

**BW37 Seminar:**  
**“Current topics in industrial economics  
and competition policy”**  
**Summer semester 2023**  
**Jun.-Prof. Dr. Biliana Yontcheva**



**Content:**

In this course, we will discuss current topics in industrial economics, with the aim of connecting academic research with contemporary policy issues. In the first block, we will elaborate on the role of growing market concentration in shaping global markets. We will discuss the drivers of rising market power and the potential policies to mitigate its negative consequences. In the second block, we will investigate the impact of inflation on firm competition. We will evaluate how market concentration affects the pass-through of cost shocks to consumers. In addition, we will look at the role of competition and taxation policy during periods of inflation and attempt to analyze the pros and cons of potential interventions in light of the current energy price crisis. In the third block, we will turn to the role of competition policy in dealing with environmental concerns. In particular, we will discuss antitrust issues around firm cooperation to reach sustainability goals. In the final block, we will look at the impact of big-data and the use of pricing algorithms on competition between firms.

**Target group:**

This course is aimed at Bachelor students specializing in Economics or Business Administration.

**Organization:**

An introductory lecture will be held at the beginning of the semester (05.04.2023 at 14:30 in Room 24.21 - 2421.01.85). Interested students can then contact the lecturer in order to sign up for a specific presentation topic by the end of April. The final presentations will take place in June (the date will be selected based on lecturer and student availability). To complete the course, students need to write a short term paper. The deadline for submission of term papers is the 15th of August 2023.

**Prerequisites:**

Students attending the lecture should have completed at least one introductory econometrics course and one microeconomics course during their studies.

**Language:**

The course will be conducted in English (the literature and presentations will be in English; term papers will be accepted in both German and English).

**Examination process:**

Short term paper (70%), presentation (30%).

**Workload:**

3 SWS (6 ECTS)

**Seminar paper topics and literature:** Specific papers and topics will be discussed and assigned during the introductory part of the course. A list of possible presentation topics, together with suggested literature, is provided below.

***Block 1: Growth in firm concentration***

De Loecker, J., Eeckhout, J., & Unger, G. (2020). The rise of market power and the macroeconomic implications. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 135(2), 561-644.

Koltay, G., Lorincz, S., & Valletti, T. M. (2022). Concentration and competition: Evidence from Europe and implications for policy. *CEPR Working Paper No. 9640* Available at SSRN: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4069206](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4069206)

***Block 2: Inflation, market power and consumer welfare***

Bräuning, F., Fillat, J. & Joaquim, G. (2023) Cost-Price Relationships in a Concentrated Economy. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4142715>

Jaravel, X., & O’Connell, M. (2020). Real-time price indices: Inflation spike and falling product variety during the Great Lockdown. *Journal of Public Economics*, 191, 104270.

Jaravel, X. (2019). The unequal gains from product innovations: Evidence from the us retail sector. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(2), 715-783.

Montag, F., Sagimuldina, A., & Schnitzer, M. (2021). Does tax policy work when consumers have imperfect price information? Theory and evidence.

***Block 3: Competition and investment in sustainable technologies***

Ale-Chilet, J., Chen, C., Li, J. & Reynaert, M. (2021). Colluding Against Environmental Regulation, *TSE Working Paper* n. 21-1204.

Schinkel, M. P., & Spiegel, Y. (2017). Can Collusion Promote Sustainable Consumption and Production?, *International Journal of Industrial Organization* 53, 371–398.

***Block 4: Competition and digitization***

Schwalbe, U. (2018) Algorithms, machine learning and collusion, *Journal of Competition Law & Economics*, 14(4), 568–607.

Mancini, J. (2020). Abuse of Dominance in Digital Markets: OECD Background Paper. Available at SSRN 3862453.

**Contacts:**

If you have further questions, please send an e-mail to [yontcheva@dice.hhu.de](mailto:yontcheva@dice.hhu.de). Additional information can be found on the ILIAS platform.