

ECONOMICS 8209
Ph.D. RESEARCH METHODS COLLOQUIUM I
FALL, 2004

Keith Maskus
Economics 210

303-492-7588; Keith.Maskus@colorado.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00 - 5:00, Thursdays 9:00 - 11:00 and by appointment. Please note that because I am department chair there may be times when I cannot meet these office hours.

Course web page: www.colorado.edu/Economics/courses/maskus/8209

Recommended General Reading:

Economical Writing, Deirdre N. McCloskey, 2d edition, 1999, Waveland Press.

The Elements of Style, William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, 4th edition, 2000, Allyn and Bacon.

Research Methodology in Applied Economics: Organizing, Planning, and Conducting Economic Research, Don Etheridge, 1995, Iowa State University Press

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to push you into the process of conducting original research in economics. 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 this first 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, 2005. 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.

This course will be run as a true seminar, which means that students are expected to participate actively, by reading all relevant materials and contributing to classroom discussions in addition to making the presentations listed below. Classroom participation will be a large element in my determination of your progress into a sustainable research process.

Course Activities

(1) Understanding Elements of Research

The initial task will be for the entire class to read recent published papers or working papers of my choosing (see list below) and to discuss them in class. The intent will be to begin to understand the nature of a research project and paper, including the basic elements of research. (Aug. 26 - Sept. 2)

PAPERS (all are available at www.Economics/courses/maskus/8209/):

1. Bernard and Busse, "Who Wins the Olympic Games..." REV OF ECON AND STATISTICS, Feb. 2004;
2. Ganslandt and Maskus, "Parallel Imports and the Pricing of Pharmaceuticals..." JHE, forthcoming;
3. Levinson and Taylor, "Unmasking the Pollution Haven Effect," NBER working paper 10629, 2004;
4. Wisniewski, "Effects of Foreign Intellectual Property Rights..." manuscript 2004.

(2) Critically Presenting Elements of Research

The next task will be for each student to choose and present in class a recent published paper or working paper. You will have 20 minutes to discuss its main elements and present an analytical critique. (Sept. 7 - 23; no class Sept. 9)

(3) Literature Review Development

It is important that you undertake a continuous process for developing your final research proposal for the semester. The first stage in this process will be for you to develop a critical and analytical literature review in your area of interest. The literature review will begin with a well-specified research question that you will fit into the literature review. You will write a paper (maximum 15 pages, double spaced) and make a 20-minute class presentation of the research question and the literature review. (Sept. 28 - Oct. 19; no class Sept. 30 and Oct. 14)

(4) Identifying the Research Methodology

In the next stage you will write a paper (maximum 20 pages, double spaced) that will set out the details of the methodology (theory and empirical) that you will use for answering your research question. You will make a 20-minute presentation on this paper as well (Oct. 21 - Nov. 4)

(5) Research Proposal

You will combine the literature review and methodology, deal with comments received to that point, and refine the material into a written research proposal (maximum 25 pages, double spaced). You will make a 30-minute presentation of the proposal to the class and to your principal research advisor. (Nov. 9 - Dec. 2; no class Nov. 25)

(6) Revised Final Research Proposal

You must turn in a polished revision of your proposal by the last day of classes (Dec. 9, 5 PM), which takes into account comments received from me, your advisor, and the class.

Course Evaluation

All of the activities above are required and will be evaluated directly by myself. The course grade will be determined by (a) your written work; (b) your presentations; and (c) your participation in the course. Evaluation of written work will be based on content, organization, and writing. Written work for items (3) and (4) above are due at the time of your presentation. Written work for the final proposal is due the final day of class. Evaluation of oral presentations will be based on the effectiveness and clarity with which you present the material *within the scheduled time*. Finally, for this process to work it is critical that students help their colleagues by attending all classes and offering constructive and critical comments, on which your presentation grade will be based. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AT ALL SCHEDULED CLASSES.**

I will provide comments and evaluative marks in the week following each period above. It will be worthwhile for you to consult with me orally as well.

Special Accommodations Policy

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