Instructor: Stephen Wu
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Course Description and Goals:
This course will study issues in the economics of higher education. Topics will include the financing of higher education, determinants of tuition costs, trends in admissions policies, determinants of academic success at college, and economic returns to higher education. A primary goal of this course is to apply economic concepts to current issues in higher education policy. This course will engage you with several of the educational goals that Hamilton promotes, particularly intellectual curiosity and flexibility (examining issues in depth from a variety of perspectives, and having the courage to revise beliefs and outlooks in light of new evidence), analytic discernment (analyzing information, arguments, ideas, and views quantitatively), disciplinary practice (engaging in the focused and sustained practice of economic analysis), creativity (imagining and developing original ideas to solve problems resourcefully), communication and expression (class discussions, oral presentation, and writing a policy paper), and ethical, informed and engaged citizenship (developing an awareness of the challenges and responsibilities of local, national and global citizenship).

Course Expectations:
I expect students to come to all class meetings and to be on time. There is no textbook for the class; readings will be comprised of academic journal articles and parts of three books (all posted on Blackboard). I may also supplement these readings with current news stories and policy briefs. Please have the assigned reading finished prior to the class period that we will be discussing it. Failure to have readings done by that class period will make discussion less beneficial to you, and to the class as a whole. You will have one midterm exam, one final exam, one paper, and several empirical lab assignments. Each of you will! also be responsible for giving an oral presentation on one of the articles and to provide feedback on other student presentations. I will give more details about the paper, presentation, and lab assignments as we go through the semester. I am also asking you to attend a discussion and panel on Thursday March 12 by Gregory Mankiw (Harvard) and Christina Romer (UC-Berkeley), two former chairs of the Council of Economic Advisors. There will be a discussion with our class between 4-5pm and there will be a public lecture/panel at 7pm. Finally, I am recommending you attend a panel discussion on affirmative action on Wednesday January 29 at 7pm.

Resources:
You are required to visit the Oral Communication Center at least two days prior to your presentation. The feedback you receive will be helpful in improving your presentation. You are also required to visit the Writing Center at least two days in advance of turning in your policy paper. You must provide documentation of your visit to the Oral Communication Center to receive credit for your presentation and documentation of your Writing Center appointment to receive credit for your paper. I recommend that you set up these appointments well in advance because the centers can get very busy in the middle and latter part of the semester.

Students with Disabilities:
Hamilton College will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation(s) and would like to make a formal request for this course, please discuss it with me during the first two weeks of class. You will need to provide Allen Harrison, Associate Dean of Students (Elihu Root House; ext. 4021) with appropriate documentation of your disability. All discussions will remain confidential.

Presentation: 2/13-4/23 (sign-ups will be through a Doodle poll)
Paper: Due Monday 5/5 (via e-mail)
Midterm Exam: Thursday 3/5 (in class)
Final Exam: Thursday 5/14 (7-10pm)
Course Outline: (Articles in bold are ones for student presentations)

Introduction to General Issues in Higher Education
1/21: Introduction; Clotfelter (1999)

Tuition and Financing of Higher Education
1/30: Guest speaker: Karen Leach, VP for Finance at Hamilton College

College Admissions
2/27: Early Admissions: “The Early Admissions Game” (Intro, Chapter 1)
3/3: Guest speaker: Monica Inzer, VP for Enrollment Management at Hamilton College
3/5: Midterm Exam
3/12: Mankiw and Romer visit (4pm discussion with class, 7pm public lecture/panel)

College Athletics
3/31: Athletics and Outcomes: Shulman and Bowen (2001) “The Game of Life” (Chapters 1,2,7,12)

Determinants of College Performance
4/7: Pre-Matriculation characteristics: Betts and Morrell (1999)
4/14: Instructor characteristics: Carrell and West (2010)

Returns to Higher Education

Faculty Issues

Grading:
Participation/Feedback 5%
Presentation 15%
Labs 15%
Paper 20%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 25%