

SYLLABUS, ECO 6716

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Required Texts

We are semi-using three books: Gerber, *International Economics* 6e, Cavusgil, Knight, Reisenberger, *International Business* 3e, and Cruse, *Lies, Bribes, & Peril*, 1e. Now I think it is a reasonable question why I said we are “semi-using”. And I also think it’s another reasonable question we use (or, actually, semi-use) three books. So, let me answer the second question first. One potential answer is because I am unable to reach a decision. Alternatively, another answer is because no one book had what I want to cover. Let’s assume the last answer is correct. The first book by Gerber is an economics textbook. Obviously I am prone to like the book because I am an economist. But for this course I am pretending that I am not an economist (at least for most of the class) because I do not think you need or even want a course in economics. However I do want to cover some material that will give us a strong foundation for understanding international trade. I think this sort of background is very useful in helping categorize and shape our thinking about international business. The second book by Cavusgil, *et. al.*, I like because it covers a lot of information specifically about international business. I lost track of how many international business books I looked at—it had to be at least 15. Most I did not like at all. But there was a lot I liked about this book. Is it perfect? Of course not. But I think it is the best of the lot. The last book by Cruse I read on my own a couple of years ago because it looked interesting. I thought that the book presented a real “hands-on” view of international business, so I was really eager to use it for our class. I don’t like the comments in the book about “You will never hear this in an MBA class,” both because they are now false (!!) but also because I think the author does miss some of the forest for the trees he describes. But those trees are really interesting. I think this is a book you will read for pleasure, just as I did.

OK, now to the first question: I said “semi-using.” What I mean by that is that I really couldn’t find any book that covers the material I want to talk about. So in a very real sense what is important will be my lectures and your notes. What this means is that if you will miss a class, make sure that a classmate gives you a copy of his or her notes.

Class Goal

My over-riding objective for this class is to talk about international economics *and* international business. My over-riding goal is to make this class useful. I am highly interested in whether or not I succeeded in attaining this goal. This will be the second time I have taught this course. The first time, on the final exam I asked the students what material they thought was the most useful. I told them that they would credit for the question no matter what they said as long as they told me what they thought was most important. (Incidentally, the fact that I did this for my first class is perhaps a strong indicator that I may well be doing it for my second class. Oh wait a minute—that's you!) I was surprised when the topic that got the most "votes" was the economics. So I have re-ordered and re-adjusted the course to put the economics first.

Class Web Page

Plan on becoming acquainted with the class web page. In fact, plan on not only becoming acquainted, plan on it becoming almost your best friend! To get to the class web page, go to <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> and login to E-Learning with your Gatorlink username and password.

Class Web Page Problems

Will everything work out correctly so that you get to the class web page with no problems? Perhaps. Perhaps also I shall exercise and lose 15 pounds this semester, as well as eat a plethora of healthy leafy green vegetables. Now, you can't do anything about my exercising or dining habits. But if you encounter an error in trying to access either the class web page or the lectures, here is a valuable link for you:

http://notes.cba.ufl.edu/cbahelp.nsf/request_grad?OpenForm

<http://warrington.ufl.edu/itsp/techservices/students.asp>

What is this link? It is a link to the TAC...aka "Technology Assistance Center." I cannot help with any of the technical issues. But the computer technicians can help—and the feedback I get from the students is that they are a *lot* of help! So, if you have a problem, DO NOT email me. Every semester I have students email me about a problem. All they are doing is to 1) admit that they haven't bothered to read this syllabus, which surely does not endear them to me, and 2) delay resolution of their problem because I can do nothing. So, rather than email me, use the link I've given you to ask the people who know what to do for help. Indeed, I've bookmarked the link—I suggest you do likewise! In other words: SAVE THIS LINK. IT IS USEFUL!!

Material Covered in Class

Look at the last page for the schedule. The last page has the tentative schedule for the class. Last year I got behind and never caught up. I felt bad about that. The class did not. In truth, neither did I because I was behind because the class was asking good questions.

You'll see that if you want to read along in the recommended books, I have suggested chapters. You'll notice that one of the sessions has an entire book assigned. You might bemoan that fact. But this book is fun and it is easy reading. You will probably really like that book. Of course, I also think you will be delighted by the economics book, so perhaps I am not an outstanding judge of what your preferences...

Guest Speaker

I am working on arranging for a guest speaker for the class. I have two possibilities and it will be great if either one can make the class. I will keep you appraised as the semester progresses. But in the meanwhile you can join with me by hoping that at least one can attend.

