Below you find a list of topics for the seminar. However, it is never too early to start thinking about your Master thesis. So, if you have any (however vague) ideas about potential topics or things you would like to learn about, email them to me or come by my office hours. I welcome your suggestions – this is the best time to think about your own ideas.

**Applied Research in Immigration, Public and Labor Economics**

**Topic Area A: Labor Markets and Public Policy**

(A1) **Technological Change, Globalization and Local Labor Markets**

Recent years have seen dramatic changes in technology and competition from abroad (like India or China). How do these changes affect local labor markets and wages?


(A2) **Germany’s Hartz Reforms**

Several years, Germany substantially reformed its welfare system. While the reform has been very unpopular, it also seemed to have been quite successful in reducing unemployment.


(A3) **Germany’s Income Tax Reform of 2000 and Labor Supply Effects**

In 2000, Germany reduced its top marginal tax rates from over 50% to around 43%. The hope was that this would increase labor supply and work efforts, especially among the high-skilled. What do we know about the responsiveness of labor supply to taxes and what can we learn from the German reform?


**Topic Area B: Immigration**

(B1) **Educational performance of 2nd generation migrants in Germany**

At least since the results of the first PISA test were published in 2001, it is well known that migrants (many of them born in Germany) perform dismal in the German education system. Is this conclusion still true today and valid for other age groups than those tested in PISA? And how can we explain the low performance of migrants in the German education system?


(B2) **Educational performance of 2nd generation migrants in other European countries or North America**

This topic contrasts (or supports) the experience in Germany with those in other countries. Do migrants always perform badly in the host country’s education system? In which countries do young migrants perform relatively well? Why?


(B3) EU Enlargement and its Effects on Source or Destination Countries

The expansion of the EU has taken down the barriers to labor mobility. Some countries, most notably Germany, have delayed full labor mobility from the new EU members for several years following concerns that there would be fierce competition of cheap labor. There is no evidence yet whether these concerns were warranted and what the effects of EU enlargement on the German labor market are (or other labor markets that did not delay full labor mobility like the UK).


**Topic Area C: Careers Inside Firms**

This topic area seeks to understand careers inside firms. Some general references are:


**(C1) Careers in internal labor markets (Personnel Economics)**

Study internal careers and wage growth in firms: what determines promotions? What role does experience on a job play for promotions and wage growth?


**(C2) Gender Differences in the Workplace and the “Glass Ceiling”**

This topic studies the glass ceiling, what theory says about its existence and possible explanations for it and what the empirical literature from various countries find.

Kunze, Astrid (2011). "Why are so few Women on Top Ranks?" Unpublished Manuscript, Norwegian School of Economics.

(C3) Should we have Gender Quotas? Learning from our European Neighbors

There is currently a heated debate whether Germany should introduce a gender quota for top managers, advisory boards and politicians. What can we learn from other country’s experiences (Norway, France)?


Organizational Matters

Once you have chosen your topic, email your student id, name and most preferred and second most preferred topic to Frau Morawa (sabine.morawa@awi.uni-heidelberg.de).

The organizational meeting of the course will be held on Monday, October 29, 2012 (2-3.30 p.m). We will email you about the room.

The default language of the seminar is English. However, if all participants feel comfortable in German and there is a majority of participants with a preference for German, we can also hold the seminar in German. We will discuss that at the organizational meeting as well.

We will also discuss the requirements and what you need to do until the seminar.

If you want to get started, read the suggested references and further literature you might find in those references or from other sources.

Write up a one-page concept on what your question is, the main theoretical arguments, some main results you expect or learned about and what open questions is + a list of references.

Every one of you should come to my office hours at least once to discuss the structure and arguments of your concept and the next steps.