

Economics 496S
Honors Seminar II Research Workshop
Fall 2015

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Meetings: Sign up on <https://michelleconnolly.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php>

Honors Program website: <https://econ.duke.edu/undergraduate/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 is available at

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

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

We have a **STATA license for the students** in this course. Details are on blackboard.

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