
ECON 8209
RESEARCH METHODS
FALL 2026
MON-WED 12:45 PM - 2:00 PM, ECON 5

COURSE SYLLABUS

Overview

This is the first course in a two-course sequence designed to transition you to the research and scholarship phase of your doctoral program. The primary goal of the fall workshop is to develop a research proposal that at a minimum features a well-specified research question, an introduction/literature review that explains the contribution of the proposed work, and a proposed methodology. Given that students to-date have demonstrated that they can be consumers of knowledge, this course focuses on becoming producers of knowledge.

Office Hours and Contact Information

Professor: Jonathan Hughes
Office location: Economics 102
Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm (or by appointment)
Phone: (303) 735-0220
Email: jonathan.e.hughes@colorado.edu

Course Organization: The course will feature several key components designed to build up to the research proposal.

- 1) Introductory discussions:** We will discuss the basic structure of the research process, including choosing and working with advisors, generating research ideas, conference presentations, journals, etc.
- 2) Literature review:** Based on the research proposal topic, students will write a roughly 3-page literature review. Importantly, this literature review is not just a series of abstracts jammed together.
- 3) Methodology proposal:** Students will write a roughly 3-page paper describing the methodology they will use for their research proposal. Students will do a 15-minute presentation to the class.
- 5) Peer-editing:** One week before the due date for literature reviews and methodology proposals, students will send their rough drafts to two classmates (I will create peer groups to facilitate this). Each classmate will provide feedback and edit the drafts they receive.
- 6) Final presentation and proposal:** This is the main goal of the course. Based on the lit review, methodology proposal and feedback, students will write a 7-10 page research proposal and present it to myself and their advisor(s) as a 30 minute presentation followed by Q&A. Emphasis will be placed on a clear research question, clear methodology, and an introduction explaining the proposed contribution to the literature.

Grading: The primary assessment for this workshop is the quality of the research proposal. To help you prepare, I will also evaluate the intermediate products (literature review and methodology proposal) as well as your thoughtful and constructive participation in classroom exercises (brainstorming sessions and peer evaluation).

10% Discussions, brainstorming exercises, peer reviews
20% Literature review
20% Methodology proposal
50% Final proposal

Course Materials:

The lecture notes, assignments, reading and other materials will be available through Canvas. Please visit the class website often.

Classroom Behavior:

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

Additional classroom behavior information

- [Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior Policy.](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct.](#)
- [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.](#)

Accommodation for Disabilities:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange accommodations. Also see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns:

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information does not always align with how they identify. If you wish to have your preferred name (rather than your legal name) and/or your preferred pronouns appear on your instructors' class rosters and in Canvas, visit the [Registrar's website](#) for instructions on how to change your personal information in university systems.

Honor Code:

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use

of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part of adhering to the Honor Code.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and will be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation:

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email OIEC@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [OIEC support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors are required to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these concerns regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure the person impacted receives outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Religious Holidays:

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness:

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#), located in C4C, or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [AcademicLiveCare](#). The AcademicLiveCare site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.