Assignments

Your grade will be based on two factors: a Group Project and a Final Exam. This is your last term in the program. So I am trying to accomplish two goals with the group project. The first goal is to not kill you with the project. I presume it would be really bad form to have a bunch of my students dropping dead from the workload in their very last semester. The second goal, however, is to allow you to really make use of what you have learned in the program. So, let me describe what the projects entail:

Group Project

Your team will be responsible for creating a business plan. What I have in mind is that you all work for the same company and your superiors in this company have assigned your group as a team to brainstorm a new international project. They want a report from your group suggesting a nation and a product or products that your company can profitably sell in this nation. This assignment is total "blue sky." You can select an actual business or make one up. You have to use your creativity and what you have learned in your courses to convince me that your plan will be profitable. In order to judge whether your proposal will be profitable, you must give me some economic data and background for the country. You have to tell me how you plan to market and produce the product, that is, establish a partnership with a local firm or whatever. (If you do plan on establishing a partnership, you do not need to research which firm you want as your partner, though if you do that would be good.) Tell me why you selected

this method of marketing/production. You could present options about how you might market/produce the product and tell me what might lead you to favor one over the others. Presumably you may have some ideas of how to advertise the product—what are they? You might estimate some cost data and the price range for which you will sell the product. You could include a spreadsheet...or not. It's your choice. I think that Chapters 14, 15, and 16 in Cavusgil *et. al.* would be *very* valuable chapters to read before plunging into this project. When this report is due, the class will be rapidly drawing to a close. I certainly do *not* want your last memories of the class to be a series of 3 AM nights spent hard at work researching a project. So keep this report to, say 15 to 20 pages long. That way you will not have memories of being up until 3 AM creating the report nor will I have memories of being up until 3 AM grading it. Which reminds me, I also expect the report will not be written in a tiny, 4 point font with incredibly small margins. ☺

Grading of the Project

The grading scale for the project will be 1 to 25. But I really plan on grading most projects 18 or higher. (If anyone gets anything lower than a 12, I grieve for the trees and/or electrons that were used to create the project.) The grade will be based on the answers and on the writing of the report. Speaking with business people, I have come to the conclusion that clear and grammatically correct writing is highly valued by them. Hence it shall be equally highly valued by me. The group project is due by the weekend indicated in the schedule. I will accept late projects but the score will be lowered by 3 points per day, down to a minimum of 0. (That is, I am not so cruel as to give any group a -5 as a grade....) Please hand in two copies of the report on Saturday or Sunday of the weekend in which they are due. I have asked another instructor (sadly, Not Prof. Rossi) here at UF to help me grade these projects. She and I will grade them separately and will separately provide some feedback. Then she and I will meet to discuss out assessments of the projects. From this meeting I will determine the final grade.

Final Exam

A final exam will be given on the last meeting. It will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and longer answer questions. Is the final going to a challenging endeavor, the last 50 foot hurdle you must clear before you graduate? If it is, both you and I will be surprised! The final exam will be 1 hour and, aside from congratulations, will be the only thing we do on the last day. The final will be worth 25 points.

Grades

In summary here are the possible points:

Group projects	25 points
Final exam	<u>25 points</u>
Total	50 points

I wish I was completely unconstrained in my grading scale but the MBA program applies a crucial and important limitation: The average grade in the class can be no higher than a 3.50, which means the average grade must be between an A- and a B+. So, keeping that in mind, I plan to assign the top 25% of the class A's, the second 25% A-'s, the third 25 B+'s, and the bottom 25% B's. If someone does significantly poorer than the remainder of the class, I *will* give lower grades, such as a C. Of course, in that case, I can boost other students' grades. So, let me ask: Does anyone want to volunteer to get a low grade so that some other well deserving students can have their grades boosted?

Tentative Course Schedule

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General topic	Readings/Chapters	Project
Meeting 1 (July 30) International Trade Background	Gerber: Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 Cavusgil: Chapter 8	
Meetings 2 and 3 (August 19, 20) International Finance	Cavusgil: Chapters 2, 4, 5	
Meetings 4 and 5 (September 9, 10) International Finance	Cavusgil: Chapters 2, 4, 5	
Meetings 6 and 7 (October 7, 8) Institutions and Laws	Gerber: Chapter 2 Cavusgil: Chapters 7, 11 Cruse: Entire book	Project due
Meeting 8 (October 28)	Exam	