RESEARCH PAPER
ECON 581
Dr. Sauer
Fall 2008

TOPIC: You have the choice of writing a paper on any issue(s) related to international finance. Pick a topic that you are deeply interested in and would like to learn more about. Show some intellectual curiosity and do not recycle a project that you may have worked on for another class. One place to start looking for a topic is the reading list for the course; you may also want to spend a few hours browsing current periodicals online or at Parish Library. Let me know if I can be of assistance in identifying a suitable paper topic.

You are expected to produce a substantive research paper that contains your own analysis of an economic theory and/or economic data. Starting with a review and critical assessment of the existing academic literature, your paper should identify and analyze the major issues/problems of your chosen topic and draw some policy conclusions (if relevant). Most of your sources should come from scholarly publications (i.e., journal articles, monographs, NBER working papers, or research reports) rather than the popular press or other mass media. Remember – “to write is to think” and “seeing is believing.” This paper gives you an opportunity to sharpen your writing and presentation skills, both of which are indispensable “tools of the trade” not just for economists. Be original and don’t regurgitate other people’s ideas!

WSSA CONFERENCE PRESENTATION & PARTICIPATION: I will select up to four papers from this class to be included in a session on international finance that I will submit to the organizers of the Western Social Science Association (WSSA) 51st Annual Conference, to be held in Albuquerque next April 15-18, 2009. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in (1) presenting at the conference and/or (2) serving as a discussant at the conference. I have to submit the conference proposal by November 15, 2008.

PAPER PROPOSAL: As part of your grade, you are required to submit a paper proposal that (1) motivates your choice of topic, (2) identifies the major issues/problems, (3) provides a brief outline of the paper, and (4) describes the data source(s) and references to be used. The proposal should not exceed three typed (double-space) pages.

LITERATURE REVIEW: As part of your grade, you are required to turn in a draft of your review and critical assessment of the relevant academic literature. You are expected to evaluate at least five scholarly publications that pertain to your chosen topic. Make sure that you follow proper procedures for quoting and citing other people’s work. The literature review must include complete references and should not exceed six typed (double-space) pages.

PAPER FORMAT & LENGTH: Write this paper as if you are planning to submit it for presentation at a professional meeting and/or publication in an academic journal. Following the basic format of a journal article, the paper (including title page, abstract, text, tables, graphs, and references) should not exceed twenty (20) pages total. It must be typed double-space in a legible font, with one-inch margins on all sides. Tables and graphs may be integrated into the text or attached at the end of the paper. Be sure to include complete references for all sources used. You may want to consult a published article in an academic journal for style examples.
GRADING: Unless you have received prior approval from me, you are expected to submit an original paper that has not or will not be submitted for another course. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of substance as well as originality and presentation. The proposal is worth 15 points, the literature review 25 points, and the paper 100 points; together they account for 35% (140 out of 400 possible points) of your final grade.

DUE DATES: The proposal is due in class on Wednesday, October 15, 2008. The literature review is due in class on Wednesday, November 5, 2008. Complete papers are due in class on Wednesday, November 26, 2008. Please turn in hard copies of your work. Work received after its due date is subject to penalty points.

POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS: Here are some possible research topics that you may wish to pursue. However, this list is not meant to be complete or exhaustive – you should choose a topic that you are deeply interested in and want to learn more about. You may also want to consider choosing a topic that can be developed further into a paper that can satisfy the department’s research requirement for Ph.D. students.

- monetary unions and/or dollarization: effects on trade, financial stability, growth, etc.
- choice of exchange rate regimes for developing and/or transition economies
- causes, effects, and policy implications of currency crises
- effectiveness of official foreign exchange intervention
- microstructure of foreign exchange markets
- debt relief issues
- effectiveness of IMF stabilization programs
- international capital mobility, financial stability, and banking regulation