

Econ 8219: Research Methods
Spring 2015 Course Syllabus (Preliminary)

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Office Hours: By appointment and after class on Thursdays

Class Time and location: Econ 5 Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 - 12:15pm

Course Goals

The second semester of the research methods class gives opportunities for students working on their orals proposals to discuss and present their ongoing work. By the end of the class it is expected that most students will complete the comprehensive oral exam proposal and defend it. We will also be focusing on making short conference presentations, useful descriptive statistics, and editing your own work as well as others.

Course Content

Students will participate in the following activities:

1. *Detailed Abstract of Research Proposal:* Students will be given guidelines for generating a 2-4 (double spaced) page detailed abstract of their research proposal. It will cover basic motivation, main research question, the contribution of their research to the literature, and perhaps key points of their methodology. I will also ask you to either include, or discuss what you would include in your “money graph” or main descriptive statistics or real life examples (if doing theory).
2. *Group Editing of Detailed Abstract:* Students will be sent draft detailed abstracts in advance of class to their group members and be expected to edit the detailed abstracts. In class the students must go over the edits in details with the group/author and the group should discuss how the author can improve their work.
3. *Short Presentations:* Students will make a short (15 minute) conference style presentation of their research. See more details below.
4. *Group Editing of Most Sections of the Proposal:* Students will send drafts of different sections of their proposals at different points in the semester. They will send the draft in advance of class to their group members and are expected to come to class with detailed edits for each group member. In class the students must go over the edits in details with the group/author and the group should discuss how the author can improve their work.
5. *Final Papers/Presentations:* The final product of the semester is a draft of the student’s comprehensive exam proposal. The proposal should be written like a paper including all citations, but the author can say what they will do if they don’t have all available data or have not finished their models. Depending on where the student is with their research this may or may not include final results. Presentations will take place the last 4-5 weeks of class. Most students are expected to use this presentation as their oral comprehensive exam and this is the goal of the class; those doing so will have the first pick of dates at the end of the semester. *Note that a complete draft must be provided 2 weeks in advance of the presentation if it is serving as a comprehensive exam.* Final papers are due on the last day of class. In many cases the paper you handed in for your

comprehensive exam will suffice as your final paper for the class and I will let you know that at the end of the comprehensive exam. See below for more details regarding the guidelines for the oral comprehensive exam.

Grading

Peer Grading of edits and my class participation grade	10%
Short Presentation	15%
Final Presentation	35%
Final Proposal/Paper	40%

Tentative Class Schedule

WEEK OF	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
1 – Jan 13	Introduction / Detailed Abstract / Paper Advice / Create groups	Presentation Advice / Descriptive Data Analysis
2 – Jan 20	No Class: Draft Due “Detailed Abstract” –email to group by noon on Tuesday unless other arrangement is made	Group Edit: Detailed Abstracts
3 – Jan 27	No Class Abstract Due: (print/email) by 3pm	Individual meetings
4 – Feb 3	Individual meetings	Individual meetings
5 – Feb 10	Short presentations	Short presentations
6 – Feb 17	Short presentations	Short presentations
7 – Feb 24	No Class: Draft Due “Data/Methods –empirical strategy, model outline or set up”	Group Edit: Data/Methods (Model set up)
8 – Mar 3	TBD	TBD
9 – Mar 10	Class: Preparing final presentation	TBD
10 – Mar 17	Draft Due “Results” or second go at Methods	Group Edit: Methods/Results
11 – Mar 24	Spring BREAK	
12 – Mar 31	TBD	Draft “Results” or third go at Methods
13 – Apr 7	Group edit: Result/(methods if no results)	TBD
14 – Apr 14	Final Presentations/Comp. Exam	Final Presentations/ Comp. Exam
15 – Apr 21	Final Presentations/Comp. Exam	Final Presentations/ Comp. Exam
16 – Apr 28	Final Presentations/Comp. Exam	Final Proposals Due (print & email)

Due Dates

All due dates are on the calendar. When drafts are due, **please email them to your group before 9am** on the day they are due. Please also put a hard copy in my mail box by the end of the day. This allows students to use the class time to read each of the group papers. If as a group you are okay with emailing the draft out later that day, that is okay with me. The final proposals are due the last day of class. A printed copy needs to be put in my mailbox by the end of the day and you also need to email me a copy.

1. Final Detailed Abstract: Due Jan. 27 (Tuesday). Email to me and put a printed copy in my mail box.

Short Presentations

The purpose of the 15 min presentations are to give you practice at a short conference-style presentation. **All students are expected to attend all presentations.** The most important part of the presentation is the first five minutes, in which you are expected to lay out in very clear and concise terms your motivation, your research question, and its contribution to the literature. Your previous work writing and revising your detailed abstract should benefit you here. Because most of you will not have completed research to discuss, the remaining 10 minutes of the presentation can take on one of the suggested forms below. Option D is not what you want to do and should not be the aim – but research doesn't always pan out the way we want it to.

