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FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg
Chair of Economic Policy

Summer Term 2026

Seminar Applied Economic Policy:

Topics in Applied Microeconomics

This seminar covers various topics in political economy and applied microeconomics. Students get in touch with up-to-date research in these fields and learn how to deal with high-quality contributions to the respective literature.

Please note that students can only participate if they have successfully completed the module *Introduction to Econometrics* (or an equivalent module).

The seminar has two consecutive parts. **In the first part, students write a thesis (about 15 pages)** under the guidance of their advisor. The thesis covers one of the seminar topics and analyzes in depth one recent contribution to the literature. While writing their thesis, participating students are expected to search for additional literature and work independently on their topic. Advisors provide close guidance during this process. **The second part consists of a blocked seminar on June 30 and July 1, 2026, where the participating students present their theses.** Before preparing their presentations, supervisors will provide students with detailed feedback on their thesis.

To express your interest, please submit the registration form to *celina.hoegn@fau.de* before April 6, 2026. Please note that the maximum number of participants is 9 students. The deadline for submitting the seminar theses is June 7, 2026. We will have a short introduction over Zoom on April 13, 2026, at 4pm.

List of Topics

1. **International Differences in Preferences for Redistribution**
   How much inequality is acceptable? People tend to give very different answers to this important question. We want to understand if there are systematic cross-country differences in how people think about inequality and redistribution.
   – Literature: Almas, I., Cappelen, A., Tungodden, B. (2020): Cutthroat Capitalism versus Cuddly Socialism: Are Americans More Meritocratic and Efficiency-Seeking than Scandinavians? *Journal of Political Economy* 128, 1553-88.

2. **Does Diversity Matter for Health?**
   People often interact with others when making important choices. For instance, patients interact with doctors when seeking advice in terms of health. We want to understand if characteristics like race play a role in these situations. If yes, why is this?
   – Literature: Alsan, M., Garrick, O., Graziani, G. (2019): Does Diversity Matter for Health? Experimental Evidence from Oakland. *American Economic Review* 109, 4071-4111.

3. **Temperature and Performance**
   What are the effects of heat exposure on high-stakes assessments? Does performance increase or decrease under higher temperatures? The study also examines potential impacts on longer-term educational attainment. What are the findings? How do teachers respond to temperature fluctuations?
   – Literature: Park, R. J. (2022). Hot Temperature and High-stakes Performance. *Journal of Human Resources*, 57(2), 400-434.

4. **Too Hot or Too Cold to Study?**
   How does temperature affect student time allocation? In particular, do students substitute studying with other activities when temperatures are unusually high or low? What are the differences between students in college and those in school? What are the consequences of such changes in time allocation and why do they matter from an economic perspective?
   – Literature: Alberto, I. C., Jiao, Y., & Zhang, X. (2021). Too Hot or Too Cold to Study? The Effect of Temperature on Student Time Allocation. *Economics of Education Review*, 84, 102152.

5. **Gender Composition in STEM**
   What are gender peer effects in higher education. For instance, can gender composition of doctoral programs influence the duration, rate of completion and dropout rates of female PhD students. If so, why could that be? Why should one care about female representation in science?
   – Literature: Bostwick, V. K., and Weinberg, B. A. (2022): Nevertheless she Persisted? Gender Peer Effects in Doctoral STEM Programs. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 40, 397-436.

6. **Team Gender Compositions and Willingness to Lead**
   Explain the role of the team gender composition on subjects' willingness to lead. Does the team gender composition make a difference for females' and males' willingness to act as team leader? If the team gender composition makes a difference, why is this?
   – Literature: Born, A., E. Ranehill, and A. Sandberg (2022): Gender and Willingness to Lead: Does the Gender Composition of Teams Matter?, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 104, 259-275.

7. **Gender Differences in Leadership**
   Are there gender differences in team leadership. For instance, is it true that females have a lower willingness to act as team leaders relative to males? If such a gender difference exists, is it innate, or rather socially acquired (i.e., do females "learn" over time that they are not supposed to lead, or that others do not trust their leadership)? If females are less willing to lead, why is this, and what can be done about it?
   – Literature: Alan, S., S. Ertac, E. Kubilay, and G. Loranth (2020): Understanding Gender Differences in Leadership, *Economic Journal* 130, 263-289.

8. **Violence Against Women at Work**
   Workplace violence is a well-documented phenomenon, yet evidence on its economic consequences for victims, perpetrators, and firms remains limited. What role do power differences

play, particularly between male and female colleagues? Can management mitigate these negative effects? If so, how – and what types of management are most effective in doing so?
– Literature: Adams-Prassl, A., Huttunen, K., Nix, E., & Zhang, N. (2024). Violence Against Women at Work. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 139(2), 937-991.

9. **Exposure and Attitudes about Gender**
Can gender stereotypes be changed when males are exposed to females. Is there a gap in gender attitudes about mixed-gender teams, sharing housework and female leadership? What attitudes can be changed by workplace exposure? Why should we care economically about female integration in the workplace?
– Literature: Dahl, G. B., Kotsadam, A., and Rooth, D. O. (2021): Does Integration Change Gender Attitudes? The Effect of Randomly Assigning Women to Traditionally Male Teams. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136, 987-1030.