Research Methods in Economics for Ph.D. Students
Economics 6209

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Course Materials
George Shepherd, Rejected: Leading Economists Ponder the Publication Process, Also of interest:

Course Outline

[L = lecture; S = seminar; D = discussion.]

I. Introduction to Concept and Objectives of Research Methods in Economics: Planning Session (L 8-26)

II. Scientific Methods and Methodology in Economics (L 8-29, D 9-3, D 9-5)
   Ethridge, Chapters 1-4
   Caldwell, Beyond Positivism (optional)

III. Writing Economics (L 9-10, S 9-13, D 9-17, S 9-20, D 9-24)
   A. Writing Methods and Practices
   B. Economic Content of Published Research
      Ethridge, Chapters 5-9
      McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics

IV. Access to Existing Research Knowledge and Methods (L 9-26, Library Tour 9-30?)
   A. Computer Resources--led by Greg Berg and Josefina Martinez
   B. Library Resources

V. Thesis Topic Workshop 1 (D 10-3, D 10-8)
   Thesis topic paper (2 pages) copied for all class members and distributed
VI. Critical Evaluations of Economic Research
Characteristics and Examples of Effective Research (S 10-10, S 10-15, S 10-17, S 10-22, S 10-24)

Members of the faculty will present research papers to the class that they feel are particularly good examples of economic research. These examples will focus on and critique methodology and uses of theory and empirical methods in economics. In some classes, we may read a paper discussed in McCloskey and discuss it along his lines. One or more papers may be assigned for each presentation.

VII. Critical Review of Economic Literature (S 10-29, S 10-31)
Students will write and present a brief critical review of the literature related to the topic of their research proposal. Four 15 minute presentations each day. Please have a paper copied to be distributed by 10-24.

VI. Problems and Strategies in Economic Dissertation Research
A. Rules (D 11-5)
B. Conducting Research and Preparing a Proposal (D 11-7)

VIII. Presentation and Class Critique of Research Proposals (S 11-12 through the end of the semester plus final exam period as necessary)
Each student will present his or her research proposal to the class, following the format established by the faculty presentations in early October. These presentations will build upon the earlier presentations of each student as appropriate. The resulting discussion and peer critique will help each student progress toward a viable dissertation proposal for a proposal defense during the following semester.

Graded Assignments:
A. Research Proposal (@80%): Students will develop a research proposal that shows an understanding of economic methodology and develops an interesting research hypothesis and plan of investigation. This proposal will need to be thoroughly researched and differentiated from current literature.

B. Critical participation in the discussion of the work of peers (20%).