Syllabus
Economics 8209
Ph.D. Research Methods Seminar I
Fall 2002

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Location: Economics 16
Meeting Times: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.
Office Hours: Tuesday 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., Wednesday 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. and by appointment

Reference Books:
Research Methodology in Applied Economics, Don Ethridge
Economical Writing, Deirdre N. McCloskey
The Elements of Style, William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

Course Objectives:
The purpose of this course is to help you begin the process of conducting original research in economics. Specifically you must develop a research proposal by the end of the fall semester. By the end of the spring semester, you must complete the research project and write a research paper. Ideally this paper will serve as the first chapter in your dissertation. We expect your research project and paper to be of sufficient quality to eventually merit publication in a peer reviewed economics journal. Carefully conceived, original, and well executed research in economics gets published. This sequence is designed to help you on all three of these fronts. Do not fear. You will succeed.

Course Components

(1) Elements of Research- We will begin the course with a discussion of developing a research topic and writing a research proposal. The Ethridge book will serve as a guide for this discussion. In addition, we will read and discuss several published papers of my choosing. Our discussions will focus on the elements of research in these papers.

(2) Research Proposal Development Exercises- In order to ensure a continuous process through completion of your research proposal, you will complete three development exercises that will lead up to the final research proposal. Exercise 1 will require you to conduct a literature review for your area of interest. You will write a paper and make a 30 minute class presentation of the literature review. Exercise 2 requires you to present a research question. You will write a paper and make a 20 minute class presentation. In presenting your research question, you will need to focus on placing the research question in the context of the literature and defending the question itself. Exercise 3 requires you to identify the methodology that you will use for answering your research question. Again you will write a paper and make a 20 minute presentation.

(3) Research Proposal Presentation- You will be given 30 minutes to present your research proposal to the class and to your advisor. The presentation will provide you the final semester's feedback on your project from your colleagues and your advisor.

(4) Research Proposal- It is no accident that the development exercises form the basic building
blocks of your research proposal. At this point I expect you to deliver a highly polished research proposal.

**Evaluative Criteria**: In order to earn a passing grade in the course, you must complete and turn in your research proposal 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.

**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 Accommodations 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).

**Important Class Dates**
- August 27: First Day of This Class
- October 10-11: Fall Break
- November 28-29: Thanksgiving Break
- December 12: Last Meeting Day for This Class

**Course Calendar**