

Professor Julie Cullen

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## **Economics 191A: Senior Essay Seminar, Spring 2024**

### **Course goals**

This course will help you apply the tools you have learned in your core and elective coursework to do your own research (to move from being a *consumer* of research to a *producer* of research) and critically assess others' research. You will learn how to:

- present your ideas orally and in writing
- ask, research, and answer a question through empirical analysis
- listen to other people's ideas and provide useful comments/suggestions

### **Structure of the course**

This is the first quarter of a **two-quarter course sequence**. Grades are assigned for the full two-quarter sequence. By the end of the Fall quarter, you will have completed an economics academic research paper. The grade recorded at the end of the Spring quarter is IP ("in progress"). Dropping the course by the end of the sixth week in the Spring results in a grade of W. Dropping the course in the Fall quarter may result in an F (at least for the Spring).

The goal of the Spring quarter is to pose a viable research question, understand how it fits into the existing literature, obtain the data you will use, process the data so that you know which variables are available to you, and lay out a concrete plan to use the data to answer your question.

The written deliverable for the Spring is a **rough draft** that: i) poses your question, ii) explains how it relates to the existing literature, iii) describes the data and variables you will use, iv) details the estimation strategy you will use to answer your question, and v) presents any preliminary results. This draft does not have to be complete but should be structured like a standard economics research paper and have fully developed data and strategy sections. The draft should be a minimum of 4 single-spaced pages of text, with additional figures and tables.

Each of you will prepare a 15-minute **presentation** of your research project. During our last two meetings, all of us will watch your and your classmates' presentations and provide feedback.

**Attendance** at all scheduled class meetings is required (unless you have been excused in advance). This quarter, our reserved class meeting slot is **Monday 5:00-7:50pm** and our classroom is **MANDE B-153**. For any meetings that are held via zoom, the link will be made available on the canvas course website. Some weeks we will use this time to meet as a group to cover shared material or discuss your research projects. Other weeks we will use this time for one-on-one meetings. I will also be available for one-on-one meetings by appointment throughout the quarter.

Active *participation* in class is important for developing the ability to think critically.

Finally, make sure to use this opportunity to build your network. Once you have made some progress, you should *meet with faculty members* with interests related to your topic. Faculty can provide useful guidance in your research and also serve as future references.

### Tentative Schedule

Week	Dates	Activity
1	April 1	<b>Group meeting</b> Introduction to course and one another <b>Assignment By 5pm</b> Be prepared to describe your current research plan for 3-5 minutes
2	April 8	<b>Group meeting</b> Overview of UCSD library resources led by Lisa Martin (on zoom)
3	April 15	<b>Group meeting</b> Methods for identifying causal effects; Crash course in Stata <b>Assignment By 5pm</b> Read Duflo et al. (2006) pp.4-17; Watch Muralidharan “Moving Up A Gear”
4	April 22	<b>Group meeting</b> Genre analysis led by the Writing Hub <b>Assignment By 5pm</b> Submit genre analysis activity
5	April 29	<b>One-on-one meetings</b>
6	May 6	<b>One-on-one meetings</b>
7	May 13	<b>Group “hang”</b> Join for voluntary group office hours
8	May 20	<b>Group meeting</b> 1st round of presentations
9	May 27	<b>No meeting</b> Memorial Day holiday
10	June 3	<b>Group meeting</b> 2nd round of presentations
11	June 14	<b>Assignment Draft due by 5pm</b>