Topics in Spatial and Urban Economics: An Introduction

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First Objective: Learning

- ▶ How many of you have taken an undergraduate or master level course in urban economics or political economy? The textbook will provide a good introduction to the field.
- ▶ I define urban economics broadly which includes housing economics and overlaps with trade, the economics of education and state & local public finance.
- ▶ I will typically assign one paper per class that you should read prior to coming to class.
- ▶ The syllabus and the textbook contain additional suggested reading material that you may want to explore at your own leisure.

Second Objective: Evaluating & Presenting

▶ You will learn how to present and evaluate research largely by giving an in-class presentation of an assigned paper and by participating in discussions.

▶ There are three questions that you should ask yourself when you read and evaluate research:

    ▶ Has the research been executed competently or are there some major flaws in the analysis?

    ▶ Are the main (empirical) results credible?

    ▶ What have we learnt form the analysis that we did not know before?

▶ Please pick a paper by next week that you like to present in class.

▶ Presentations will be on April 24 and 29.

Third Objective: Producing Research

- ▶ You will start working on your own research.
- ▶ There are three questions that you need to ask yourself when you work on your research project:
  - ▶ Is the idea interesting and new?
  - ▶ Are there any new methodological contributions?
  - ▶ Are the data used in the analysis innovative and insightful?
- ▶ You need to be able to answer, at least, one of these questions affirmatively for your research to be promising.
- ▶ A five page research proposal is due on May 1.

Fourth Objective: Moving forward

- ▶ Should you consider writing a dissertation in Urban or Real Estate Economics?
- ▶ You need to start thinking about forming a dissertation committee. Who will be your primary advisors? You need at least two.
- ▶ Econ Department: Camilo Castillo (Transportation), Francesco Agostinelli (Education), Margaux Lufflade (Education), Petra Todd (Education), Jin Liu (Trade).
- ▶ Wharton Real Estate: Joe Gyouko, Gilles Duranton, Fernando Ferreira, Ben Keys, Jessie Handbury, Maisy Wong, Mariaflavia Harari, Sophie Calder-Wang.
- ▶ Philly Fed: Jeff Lin, Jeff Brinkman, Chris Severen, Kyle Mangum, Bryan Stuart.
- ▶ Sociology & Criminology: Charles Loeffler, John McDonald.