Economics 8219  
Research Methods Workshop II  
Spring 2001

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Location: Women's Cottage 111  
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Office Hours: Tuesday 9 - 10 a.m.; Thursday 12:45 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. and by appointment  
Phone: 303 492-8145  
Meeting Times: Tuesday/Thursday, Guggenheim 3, 2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Course Objectives: This course is intended to continue to move you along in the research phase of your graduate education. Building on your work from Professor Maskus' fall course (Economics 8209), you will complete an original research paper by semester's end and present your research results in a one hour seminar. While the primary goal is completion of an original research project, the workshop will also focus on the research process. During the first eleven weeks of the semester you will write and present three short papers on different aspects of your research. These exercises are intended to help you think carefully about your research and provide you feedback on how to best communicate your work. The exercise sequence is designed in a manner that when all exercises are taken together, the components of a research paper and seminar are in place. The last month of class will be dedicated to the one hour seminar presentations.

Evaluative Criteria: In order to earn a passing grade in the course, you must complete your research paper by the last day of class. There will be no exceptions to this requirement. The course grade will be determined by (1) your written work, (2) your presentations, and (3) your participation in the course. Evaluation of written work will be based on content, organization, and execution. Written work for the exercises will be due at the time of presentation with the exception of the final paper. Evaluation of presentations will be based on how well you communicate your work in the allotted time. It is imperative that students help one another through the research process. One observable way of helping is to provide constructive comments during presentations and discussions. All students will begin the semester with zero participation points. Points will be earned by providing helpful comments throughout the semester.

Research Partnerships: You will be assigned a research partner for each exercise. Your responsibility toward your research partner is to provide private, individual feedback on written work and presentations. Feedback may come in the form of editorial assistance, observing practice seminars, or any other type of feedback that you deem helpful. While the research partnership is not a graded activity, it is a professional responsibility.

Faculty/Student Consultation: For each research exercise, grades will be assigned in the week following the last exercise presentation. Students will be kept abreast of their course progress through written communication and consultation with the professor.

Odds & Ends: While much of the course revolves around formal presentations, we need to strive to maintain a workshop atmosphere. There is enormous collective knowledge within our workshop group. In order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and suggestions, ample discussion time is built into the schedule.
Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled classes.

**Special Accomodations Policy**

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office in Willard 322 (phone 303-492-8671).

**Exercise 1: Research Problems and Objectives (20 minute presentation)**

This exercise requires that you present and discuss your research problem and the objectives of the study. The exercise is different from your research proposal of last semester in that you will focus almost entirely on your own research problem and study objectives. You should provide a summary, not a literature review, of the state of public knowledge on your topic. You then need to present your specific research problem, discuss its significance, and identify your final paper's intended audience. Depending upon your topic, it may be useful to provide a general question or hypothesis and then provide refined questions/hypotheses that make the problem manageable. At this stage it is essential that you develop a concrete plan of research. Therefore you need to place an emphasis on the precision of your statements. After presenting the research problem, you should discuss the study's objectives. Given the time allotted, you should not present a formal model although you may need to briefly sketch the logical development that leads to your refined questions/hypotheses in general terms. As part of your objectives discussion, I would like for you to classify your research according to the scheme presented in chapter two of Ethridge and discuss the inference that may be drawn from your research project.

**Exercise 2: Conceptual Framework, Methods/Procedures Overview (30 minute presentation)**

This exercise requires that you provide and discuss the conceptual framework behind your research. In this context, the phrase conceptual framework refers to the specific underlying rationale of your research project. Conceptualizations that exist in the literature become important and so you may need to discuss existing models from the literature. In contrast to exercise one, details are important. You may be using a standard framework as the basis of your research or you may be developing an original conceptual model. If you are doing the latter, you will need to discuss the merits of your model. Why is it the right model? The level of detail should be geared toward helping workshop participants clearly understand what you are doing in your research. Note that this level of detail is expected to be greater than what will be included in the final presentation/paper. The idea is to educate workshop participants so that they may provide you suggestions and comments.

**Exercise 3: Preliminary Research Findings (30 minute presentations)**

This exercise should be viewed as the beginning of the synthesis stage of your research. This exercise requires that you present preliminary research findings and conclusions. This exercise should be viewed as a trial run for the research findings portion of your final paper and presentation. Most likely you will need to briefly summarize your conceptual model, as a reminder to workshop participants, then proceed to the results, and then onto the conclusions of your research. This exercise will provide you valuable feedback on how to best communicate your results.

**Exercise 4: Final Paper and One Hour Presentation**

At the time of this final exercise you will have had the opportunity to write about and present the primary
components of your research. You will also have received feedback on your communication of these components. The final exercise will no longer be for just the benefit of the workshop participants. The paper will be directed toward the intended professional audience and the presence of your advisor and potential committee members at the seminar will be requested. The final paper should contain all of the necessary ingredients of a carefully executed research paper. The model for the seminar is a standard academic seminar, similar to those from our department seminar series. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all department seminars this semester, regardless of field. Students may consider combining this seminar with a dissertation proposal seminar.

Tentative Schedule

January 16 & 18, Course Overview & Roundtable Discussions
January 23 - February 1, Exercise 1
February 6 - Off Day
February 8 - February 27, Exercise 2
March 1, Off Day
March 6 - 22, Exercise 3
March 26 - 30, Spring Break
April 3 - May 3, Final Presentation

Grade Evaluation

Participation 5%
Exercise 1 15%
Exercise 2 15%
Exercise 3 15%
Exercise 4 50%