A) If you have preliminary results, theoretical or empirical, go ahead and present them just as you would at a conference. This may include a “money” graph to motivate your identification strategy.

B) If you are doing empirical research, and you do not have results, you can lay out the empirical model and/or your identification strategy and any biases you are worried about (e.g. mortality or migration selection). If you have data but do not have results, generate descriptive analysis to describe the quality of information and the key variation you use for identification. The latter often takes the form of a graph. You may also want to discuss any major road blocks you have encountered or think you will encounter.

C) If you are working on a theory paper, and do not yet have results, you can spend some time motivating your model with the anecdotes, case studies, stylized facts that convince us your model has real-world implications, also present the basic set up of your model and again problems you are facing in solving or setting up the model. Make sure you are clear on the contribution, and what models you are extending and why.

D) You can discuss the form your presentation would take with completed slides: e.g. “This slide will contain my model assumptions. This slide will contain Proposition I, which will likely state X. This slide will graph outcome Y as a function of the model parameters A and B.” or “This slide will have a table of my basic OLS results. This slide will contain my fixed-effects results, pooled and then separated into developing and developed countries.” If you use this option, please also include what progress you have made since last semester, or during the semester.

The audience will observe conference-style rules, which means we only interrupt for clarifying questions and reserve substantive questions for the end. This means that your 15 minutes will be virtually uninterrupted. You are expected to adhere strictly to the time limit, as going over reflects poorly on you at real conferences. There will be 5-10 minutes for questions after your presentation. You need to email the class your detailed abstract at least two days before you present (send by Sunday

if present on Tuesday). I expect each student to have read the detailed abstract for that day's presentations and to have prepared questions.

We will do 3 presentations per day and presenters should get to the classroom 5-10 minutes early and get their presentations loaded onto my laptop by the start of class (I have a MAC). If that day's presentations are using a student laptop, please organize slides to him/her in advance so that they will already be on the laptop before coming to class.

Final Presentations

One hour presentation for those doing their comprehensive oral exam; half an hour otherwise. **All students are expected to attend any presentations that are not for the comprehensive exam.**

It is best to schedule the comprehensive exam possible before **April 24**, so you have time to address any comments if needed by the time your final proposal is due.

Oral Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

A. Basic Guidelines

- 1) The Oral Comprehensive exam is a one hour presentation based largely on the student's 3rd year paper.
- 2) The presentation is open to anyone but usually is only attended by the 3 faculty members designated as the comprehensive examiners for the student (more details below in B). Make sure you identify and ask the faculty members in advance. I will act as one member, so you need one more person in addition to your advisor.
- 3) A student is deemed ready to present if, in the opinion of their advisor(s), s/he has a well developed and "doable" research proposal (in some cases you may even have results and the proposal may be more in the form of a paper).
- 4) The written proposal, with a complete reference list of literature cited, must be distributed to the comprehensive examiners at least two weeks in advance. If this deadline is not met, the comprehensive exam must be rescheduled.
- 5) Students are held responsible for all literature listed in the reference list of the proposal.
- 6) Having received the paper at least two weeks in advance, examiners who find the reference list to be incomplete may contact the student in advance of the presentation to suggest additional literature that is relevant for the research project. It is then the student's responsibility to familiarize him/herself with this literature, which should be listed by the examiner with sufficient lead-time for that purpose, before the presentation. During the exam, examiners may, of course, question the student on any issues and literature they wish that is covered in the proposal.
- 7) Prior to the start of the orals you will be asked to leave the room so the committee can briefly talk.
- 8) At the end of the oral comprehensive exam, all attendees except the examining committee must exit the room so that the examiners may discuss the performance of the student. You will be asked back into the room and told the result of your exam.

B. Faculty Examining Committee:

Each student's comprehensive examining committee will consist of 3 faculty members, two of which should be likely people for student's primary and secondary dissertation advisors. I will act as the 3rd faculty member, and am usually not kept on the dissertation committee unless that makes sense.

1) For comprehensive exams that take place in 8219, the 8219 instructor will serve as the 3rd committee member. If the exam is not done during the 8219 semester the student will likely need to find a 3rd member as I suggest they find someone they would like on the dissertation committee.

2) In consultation with the dissertation advisors, students are responsible for scheduling the remaining faculty members to serve on their comprehensive committee. You are also responsible for booking a room if you are not presenting during class time.

University Policies if Needed

Please remind yourself of the various university policies if needed.

University policies regarding classroom behavior are available at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior> and http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/code.html#student_code

The Honor Code

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/>.

University policies regarding disabilities are available at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

University policies regarding religious practice are available at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

University policies regarding Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships are available at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/Pages/default.aspx>