

J. WILLIAM AMBROSINI JR.

University of California, Davis

Department of Economics
1113 Social Sciences and Humanities
One Shields Ave
Davis, California 95616 U.S.A.

Curriculum Vitae

November 2010

Placement officer: Marianne Page	(530) 554-4940	mepage@ucdavis.edu
Placement officer: Ina Simonovska	(612) 703-2265	inasimonovska@ucdavis.edu
Placement assistant: Marilyn Dexter	(530) 752-0743	mldexter@ucdavis.edu

Personal Data

Mailing Address

Department of Economics
1113 Social Sciences and Humanities
One Shields Ave
Davis, California 95616

Contact Information

Cell: (408) 394-1434
Office: (419) 838-9656
E-mail: jambrosi@ucdavis.edu
URL: <http://ambrosini.us>

Citizenship: USA

Major Fields of Concentration

Macroeconomics, Growth, Labor, Immigration, Inequality

Education

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Year</i>
Ph.D.	Economics (expected)	University of California, Davis	2011
M.A.	Economics	University of California, Davis	2007
B.A.	Mathematics (with honors)	Humboldt State University	2005
B.S.	Business	University of California, Berkeley	1999

Dissertation

Title: "Task employment, Task wages and Income Inequality"

References

Professor Giovanni Peri (Dissertation Advisor)	(530) 554-2304	gperi@ucdavis.edu
Professor Ann Stevens	(530) 752-3034	annstevens@ucdavis.edu
Professor Pontus Rendahl	(530) 752-0741	prendahl@ucdavis.edu

(Please contact Marilyn Dexter, mldexter@ucdavis.edu, for letters of reference)

Teaching Experience

- 2009 - Present Instructor, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis, California.
Intermediate Macroeconomics and Financial Economics
- 2009 Instructor, College of the Redwoods, Eureka, California.
Principles of Macroeconomics and American Economic History
- 2005 - 2009 Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis, California.
Principles of Macroeconomics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Labor Economics, Economic Development, Econometrics and Economic History
- 2005 and 2007 Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Davis, California.
Contemporary Japanese Society and Culture

Research Experience

- 2009 - Present Research Assistant, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis, California. Research Assistant to Professor Giovanni Peri.
- 2008 - 2009 Research Assistant, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis, California. Research Assistant to Professor Chris Meissner.
- 2007 - 2008 Research Assistant, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis, California. Research Assistant to Professor Peter Lindert.

Papers

- “The task space, task wage gaps and income inequality,” job market paper.
- “Does task specific human capital exist and is it transferable?” working paper.
- “Trends in task employment and wages,” work in progress.
- “Immigrants and the Labor Market in California, 1960-2005,” (with G. Peri), Gifford Population Center, UC Davis, June 2010, not peer reviewed.
- “The Selection of Migrants and Returnees: Evidence from Romania and Implications,” (with G. Peri, K. Mayr, and D. Radu) Manuscript UC Davis, April 2010.

“Migrant and Returnee Selection: Evidence from the Mexican Family Life Survey,” (with G. Peri) work in progress.

“Migrant self-selection with a choice of multiple destinations,” work in progress.

Presentations

“The task space, task wage gaps and income inequality” at Sonoma State University (Fall 2010) and Sacramento State University (Fall 2010)

“Does task specific human capital exist and is it transferable?” at All California Labor Conference, graduate poster session (Summer 2010)

UC Davis macroeconomics brown bag (Spring 2008, Winter 2008)

UC Davis applied microeconomics brown bag (Spring 2009)

UC Davis econometrics brown bag (Spring 2009)

UC Davis theory brown bag (2007)

Honors and Awards

2009, 2011 Graduate Teaching Award

2008 Laura Perrott Mahan Fellowship

Computer Skills

Expert Perl and R; Intermediate MatLab; Beginner STATA, Mathematica, Fortran, Python and Scheme; Some C, C++ and Java

Dissertation Abstract

“The task space, task wage gaps and wage inequality” (job market paper)

This paper develops and tests a model of equilibrium task supply where such tasks are the proximate inputs to production. In the model, ex ante identical workers choose task supply and identical, competitive firms choose task demand. The model predicts that changes in task supply adjustment costs drive changes in the income distribution by creating a wedge between task wages. The key assumption of the model --- that task adjustment costs are economically significant --- is validated using methods of program evaluation from the labor literature. That quasi-experimental evidence indicates workers who are forced to make the median change in their task supply lose on average 7 log points of annual earnings over their lifetimes. Working through the mechanisms of this empirically validated model, increased task adjustment costs can explain much of the recent rise in income inequality.

“Does task specific human capital exist and is it transferable?” (working paper)

I characterize task-specific human capital as the abilities required to complete tasks performed on the job and then I define a task knowledge space where distances between jobs can be measured. To show the transferability of task-specific human capital, I use the tools of program evaluation from the applied micro literature to explore the effect of losing varying amount of task-specific human capital on displaced workers from the PSID. Not only do displaced workers who switch tasks post-displacement see substantial long-run drops in earnings, those losses in earnings are larger the more different their post-displacement job is from their pre-displacement job, with respect to the tasks performed in the job. Using common estimates of discount rates and amortizing, this loss amounts to a lifetime cost of around 7 log points of earnings per year for workers that move the median distance in task space post-displacement relative to those displaced workers that do not switch tasks. In summary, I find task-specific human capital exists and is (partially) transferable.

“Trends in task employment and wages” (work in progress)

This paper explores, quantitatively, qualitative trends in labor supply. I first construct a measure of task employment. Using these data and aggregate wage data, I develop a method to infer task wages. The main trends in these series are as follows: the American economy has become more skilled in the last five and a half decades and creative and interactive abilities have become more important relative to reasoning ability; labor has become less task specialized; since 1980, wages for interactive abilities have increased 50% relative to wages for reasoning abilities; and low wage workers haven't increased their supply of interactive skills while high wage workers have increased their supply of these abilities dramatically. To facilitate the use of these data in other applications, I discuss several methods for dimension reduction of the task space.