

Economics 495S  
Honors Seminar I Research Workshop

Fall 2017  
T, TH 3:05pm – 4:20pm  
Languages 208

Professor: Michelle Connolly  
Office: 207 Social Sciences Building  
E-mail: [mconnoll@duke.edu](mailto:mconnoll@duke.edu)  
Meetings: Sign up on <https://michelleconnolly.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php>

Writing Consultant: Elizabeth Smith, [elizabethc.smith@duke.edu](mailto:elizabethc.smith@duke.edu)

Writing Consultant Group Meetings (2 per semester):

First make an account at <https://ewc-duke.mywconline.com/>  
Then sign up for group meeting at  
<https://ewc-duke.mywconline.com/schedule.php?date=08-25-2017&scheduleid=sc59284f114f625>.

Required Textbook: *Writing in Sociology: A Brief Guide*. Cary Moskovitz and Lynn Smith-Lovin. New York: Oxford University Press. 2017.

**Honors Program:** <https://econ.duke.edu/undergraduate/current-students/honors-program>

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 semester, 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 resources, as well as access to past theses is available at

<https://sites.duke.edu/econhonors/>

We have a **STATA license for the students** in this course.

General Notes:

- Remember that this is scientific writing, not creative writing. Simplicity and clarity matter more than eloquence.
- Put a title, your name, course and date on each assignment
- Turn in *single* sided hard copies, double spaced, 12 font min.
- Number all equations.
- Number and provide an explanatory/descriptive title for all tables and figures.
- Use words, not variable names in tables and discussions.
- Keep things concise! Say only what you need and say it clearly. Ideally, your final thesis including *everything* should be less than 30 pages.
- There are specific requests for each assignment – including formatting and max length. If you do not follow these requests, I will return it to you to redo and return. You will automatically lose 5% on the assignment grade if this occurs.

*Tentative Schedule:*

Classes 1- 4	Review of Course and Research Resources. Identification of Topics. <b>Individual Meetings</b> to identify research topics, relevant literature and possible Faculty Advisors: <b>replaces August 31 and Sept. 7 classes.</b>  <i>Readings:</i> p. 34 “Start Smart” Section to top of p.45; pp. 80-81; Ch. 5; Appendix A on presentations – <i>be sure to read before your first presentation- it will be obvious if you haven’t.</i>
Class 3	<b>Assignment 1 due September 5.</b> One page review of a past honors thesis of your choice, <i>approved by me.</i>
Classes 4-8	Student presentations of paper or papers most closely related to topic of interest. Presenter chooses a student to take notes of comments during presentation.
Class 6	<b>Assignment 2 due September 14.</b> <i>Written Research Topic.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hard copy due in class.</li><li>• Upload in Dropbox using filename <a href="#">LastName_Econ495_2017_A2</a>.</li><li>• Give a working title, include your name, course and date.</li><li>• Couple of paragraphs min. – max 2 pgs.</li></ul>
Classes 9-13	Student presentations of their proposed topic.
Class 12	<b>Assignment 3 due October 11 at noon in Sakai Dropbox.</b> <i>First Research Proposal.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upload to Dropbox using filename <a href="#">LastName_Econ495_2017_A3</a>.</li><li>• Include a <b>title page</b>, <b>introduction (with thesis topic in bold in first or second paragraph – max 3 pgs.)</b>, <b>literature review</b> (synthesize rather than summarize - max 3 pgs.), Reference List, and a one paragraph research plan.</li><li>• CHECK RUBRIC AND BE CONCISE! (<i>Review Ch.5 before turning in assignment.</i>)</li></ul>
Oct. 11 to Oct. 17:	<i>Group Meetings with Elizabeth Smith</i>
Class 14	<a href="#">Revised Assignment 3 due October 19 both in hard copy and in Sakai Dropbox</a> using filename <a href="#">LastName_Econ495_2017_A3_revised</a> .
October 20	<b>ONLINE HONORS APPLICATION FORM DUE TO ECOTEACH.</b> Requires faculty advisor signature.
Classes 14-19	Student presentations of their updated proposed topic WITH THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/EMPIRICAL APPROACH. 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.

*Readings:* Chapters 6 – 9. Note that Economists use APA citation style not the ASA style mentioned in the book.

Class 18

**Assignment 4 due October 31. Revised Proposal and Response to Feedback**

- Hard copy due in class.
- Upload to Dropbox using filename [LastName\\_Econ495\\_2017\\_A4](#).
- SHARE FILE WITH YOUR ADVISOR.
- Include a title page, introduction (with thesis topic in bold), literature review, **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND/OR EMPIRICAL SPECIFICATION** and a research plan.
- Incorporate any previous feedback on paper and from presentations. After your reference list, create a section titled: **Response to Feedback**. As if responding to a referee report, write out the key changes you have made. If you have not incorporated certain suggestions, explain why.

Oct. 31 to Nov. 7:

*Group Meetings with Elizabeth Smith*

Class 21

[Revised Assignment 4 due November 9 both in hard copy and in Sakai Dropbox](#) using filename [LastName\\_Econ495\\_2017\\_A4\\_revised](#).

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.

Class 28

**Assignment 5 due December 7.**

- Hard copy due in class.
- Upload to Dropbox using filename [LastName\\_Econ495\\_2017\\_A5](#).
- SHARE FILE WITH YOUR ADVISOR.
- Include a title page with a **draft abstract**, introduction (with thesis topic in bold), literature review, theoretical framework/empirical framework, **DATA SECTION (INCLUDING SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR KEY DATA)**, and a plan for the rest of your research.
- Incorporate the latest feedback on paper and from presentations. After your reference list, create a section titled: **Response to Feedback**. As if responding to a referee report, write out the key changes you have made in this version of the paper. If you have not incorporated certain suggestions, explain why.
- *Review Ch.6 of textbook before turning in assignment.*

In the second half of the semester we will again break for individual meetings.  
We may also have a Data Visualization Presentation and a STATA review.

Grades:	25%	Presentations (missed presentation = -20% of this grade)
	20%	Workshop and Writing Meetings Participation (unexcused absence = -5% of this grade)
	55%	Assignments (-5% per day late)

Resources for avoiding Plagiarism:

“Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism: Documentation Guidelines”:  
<http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/index.html>

“Plagiarism: Its Nature and Consequences”: <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/index.html>

The Writing Studio: <http://uwp.duke.edu/writing-studio/resources/working-with-sources>