Syllabus for Economics 6209:
Research Methods in Economics
University of Colorado Boulder
Fall Semester, 2001

Thomas F. Rutherford
rutherford@colorado.edu

Class Meeting
TR 2-3:15 in Economics Room 5

Course Overview

Economic research at the MA level involves the application of ideas from the courses offered in the first year of the MA program. The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the skills and tools involved in doing economic research. Unlike the core curriculum courses in economics which use an analytical approach, this course emphasizes writing, verbal presentation and computer-based analysis.

In order to provide a better understanding of how to do economic research, the class will work together on a common research project. The topic of this analysis will be (generally) the competitive impact of environmental taxes. Through the course of the term we will deal with this topic from a variety of different perspectives and using several research tools, including econometrics, experimental economics and computational equilibrium analysis.

In addition to the common research project, students in the class will be pursuing independent research projects which will provide a start on an MA thesis. All students will make periodic presentations to the class on their independent work.

Writing is a central element of any economic research project. We will do a good deal of writing as part of this course, and we will spend time talking about large and small issues in grammar and style.

The course will use three books: Research Methodology in Applied Economics by Don Ethridge, The Rhetoric of Economics by Deirdre McCloskey, and Edit Yourself by Bruce Ross-Larson (Norton, 1982). The first two of these texts are available in the bookstore. The third is available in paperback. Reading assignments from these texts will be made through the course of the term.

Additional readings will be selected by individual students from published papers or manuscripts. Students will present one journal article or manuscript in class and prepare referee reports on two other papers.

There will be a final exam but no midterm.

Requirements

- Initial research proposal (2 pages) and bibliography on some aspect of the competitive impact of environmental taxes.
- Initial research proposal (2 pages) and bibliography on individual term paper.
- Midterm exam on research methods and writing
- Class presentation (30 minutes) of a published paper or manuscript.
- Referee reports (2 x 3 pages) on papers being presented by others in the class.

http://www.colorado.edu/Economics/fall01-syllabi/fall01-6209-001syllabus.htm 8/28/01
- Research progress reports (2 x 5 pages) outlining analytical methods and preliminary results.
- Initial drafts of research papers (2 x 20 pages).
- Final drafts of research papers (2 x 20 pages).
- Final exam

**Evaluation**

- Research proposals (15%)
- Midterm examination (10%)
- Class presentation of published paper (15%)
- Referee report (10%)
- Research paper (40%)
- Final exam (10%)