SENIOR THESIS GRADING RUBRIC

STUDENT: _____ SUM:_____ LETTER GRADE_____ FAC. MBR._____

COMMENTS:

INITIAL CLAIM: *the introduction of the thesis, its relevance and a brief indication of how you are planning to proceed in answering the questions.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
No clear thesis	Clear, well-focused thesis Some basic idea of why the question is interesting and why it is topic appropriate for economic analysis.	Clear well-focused thesis Convinces the reader of the economic importance of the issue Clearly demonstrates the originality of the work and places it within the context of the economic literature

BACKING: *the recognition and understanding of previous, relevant work in the area.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
Little or no reference to articles in professional journals. References are not used as an integral part of the argument, or inappropriate references are used.	*Some* reference to articles in professional journals. References are used to strengthen and focus the argument.	Numerous references are made to articles in professional journals and/or other original sources. Effectively appeals to the literature at ALL stages of the argument

THEORY: *the use of economic reasoning as the basis for the argument.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
States but does not clearly explain how the theory is used to analyze the issue at hand; the espoused theory is not central to the argument. Given the context of the argument, someone else's theory is *improperly* applied.	Given the context of the argument, someone else's theory is *correctly* applied. Economic reasoning is clearly and logically explained. Where possible, some use of mathematical symbolism or graphs to explain theory.	Consistently uses economic concepts and terms when explaining reasoning. Extensive and effective use of symbolism and graphs to illuminate theory where appropriate. *Creates* a *useful* extension to someone else's theory, and *correctly* applies it, given the context of the argument or combines multiple (existing) theories in an original and enlightening way. Considers and addresses specific assumptions of the argument.

EMPIRICAL EVALUATION: *"Empirical" simply refers to evidence that comes from experience or experiments. Data can be thought of as any bit of evidence (e.g., historical, textual, national statistics, experimental results, computer-generated simulations, etc.). These data (loosely defined) must be used to evaluate the argument in a convincing, appropriate way.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
Use either no evidence or only anecdotal evidence to evaluate the thesis. Uses data only for descriptive purposes. Inferential statistics or computer simulations are used in an inappropriate manner in order to evaluate the thesis, or may be applied correctly but with no clear explanation (or an incorrect explanation) of the results.. In the case of non-numerically-driven studies, appeals to historical or philosophical evidence are not applied at all, are applied incorrectly, or if applied correctly, are inadequately explained.	Uses data or other historical evidence to evaluate the thesis. Makes explicit use of numerical estimates (mean, median, standard deviation), graphical analysis (scatter plots, line graphs, and box plots), to describe and justify the use of data. If the data is numerical, basic inferential statistics (hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, OLS regressions, etc.) are applied correctly and adequately explained. In the instance where advanced econometric techniques are used, they are inappropriately applied and/or not adequately explained. In the case of non-numerically-driven studies, appropriate references to historical evidence and/or well-established philosophical positions are used for evaluation, but are applied in a shallow or simplistic manner.	Demonstrates that the empirical evaluation, numerical or historical, is linked directly to the theory or claim. Advanced econometric techniques are used, are adequately explained, and appropriately applied. Demonstrates serious reflection on the process by investigating the underlying assumptions of the models applied in order to determine the robustness of the results. In the case of a historical or philosophical work, where numerical evidence is either not appropriate or not available, extensive appeals to historical evidence and/or philosophical justification are evident and are applied in a sophisticated and creative manner in support of the hypotheses being tested. Further, in the case of non-numerically-driven studies, the same careful consideration of alternative positions or conclusions is evident; just as is expected in numerically-driven work

REVISED CLAIM and SUMMARY: *the understanding of one's results and reflection on the implications thereof.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
A *vague* and/or *ambiguous* summary of the argument's conclusion. This conclusion has a *weak* connection to the argument's theory and data.	A *well-stated* summary of the argument's conclusion that is *explicitly* and *strongly* connected to the argument's theory and data. Some reflection on the implications of the results and possible unexplored issues.	Provocative reflection upon the implications of the conclusion with interesting new questions to be explored. Clearly understands the relationship between the paper's conclusions and previous work. Places results into the broader context of the literature or policy-making process.

OVERALL QUALITY OF WRITING: *the overall quality of the paper's organization, style, and grammar.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
Poorly organized; the argument is difficult to follow. Fails to maintain focus throughout the argument. Unacceptable grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Clear organization; the argument is easy to follow. Good job maintaining focus throughout. Acceptable grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Well-organized and easy to follow. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Grading: *We score each of the 6 components on a 1.0 to 5.0 scale, using increments of 0.5 only (e.g.1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.). When you tally up your total score, you will report your score and grade to your grading chair using the following:*

A .... **>=24.5 and above**
A-....... **>=23<24.5**
B+ ...... **>=21.5<23**
B .... **>=20<21.5**
B- ...... **>=18.5<20**
C+ ...... **>=17<18.5**
C .... **>=15.5<17**
C- ...... **>=14<15.5**
D+ ...... **>=12.5<14**
D........ **>=11<12.5**
F .... **>= 6<10**

Notes:

There is no D-s.

If the grading committee is within 6 points there is consistency. If there is not consistency, the thesis grading committee must reevaluate the thesis and try to come to an agreement on the scoring. When consistency is achieved, the 3 grades are averaged (i.e., using arithmetic mean) to determine the final grade. If no consistency can be achieved, all members of the department will read the thesis and the grade will be the average of all department members.