

Economics 495S
Honors Seminar I
Research Workshop
Spring 2013

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The goal of this Workshop is to get you started on a research project for your honors thesis. We will spend the first few weeks of classes learning about what constitutes novel research and how research papers are created and written. We will moreover learn about resources available to help you with your research and writing [ex. EconLit, GoogleScholar, Joel Herndon (Data Librarian), STATA classes and support, faculty advisors, Writing Tutor, Econometric Support]. Once you have chosen your topic, you will present the relevant papers in the existing literature on the topic and explain how you will use these in creating your own research product. This will help you acquire working knowledge of theories and empirical research in the topic of your choosing. If you are doing empirical research, you will collect the relevant data this semester. Finally you will develop a research proposal. Next fall, in Econ 496S, you will complete your research project, and turn in your honors thesis.

A fundamental feature of research, as opposed to classroom learning, is that it is independent and self-motivated. At the same time, researchers continually share thoughts and ideas with colleagues. This sharing is often at irregular intervals and very informal. However, Workshops are one of the main regular and more structured venues through which research ideas are developed, disseminated, dissected, and refined. At Duke, as at most research oriented economics departments, we have weekly workshops for faculty and graduate students who share common interests in any of the major fields. The research process for graduate students and faculty involves the initial creation of the idea behind a research project. This often times evolves from conversations with colleagues. We then work on the topic and present it at workshops in house. We further revise based on feedback from the workshop. We then present at conferences or seminars at other universities. This provides us with another layer of feedback. Finally, we submit the research to journals. There we receive on average two referee reports, as well as comments from the editor of the journal. This gives us a final (and often brutal) level of feedback in the creation of novel research.

The goal of this course, and the Honors Research Workshops in other fields, is to try and establish the Workshop tradition at the undergraduate level. We want to encourage an interchange of research ideas, problems, and strategies among undergraduates and faculty similar to the sort of interchange that now goes on between graduate students and faculty. For this interchange to be productive there has to be a certain amount of shared or common knowledge among the group. As outlined in more detail below, we will spend several weeks at the start of the Workshop outlining theories and some empirical approaches that have been used to study the topics of interest to you. If needed, we will cover specific Econometric techniques appropriate to particular research topics. This part of the course will help to develop a base of shared

knowledge we can all draw on throughout the remainder of the semester as you begin to develop your own research proposals. This will be done in stages as you present your own fledgling research plans, help others with their plans, share literature related to your topic with the group, collect data, and eventually write up and present to the workshop your research proposal for next Fall's workshop.

My role in this class is very different from that of a lecture course. As opposed to a lecture course where information is transmitted from instructor to student unidirectionally, workshops are a group endeavor. We are all working together to create something new. My role in this workshop is that of a facilitator. I am here, as are the other students in the workshop, to help you succeed at undertaking novel research. I am therefore a resource, a sounding board, a mentor for you. There are also departmental resources (including research and writing support, fellowships and grants) to help support your research. Information on these is available at

<http://econ.duke.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-research> .

<http://econ.duke.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-research/past-honors-theses>

Here's a *rough* outline of how we will allocate our time during the semester:

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| Classes 1-4 | Review of Research Resources. Individual Meetings to identify Research Topics and possible Faculty Advisors: <i>replaces Jan 15 class</i> . Identification of Literature relevant to those topics. |
| Class 3 | Research Librarian Presentation, Mark Thomas and Joel Herndon |
| Class 4 | Assignment 1 due January 22. One page review of a past honors thesis of your choice. |
| Classes 4-8 | Student presentations of paper or papers most closely related to topic of interest. Presenter chooses another student to take notes of comments during presentation. |
| Class 6 | Assignment 2 due January 31. Written Research Topic due in class in hard copy. (Couple of paragraphs min.) |
| Classes 9-13 | Student presentations of their proposed topic. |
| Class 10 | Assignment 3 due February 7. First Research Proposal. Bring a hard copy to class for me and email the file to your advisor and me. This should include an introduction (with thesis topic in bold), a literature review, and a short research plan. (BE CONCISE!) |

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| March 16 | <i>ONLINE HONORS APPLICATION FORM DUE TO ECOTEACH IF GRADUATING DECEMBER 2013.</i> Requires faculty advisor. | |
| Classes 14-19 | Student presentations of their updated proposed topic WITH THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. This should include a theoretical framework upon which empirical work will be done, or the beginning assumptions for a theoretical model. Presenter chooses a new student to take notes of comments during presentation. | |
| Class 19 | Assignment 4 due March 7. Second Research Proposal. Bring hard copy to class and email the file to both your advisor and me. This should include an introduction (with thesis topic in bold), a literature review, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK and a research plan. USE TRACK CHANGES RELATIVE TO YOUR PREVIOUS PROPOSAL. Can write comments to me or to self in track changes mode. | |
| Classes 20-27 | Student presentations of their updated research WITH DATA SECTION, INCLUDING SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR KEY DATA. This should include a data section, or further modeling advances for a theoretical model. Presenter chooses a new student to take notes of comments during presentation. | |
| Class 27 | Assignment 5 due April 23. Third Research Proposal. Bring hard copy to class and email the file to both your advisor and me. This should include an introduction (with thesis topic in bold), a literature review, theoretical framework, a DATA SECTION, INCLUDING SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR KEY DATA , and a research plan. USE TRACK CHANGES RELATIVE TO YOUR PREVIOUS PROPOSAL. | |
| Grades: | 5% | Written Research Topic |
| | 25% | Presentations |
| | 20% | Workshop Participation (attendance is mandatory) |
| | 50% | Research Proposals |