Participants:

Please register for this course on Ilias before TBA.

General orientation and background reading:

Students work on one of the specific papers listed below. These papers will be assigned during the introductory session. There will be one paper per student. While students who work on the same topic are encouraged to interact, they will be held responsible for their own thesis only. Your thesis should demonstrate that you

- have full understanding of what is going on in the paper (by explaining it clearly and efficiently)
- are able to place the issue in a broader (policy) context.

Note: a good thesis starts with a well-defined research/policy question. It may also present some small modification to the treatment that you find in the original articles. This is, however, not necessary to obtain an excellent grade.

To ensure that all students are able to understand the paper, I assume that they have read the following paper well in advance of the seminar (in the winter holidays):


This paper reviews the current understanding of the reasons that drive economic fluctuations (macroeconomic shocks). It begins with an illustration of the problem of identifying macroeconomic shocks, followed by an overview of the many recent innovations for identifying shocks.

It may help you to provide a context for the more in-depth analysis which you’ll carry out by focusing on specific research papers (listed below). Furthermore, it should provide a common ground for our discussions during the seminar. However, you are not supposed to deal with it in detail in your Thesis!

Time Schedule

Introductory session: TBA. In this session, the topics will be characterized briefly in terms of content and methodology. You will also be informed about the organizational details and on the formal requirements for your thesis and presentation. We will then assign thesis topics to students, taking into account your background and trying to accommodate your preferences.

Two to four weeks after the introductory session, you will have to submit a preliminary outline of your thesis.

Presentation sessions: TBA

Your presentations will be based on a first and preliminary draft of your thesis. You will have to turn in both, the presentation and the preliminary draft of your thesis. During and after the presentation
sessions, you will receive feedback. You will subsequently be given further time to take this feedback into account when finalizing your thesis.

Notes regarding the presentation
- Duration of presentation 30 minutes, including time for clarification questions
- Style: you may use powerpoint or pdf format
- Note: your presentation should not be longer than 20 slides, it may well be shorter
- Time for discussion of results: 10 minutes
- Submit your slides in pdf format by TBA, via Email (also include your preliminary draft)
- The presentation is not graded, but depending on its quality you may receive more or less useful feedback

Deadline for the final version: TBA
This adds up to a total of 14 weeks to work on your thesis, which is explained as follows. The thesis earns you **12 ECTS**, which is 2/5 of a semester work load (30 ECTS). Our regulation requires that you be given 10 weeks to work on your thesis. The additional time reflects the fact that you will have to do another 3/5 of the semester workload in other courses at the same time.

**Style of thesis**
- Length of the thesis must not exceed 20 pages (excluding references and appendix)
- Font: 12-point serif font (e.g. Times New Roman), 1.5 spacing
- Language: English
- Title page must include your name, student ID (Matrikelnummer) and your Email.
- Citation: please apply consistent rules and be sure to cite all sources that you use
- Figures: Key figures should be placed in the main part of the paper; supplementary figures may be placed in the appendix.
- Your introduction should state as well as motivate the research question that you pursue in your paper
- Be explicit on what is your view and the view of the paper you are discussing.
- The conclusion section should offer a brief summary of what you have done and the results you have obtained, it should not bring new subjects.
Topics (preliminary)

I. The macroeconomic effects of uncertainty

II. The aggregate effects of tax policy shocks

III. Oil price shocks and the macroeconomy

IV. Technology and the business cycle

V. Consequences of government spending shocks