Although this course is called "research methods", it is only partially a course in econometric applications, theoretical modeling, or library searches. I presume that by now you have studied and/or attempted each of these things. Rather, our main goal here is simple. In the two-semester sequence, for which this is the first course, your job is to read, write, and talk about economics and economic research. By the end of the semester I expect that you will have prepared and defended an extensive literature review and initial modeling for your third-year research paper. Before that you will have many opportunities to think, write, and speak analytically and critically.

The third-year research paper that you will research and write during this academic year will ideally serve as a key analytical chapter for your dissertation, to be completed in the following year. I anticipate that in some cases the paper will be in a completed form and capable of submission to a professional journal, by the end of the Spring term, 2001. Such a submission is not a requirement but is a worthwhile goal, both in terms of performing the research and preparing for entry into the job market.

There is one book recommended for the course: Don Ethridge, Research Methodology in Applied Economics: Organizing, Planning, and Conducting Economic Research. 1995, Iowa State University Press. The book is useful for thinking about how to organize and present research but it won’t help you much in selecting research strategies, finding data, and doing the work. Those are your jobs, in consultation with your advisors and myself.

Listed below are the required presentations and approximate dates on which they are scheduled. Your work will consist of writing and delivering two paper presentations from the literature, two presentations of referee reports, and writing and presenting the research proposal for the paper and the literature review, along with classroom discussion. This course will be run as a seminar, so I expect everyone to comment on the presentations.

Aug. 28 Introduction and planning session
Aug. 30 Discussion of basic research questions (Ethridge, chapters 1-4); Comments by Professor Flores
Sept. 4 Labor Day; no class
Sept. 6 Presentation: finding and using data (Ethridge, chapters 5-9)
5-page grant proposals due
Sept. 11  Deconstructing a research paper and a research proposal
Select published papers for presentation

Sept. 13-20 Presentation of 5-page grant proposals and supporting data analyses
(four proposals per class, presentations of 15 minutes with brief class discussion)

Sept. 25-Oct. 11 In-class presentations of published papers and referee reports (two papers per class, presentations of 20 minutes and two referee reports of 7-8 minutes).
Select primary and secondary research advisors by Sept. 27

Oct. 16-18 No class; work on initial research proposals

Oct. 23-25 No class; individual consultations with advisors and me on your research proposals
Note: obviously you should consult with your advisors at any time

Oct. 30-Nov. 15 In-class presentations of revised research proposals (two per class)

Nov. 20-Dec. 6 In-class presentations of full literature reviews and precise problem statements (two per class)

Dec. 11 Summing up: preparing for next semester’s research

Dec. 13 No class; fully revised literature reviews due in my office