

Econ 4309: Honors Seminar
Fall 2023, Tues 3:30-6, Econ 119

Prof. Terra McKinnish

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Office Hrs: Tues 1:30-3, Wed 1:30-3, and email for appts outside office hours

Course Description

This is the first in a two-course sequence supporting students in writing honors theses in Economics. The goal of this seminar is to produce a research proposal that contains:

1. Introduction
 - a. Clear statement of the specific research question
 - b. Motivation of research question
 - c. Brief description of methodology
 - d. Contribution of the study relative to the existing literature
2. Methodology (that will credibly answer stated research question)
 - a. Data source(s)
 - b. Sample and key variables
 - c. Regression equation(s)

Requirements and Grading

Participation: Not just attendance but **focused participation** is a fundamental and mandatory expectation of all students in this course. If you must miss class due to extenuating circumstances, please inform me.

Final Grade: Your grade in this course will primarily be determined by the quality of the final research proposal and how well it meets the requirements described above. Failure to conscientiously participate in seminar activities will, however, be reflected in final course grade.

Honors Program Registration: To defend an honors thesis in Spring 2024, you must register your thesis by 11:59 PM on October 3, 2023 on the honors program webpage:

https://www.colorado.edu/honors/graduation#registration_and_deadlines-104

We will discuss completing your registration in class, but it will be your responsibility to fill out the form on time. **Note that Economics departmental policy requires only that you have secured a main advisor and an honors council representative (Prof. McKinnish) prior to registering.** You will work with your main advisor and the honors council representatives to add the third committee member once your proposal is more fully developed, no later than January 31, 2024.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: Some intermediate assignments and the final proposal require writing about other published work. You may not borrow text from the original papers without proper attribution. Plagiarism of any kind for any assignment in this class is grounds for removal from the honors program, in addition to grade sanctions for this course.

Tentative Schedule

	In-Class	For Next Week
Week 1	Getting started	Read a previous successful thesis and fill out summary form. Make a slide with 3 potential research questions.
Week 2	Potential questions discussion Finding and working with advisors Mini-lecture: data	Set up and attend meetings with potential faculty advisors. Read a second previous thesis and fill out summary form.
Week 3	Discussion of previous theses.	Continue faculty meetings, finalize advisor.
Week 4	Mini-lecture: literature search	Investigate data sources and fill out data form.
Week 5	Individual meetings on data	Complete Thesis Registration. List of papers for annotated bibliography.
Week 6	Mini-lecture: building a methodology	Work on annotated bibliography. Select paper for presentation. Fill out progress report on question/data.
Week 7	Mini-lecture: regression equations Individual meetings on question/data	Finish annotated bibliography. Prepare short paper presentation.
Week 8	Paper presentations Outside committee member	Proposed methodology form
Week 9	Individual meetings on methodology	Methodology slides
Week 10	Methodology presentations Mini-lecture: omitted variable bias	Revise methodology slides Written methodology draft
Week 11	Peer edit methodologies Individual meetings on revised methods slides	Introduction slides Omitted variable bias slide
Week 12	Full presentations (Intro+methods+OVb) Mini-lecture: lit review	Written introduction Revise written methodology
Week 13	Peer edit introductions	Draft literature review

	Individual meetings on written methodology	
Week 14	Peer edit lit review Individual meetings on written introduction	Finalize proposal
Week 15	Next Steps	

Other Course Information and Policies

Immigration status: the webpage www.colorado.edu/undocumented contains information regarding campus resources available for students and employees with DACA status. You should also feel free to discuss your status and any related issues with Prof. Cadena. I will do my best to provide appropriate accommodation or connect you to the most appropriate on-campus resources.

The **Office of Victim Assistance (OVA)** provides free and confidential information, consultation, support, advocacy and short-term counseling services to University of Colorado Boulder students, graduate students, faculty and staff who have experienced a traumatic, disturbing or life disruptive event. OVA is not a part of the police department or the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, and is a confidential resource for students, staff and faculty. Their webpage is www.colorado.edu/ova and they can be reached by phone at 303.492.8855 and by e-mail at assist@colorado.edu

Other University Policies:

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail 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, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior](#) policy, the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. CU Boulder currently requires COVID-19 vaccination and boosters for all faculty, staff and students. Students, faculty and staff must upload proof of vaccination and boosters or file for an exemption based on medical, ethical or moral grounds through the MyCUHealth portal.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask-optional. However, if public health conditions change and masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policy on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus.

If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should stay home and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office (contacttracing@colorado.edu). If you are fully vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay home; rather, you should self-monitor for symptoms and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office (contacttracing@colorado.edu). If you will be absent due to quarantine or isolation, please let me know and we will collaborate to help you make up the missed work. In weeks when we are meeting individually rather than as a full class, I will offer a Zoom option to minimize disruptions due to missed class time.

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.

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to use your preferred name/pronouns, regardless of what appears in the class roster.

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, 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. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the [Honor Code website](#).

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 sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these policies, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

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. In this class, let me know as soon as possible if you foresee a conflict, and I will accommodate your absence to the best of my ability. Because all of the assignments are inputs to the final proposal, you may have additional time to work on any assignment due on a date when you are observing a religious holiday.

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