

Economics 8219 : Research Methods II (Spring 2026)

Location: Economics Building 5

Day/Time: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:15pm

Instructor: Taylor Jaworski (Economics Building 223)

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00-2:00pm

Description

This is the second course in a two-course sequence designed to transition students to the research phase of the PhD program in economics. The primary goal is to produce a substantial research product suitable for a dissertation. In addition, students will make several presentations related to ongoing research in economics and their own research.

Oral Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

The oral comprehensive exam is a 1-hour presentation based on the student's third year paper. The presentation is open to anyone but is typically attended by three faculty members designated as examiners for the student. In addition to the main advisor, the student should select a second committee member in consultation with the instructor. The instructor will serve as the final member of the committee. A student is deemed ready to present if, in the opinion of their advisor(s), s/he has a substantial research product. The final paper with a complete list of references must be distributed to the committee at least two weeks in advance. If this deadline is not met, the comprehensive exam must be rescheduled.

Grading

Students are required to complete a final paper and presentation ("oral comprehensive exam"). The goal is to produce a draft of a paper suitable for inclusion in the dissertation or substantial research product that demonstrates significant progress in learning about the research process. In addition, students are required to attend class and participate in discussion.

Course Outline

Weeks 1-2. *In the second meeting we will discuss your research interests and project for the semester. To prepare for the discussion you should come with a roughly 5-minute summary for your project. To prepare for the discussion you should come with a roughly 10-minute practice job market interview for your assigned paper. A handout with suggestions is [available here](#) or via email.*

- 1/12: Hidden curriculum (“Big Questions”)
- 1/14: Discussion of introduction, motivation, and job market interview
- 1/19: Class cancelled (Holiday)
- 1/21: Practice interview with recent job market paper in your field
- **Due 1/21: Draft of introduction (3-4 pages)**

Week 3. *The presentation should have no more than 10 slides and last approximately 15 minutes. Your slides should include a motivation, statement of the research question, contribution to the literature, overview of the methodology, discussion of the main results, and conclusion. A guide to giving presentations is [available here](#) (via Jesse Shapiro’s website).*

- 1/26 and 1/28: Conference presentation of recent job market paper

Weeks 4-5. *The presentation should have 12-15 slides and last approximately 20 minutes. Your slides should have the following headings: **Motivation, Research Question, Contribution, and Methodology**. Where possible you should use an anecdote, figure, table, etc, as part of your motivation. State any relevant (e.g., identification) assumptions clearly.*

- 2/2: Hidden curriculum (“Faculty Mentoring” and “Work Habits”)
- 2/4, 2/9, and 2/11: Presentation of motivation and methodology
- **Due 2/11: Draft of introduction, background, and methodology (8-12 pages)**

Weeks 6. *During this meeting we will discuss your introduction, methodology, and the outline for the rest of your paper focused on methodology. We will also discuss the committee for comprehensive exam.*

- 2/16, and 2/18: Individual meetings to discuss work in progress and comprehensive exam committee

Week 7. During this week we will have an in-depth discussion of the methodology and results of a recent job market paper.

- 2/23: Hidden curriculum (“Economics has Many Fields”)
- 2/25: Discussion of recent job market paper: Dana Scott, “Workplace Amenities and Labor Market Inequality”
- Due 2/25: Draft of introduction, background, methodology, and results (15-18 pages)

Week 8. The presentation should have 4-6 slides and last approximately 10 minutes. Your slides should include a brief reminder of the key elements of your methodology and then provide an overview of your main results or outline relevant work in progress.

- 3/2 and 3/4: Presentation of results

Week 9. During this week you will do a practice job market interview with your paper.

- 3/9: Hidden curriculum (“A Research Agenda” and “The Next Paper”)
- 3/11: Practice job market interview with your paper
- Due 3/11: Draft of complete paper (18-25 pages)

Spring Break (March 16-20)

Week 10. During this meeting we will discuss your draft paper and the presentation slides for the comprehensive exam.

- 3/23 and 3/25: Individual meetings

Week 11. This presentation should include 15-20 slides and last approximately 20 minutes. Your slides should have a motivation, statement of the research question, contribution to the literature, description of the methodology, discussion of results, overview any work in progress, and a conclusion.

- 3/30 and 4/1: Conference presentation of paper
- Schedule comprehensive exam and send complete draft to faculty committee

Weeks 13-14. Final Presentation and Comprehensive Exam

- Send complete draft to faculty committee two weeks before comprehensive exam.
- Schedule comprehensive exam presentation to occur before 4/24