

**Economics 2535**  
**Advanced Topics in International Trade:**  
**Firms and International Trade, and Other Topics**  
**Spring 2024**

**Instructors:** Pol Antràs (Littauer 210) and Marc Melitz (Littauer 215)

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**Course Website:** <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/115795>

**Classroom and Time:** M-17; Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:45AM

**Office Hours:** Email us to arrange a meeting

**Course Description**

This course focuses on a firm-level approach to the study of international trade and on selected topics in trade. In the first part of the course, we will discuss theoretical and empirical studies of the decisions to export and invest abroad, as well as recent developments at the intersection of the theory of international trade and the theory of the firm. The last part of the course will cover other topics in international trade which have been and are featuring prominently in the recent trade literature.

This course is targeted to second-year Ph.D. students in economics. Students are expected to have completed first-year micro and macro theory courses (Economics 2010a-b or equivalent), as well as an introductory graduate course in International Trade (Economics 2530a or equivalent).

**Requirements**

If you are registered for this course, you will need to complete the following assignments:

1. Whenever coverage of a different paper begins, on the evening before each class, you must send both instructors an email with some comments on one of the papers that will be discussed in detail during the class (please write Econ 2535 in the subject, add your comments in the body of the email and DO NOT include attachments). The email should be short (about 400-500 words), but must briefly address the following points:
  - Why is the paper important (or why not)?
  - A description of the main features that best summarize the model.
  - What you liked – or did not like – about the paper.
  - What parts of the paper were not clear or need further explanations.
2. You must write 2 referee reports on papers that are on the syllabus (but not one of the survey articles). If you feel strongly about a paper that falls into the topics covered in class but is not on the reading list, you may write a report on that paper with our prior approval. You should also refrain from picking one of the papers that are covered in detail in class (please see us if you feel strongly about commenting on one of these papers). The referee report should be (approximately) 3-4 pages double-spaced. The first paragraph(s) should summarize the paper for the editor and describe the main features of the paper as well as its contributions to the

existing (or subsequent) literature. The report should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the paper – contrasting it to others in the literature as necessary. You should describe how the authors could address the weaknesses (if possible) and give your recommendations for changes that would strengthen or enhance the paper.

3. You must complete two problem sets designed to familiarize you with the specifics of some the empirical papers we will cover.
4. You must prepare a brief (30-45 minute) presentation on a new project related to the topics in the course. You are not expected to present a finished draft, but rather an idea and a brief outline of how that idea could be worked out. The presentation will take place the last week of class, after which you will have a week to write up a (3-5 page-long) proposal.
5. You are expected to participate in class discussion.

### **Grading and Deadlines**

The two referee reports will jointly carry a weight of 25% in the final grade. The problem sets will jointly constitute another 25% of the grade. The class presentation and written proposal will account for 35% of the grade, with class participation and summary emails contributing the remaining 15%. One of the referee reports will be due before the end of February, and the second one will be due before the end of March. This will ensure that April can be devoted to preparing the final presentation. There will be no final exam.

### **Reading List**

Available at <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/128084/pages/readings>