss one of the two papers in each block.
 - They should take the form of a self-contained research paper including, aside the main text:
 1. Titlepage (topic, personal information of author, seminar title, date);
 2. List of references;
 3. Mathematical appendix, if necessary.
 - The main text comprises:
 1. A summary part (2 pages), consisting of a brief description of the article's research question, a concise description of the model, and the main results.
 2. A discussion part (1 page), reviewing the article critically by means of critique and comparison to the literature.
 - Proofs or lengthy formal derivations may be collected in a mathematical appendix.
 - The report must comply with the usual formatting guidelines:
 - Din A4 paper, 12pts lettering in either Arial or Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing.
 - Margins: 2cm
 - Citations should be done in the American Psychological Association style.
 - Reports must be submitted on Tuesday one week after the presentation/discussion of the respective topic.
- Guidelines for the presentation:
 - The presentations should take the form of a self-contained talk including
 1. An introduction (research question, contribution)
 2. A reproduction of the assigned research article
 3. A summary of the main results and limitations.
 - Slides should ideally not contain full sentences or paragraphs, but keywords and short sentences, organized in bullet points.
 - Slides must be submitted one day before the presentation.