

LABOR ECONOMICS 250B
Winter 2021
Professors Eli Berman and Gordon Dahl

Time: Fridays, 9:00-11:50 AM

Gordon will be teaching Jan. 8, Jan. 15, Jan. 22, Jan. 29, and Feb. 5. Eli will be teaching Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26, Mar. 5, and Mar. 12.

Office Hours: Each professor will hold office hours during the weeks he or she is teaching and will be available for meetings outside those weeks by appointment. Students can make appointments outside professors' "teaching weeks" via email.

Eli Berman elib@ucsd.edu

Regular office hours TBA

Gordon Dahl gdahl@ucsd.edu

Regular office hours Tuesdays starting at 5:00 pm
zoom link: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/8582165320>

Course Content: The course content and the reading lists will be provided as separate documents by each instructor.

Assignments and Grading

1. Referee report

Students will prepare a referee report on a paper of their choosing. This referee report should be between 2 and 5 pages long. A typical report briefly summarizes the main contribution, talks about how the paper fits into the existing literature, explains what the paper does well, points out weaknesses and concerns, and offers suggestions for improvement.

Your referee report should also include a short one or two paragraph "cover letter" to the editor, which clearly indicates whether you think the paper should be published or not. You should choose the journal that you are refereeing for, such as the AER, ReStat, or JHR. Your ultimate recommendation will of course reflect the quality of the journal.

A good resource for writing a referee report can be found in a recent piece appearing in the Journal of Economic Perspectives titled "How to Write an Effective Referee Report and Improve the Scientific Process" (Berk, Harvey, and Hirschleifer, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2017).

The paper you choose should be unpublished, and preferably an NBER or similar quality working paper. You must get approval for the paper you'd like to present in advance. You can get approval by emailing two options of potential papers (with links or attached pdfs) to Gordon or Eli, depending on which week you sign up to present your referee report to the class.

2. Paper presentation

Students will provide a presentation on the paper they referee. The presentation should take roughly 15 minutes, so the presentation needs to be focused. Please sign up for a day to present at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SuC3rHsw72XTVy-9iDYWge6pB-bn5NdZ-KDOv00PxRE/edit?usp=sharing>

3. Grant Proposal

Students will write up a grant proposal for a fictitious funding agency. The purpose of the proposal is to convince the agency that your idea is worth funding, but the idea can be preliminary and you do not necessarily have to have many results yet. This should be a new idea, and not one that you have used for a previous class.

Format of Fellowship Proposal:

Proposals should not exceed 15 pages and can be shorter. Twelve-point, Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1-inch margins are required.

Required elements of the proposal include:

1. Abstract describing the project purpose, data, and methods [max 1 page].
2. Description of research question, methodology, data, and timeline [max 9 pages].
3. References [max 1 page].
4. Graphs and Tables [max 4 pages].

4. Short Paper Critiques

Students will write up short critiques of papers (1-2 pages) which will be discussed during class. The short critique should include 4 sections: (i) what the main contribution of the paper is relative to the existing literature, (ii) the key elements of the empirical analysis (e.g., methodology, identification), (iii) what the paper does well, and (iv) concerns / suggestions for improvement. These short critiques can be written in bullet form, and should be handed in on Canvas before class the day we discuss the paper. There will be either 1 or 2 papers to critique each week. We will likely call on students to share what they learned.

5. COVID-related Accommodations and Suggestions

Though the course is designed for synchronous learning, lectures will be recorded for students who cannot attend. If you require some other COVID-related accommodation, please email or set up an appointment to discuss. We're open to suggestions on how to keep the course interactive, effective and engaging as we work through this together.

Due Dates and Grades

Due date	Description	Contribution to Grade
As assigned	Short Paper Critiques.	10%
Monday, Jan. 25 th	Email two quick ideas to both Gordon and Eli for potential topics for your grant proposal: gdahl@ucsd.edu and elib@ucsd.edu	
Friday, Mar. 12 th	Turn in the final copy of your grant proposal via email to both Gordon and Eli.	50%
Around the time of your class presentation	Turn in your referee report. You only need to email this to the professor who is teaching when you give your presentation.	40% (for report + presentation)