

**Prerequisites:** Microeconomic Theory, Macroeconomic Theory, and Econometrics

### **Purpose of the Course**

Participants in this seminar will select, design, and conduct an independent research project. Each participant will work individually on a project chosen in consultation with the instructors. The project will treat a topic at an advanced level employing the tools learned in previous courses. The requirements for a project are explained in more detail below.

The course will be conducted as a seminar with each participant reporting periodically on his or her progress and/or problems. Each participant will be expected to take an active interest in the work of his or her colleagues by reading their papers and by providing constructive criticism and suggestions. The seminar format is employed so that the participants can learn something about the elements common to all research and can benefit from the continual feedback of their colleagues.

An important objective of this course is to improve skills in written and oral exposition. The paper reporting on the research project will go through several drafts. Each draft will be the basis of an oral presentation to the seminar.

The research paper written for this seminar may be submitted for departmental honors and for the Soper Research Prize.

### **Topics for Research Projects.**

Normally, student projects take the form of an empirical study. In an empirical paper, the author will report the results of his or her original work on an issue that is attracting attention in recent issues of scholarly journals. The original work could be a substantive modification or extension of a model, or a class of models, that are now in the literature. These modifications or extensions might investigate the implications of different explanatory variables, new functional forms, or new data. The paper should also present an informed opinion on ideas for future research that are likely to be fruitful.

Attempts to do original research are not always “successful.” An intelligently designed research strategy, diligently pursued, may fail to produce results that are as definite or as strong as one might like. This need not, however, prevent you from writing a good research paper. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of the design of the research project, how the research relates to the scholarly literature, and on your explanation and interpretation of the results that were obtained.

In writing and presenting your results, you should assume that your audience has completed all the prerequisites for this course, but may not be familiar with your topic and the related literature.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Each student will make five oral presentations. The first and third presentation will be given only in your section of the research seminar. The second and fourth presentations will be given to students and instructors of two sections of the Research Seminar. We will

invite the department and other members of the campus community to attend the final presentations in May. Use of Power Point is required for all presentations.

Students are required to go to the Oral Communications Center for a dry-run of the second presentation and the final presentation. Using the resources at the Oral Communications Center is strongly recommended for all presentations.

Most presentations will be based on a paper varying in length from two page drafts to the complete seminar paper. Each author will make copies of the paper available to the students and professor in his or her section no later than 7:00 pm the evening before the presentation. This will give participants time to read the papers and prepare useful questions and comments.

2. All seminar participants are required to schedule a writing conference with a peer tutor at the Writing Center. The date for this conference is indicated on the schedule given below. Participants are encouraged to schedule additional conferences on subsequent drafts of their papers.
3. An important part of your job in this seminar is to help your colleagues write better papers. All participants are expected to give meaningful and substantive comments on the presentations given by their classmates. In addition, you are required to prepare a short written critique (one to three paragraphs) on the papers that are being presented by students from your section when they present their preliminary results in April. Please type your critique and give one copy to me and one copy to the student presenter. You may also prepare short type-written critiques for the other presentations by your section members. If you choose to give your feedback in this way, you should bring one copy for the instructor and one for the student presenter.
4. The economics department will be interviewing candidates for a tenure track faculty position in financial economics this Spring. Candidates for the position will be giving seminars at 4:00 pm on Jan 21, 23, 28 and 30. You are required to attend at least two of these presentations. In addition, the department will host several seminars on Friday afternoons over the course of the semester, and you are encouraged to attend these talks.

### **Evaluation**

Your course grade will be based primarily on your final paper, which will be evaluated in terms of its content and its prose. In addition, your contribution to the seminar (oral presentations and comments on other students' papers and presentations) will be taken into consideration.

### **Format for Papers**

I will discuss with each student an appropriate format for her or his paper. In general, empirical papers should include

1. A title page.

2. An abstract of 100 or fewer words containing a brief description of the issues that you investigated and your major conclusions.
3. An introduction which includes a statement of the issues (or issue) that you investigated and why the issues are important.
4. A brief review of the existing literature on your topic. In particular, you should discuss both how your approach relates to the existing literature and the main conclusions obtained by previous investigators.
5. A description of your model(s) and your empirical strategy. You should specify your econometric models, including definitions of the variables, discuss the theoretical foundations of your equations, identify the theoretically correct signs of the coefficients, and describe the econometric approaches you will use.
6. A description of your data. The section must include a table containing descriptive statistics (e.g., sample means and standard deviations) of your variables. (If you convert variables to logarithms, please report statistics for the unconverted data.) In addition, you must identify the units of measurement and the sources of your data. You may wish to discuss the limitations, if any, of your data.
7. A summary of your empirical results.
8. A discussion of your results.
9. Summary and conclusions. You may wish to include suggestions for future research.
10. Bibliography (You should follow the style used in the economics literature you cite for your paper.)

Notes:

(1) Your paper need not strictly adhere to the above organization. For example, you might consolidate sections (e.g., sections 7 and 8). Also, you might include an appendix containing variable definitions rather than providing precise definitions in the text.

(2) Unlike many journal articles, your paper should report more than your best results. You should indicate if your results are sensitive to reasonable variations in your specifications.

(3) In the text, references to works cited in the bibliography should appear as follows: Owen (2002), Jensen (2012, p.27), Wu (2008b) or Jones (1998c, 2009, 2013b).

(4) If you cite a work in the text based on another author's summary of that work, your text should clearly indicate that the source is the work you read. For example, you might write "according to Pliskin (2009), Videras (2006) concluded..."

## Tentative Seminar Schedule

January 21	Organizational Meeting
January 26 – January 28	Presentations of research questions. The 10 to 15-minute presentation should focus on specifying the issues that you will investigate and explaining why the issues are important. In this presentation, you should 1) clearly state your research question, 2) explain why this question is important through its relation to previous literature or important policy question, and 3) indicate how you are planning to answer this question (methods and data).
February 9-18  (joint with Professor Jones' section of the seminar)  <b>On these dates, class may run until 4:00.</b>  Meet in <b>KJ 103</b>	Presentations of related literature. The presentation should briefly summarize the issues that you will investigate. Although you should give an overview of several articles, the main focus of this presentation should be on the methods used and findings obtained in one or two existing studies that examined your issues or related issues. You should briefly explain how you expect to adapt the methods discussed to your research project.  Dry-runs at the Oral Communications Center are <b><u>required</u></b> for this presentation.
February 27	First draft of introduction and literature review sections due.
March 9 – 11	Presentations of detailed research proposals and descriptive statistics. The proposal should include a statement of the issues that you will investigate and why the issues are important, a literature review, and descriptions of the economic theories underlying your work, your empirical strategy, and your data. You should include and discuss a table of descriptive statistics and any preliminary results you have obtained.
April 3	Deadline for writing conference on the second draft of introduction and literature review sections.

<p>April 8-20</p> <p>(joint with Prof. Jones' section of the seminar)</p> <p><b>On these dates, class may run until 4:00.</b></p> <p><b>Meet in KJ 103</b></p>	<p>Presentations of preliminary results, progress and problems. This paper should include an introduction to your thesis, descriptions of your model and your data, a summary of your empirical results, and an analysis of your results.</p>
<p>Friday, May 8</p>	<p>Final papers due by 4 p.m. on Friday, May 8</p>
<p>Tuesday, May 12</p>	<p>Final presentations on Tuesday, May 12. These will be scheduled later, but you should plan that you will be presenting or attending classmates' presentations for most of the day.</p> <p>Oral Communications Center appointments are <b><u>required</u></b> for this presentation.</p>