

191A-B: Senior Essay Seminar, Fall '09-Winter '10

These classes will help you apply the tools you have learned in your core and elective coursework to (1) do your own research (to move from being a *consumer* of research to a *producer* of research) and (2) critically assess other's research.

Goals:

- For you to learn how to present your ideas, both written and orally.
- For you to learn how to ask, research, and answer a question.
- For you to learn how to listen to other people's ideas, ask insightful questions and provide useful comments/suggestions.

Conducting a Research Project (based on Ashenfelter, Levine, Zimmerman, "Statistics and Econometrics")

1. Ask a question (and think about why the answer to your question is important).
Make sure your question is not too broad!
2. Find out who else has asked your question (or a similar one). How did they go about answering it – what were the strengths/weaknesses with their approach? Look for articles at JSTOR, NBER, Econlit, Google Scholar, Google search but add following condition "site:.edu" or "site:.gov".
3. What can you add to the literature? This is a must for a PhD in economics. GREAT if you can do this as undergrads
4. What is the answer to your question or what is the most you can conclude given your research? What avenues do you see for future research?

The Department of Economics at Princeton University requires all their undergraduate majors write a senior thesis and they have an outstanding and extensive website regarding the writing of a senior thesis. I highly recommend that you review "Senior Thesis Program Handbook at <http://www.princeton.edu/economics/undergraduate/#SIW>

An all around useful web site, created by Bill Goffe, is Resources for Economists on the Internet, at <http://www.aeaweb.org/RFE/>

Meeting other Faculty

I'd like you meet the faculty member(s) with interests most similar to your own, based on your research topic. We will talk more about this as you start working on your research topics the first few weeks of class. There are many benefits of meeting early in your project: getting helpful early guidance and possibly really getting to know one of our professors. There are also costs: you may use up a valuable visit (faculty time is very scarce) and learn information you could have easily figured out on your own.

Class Attendance

I will always be available to answer your questions during class times. I expect that you will attend at least one class session each week to discuss where you are, problems you are running into, successes you are having, questions you have for me, etc. Occasionally we will run out of class time before I have had a discussion with each of you. In this case, we will meet as soon as possible outside of class at a mutually beneficial time.

Presentations

Each of you will present your research at the end of the second quarter. Your presentations will be 20 minutes. I highly recommend that you participate in the Undergraduate Research Conference in the Spring. Not only will it be great experience for you, but only participants are eligible to win the Undergraduate Library Research Prize (1st place=\$1,000 and 2nd place=\$500).

Written Papers

A preliminary draft of your paper is due Thursday, Dec. 10th by 4:00. Your final paper must be submitted by WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17TH by 4:00. Submit final paper in both electronic form and a bound, hard copy with a clear front cover.

Course timeline

Fall Quarter 2009 (T-TH 2:00-3:30, Sequoyah Hall 231)

Week 1 Class Introduction

Oct 1 Meet at Giesel Library for presentation by Adele Barsh,
the Economics librarian (classroom is on the left as you enter)

Week 4 Revised proposal: includes at least 3 references and data you will use.
Dec. 10th Preliminary draft of paper due.

Winter Quarter 2010 (TBA)

Week 4 Second draft of the paper due at the end of week 4.
You will give one copy to me and one to a classmate to read. Choose
a partner and exchange papers. We will meet in groups of three to discuss
my comments and your partner's comments. I will assign meeting times

Week 5 Meetings to exchange comments

Week 10 Presentations

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17th : Submit final paper both in electronic form and a
bound, hard copy with a clear front cover.**