

ECON 8209-001: Research Methods

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<u>Class Schedule:</u>	TTh 9:30 – 10:45 am in ECON 5.
<u>Office Hours:</u>	T 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. and by appointment.

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to transition you into the research phase of your doctoral studies. The primary goal is that you end this semester with a research proposal that includes:

- a) a well-specified research question;
- b) a literature review that explains the innovation and contribution of the proposed research;
- c) the proposed methodology (theoretical and/or empirical).

Course Content

The semester will consist of 6 activities:

- 1) **Introductory lectures and exercises:** lectures on: What is research? Where do research ideas come from? How do I pick and work with advisors? What do I need to know now about the job market for economists? What makes a good literature review? What makes a good presentation? Students will be assigned several literature reviews and one published paper to read as part of the discussion. They will also make practice presentation slides for one of these papers and discuss them in groups.
- 2) **Paper presentation:** Students will pick an important paper related to their area of interest and make a 20 min presentation to the class.
- 3) **Literature review:** Students will write a 3 to 5 page literature review for their

proposed topic and make a 20-minute presentation to the class. Ideally, the literature review will start with a well-specified research question around which you organize your literature review.

- 4) **Proposed methodology:** Students will write a 3 to 5 page paper describing the methodology (theoretical and/or empirical, as appropriate) that will be used to answer the research question. Students should strive to be as specific as possible (e.g. actual equations). They will make a 20-minute presentation of the methodology to the class.
- 5) **Final presentation and proposal:** Students will use their literature review and methodology papers, and the feedback they received during the semester, to write a final proposal of 8 to 12 pages. Students will make a 30-minute presentation of their proposal to me and their advisor(s).
- 6) **Peer-Editing of Manuscripts:** For both the literature review and the methodology assignments, students will provide an early rough draft to two designated classmates at the beginning of the week the assignment is due. Each student will then edit the two drafts they receive and provide feedback to their classmates.

Class Presentations

Presenters should get to the classroom 10 minutes early so that their presentations are loaded on the laptop and the projector is up and running by the start of class.

Grades

The primary determinant of your grade will be the quality of your final paper and presentation. Final proposals will be evaluated on the extent to which they present a well-defined research question, clearly explain the expected contribution to the literature, and whether there is a proposed methodology that matches the question and contribution. Your performance on the earlier components of the semester can also be factored into your grade, particularly if they are substantially above or below reasonable course expectations.

Course Schedule

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8/28	Introductory Lectures
9/4	“
	Before class on 9/4, students should read set of literature reviews distributed during the first week of classes. Before class on 9/6, students should:

- 1) Read "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa," Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 101, No. 7, December 2011, 3221-3252.
- 2) Prepare draft of presentation slides for Nunn and Wantchekon (up to presentation of results) to discuss in class in groups.

9/11 Class time will be used to for each student to meet with me individually. For the class on 9/11, students should prepare a one page, double-spaced statement of research agenda. This should i) state the student's field of interest; ii) list three questions/papers within the field that intrigues the student; iii) intended professional path (academia vs. the private sector; research vs. teaching jobs; international organizations).

9/18 “

9/25 Paper presentations. Students attend all presentations.

10/2 “

10/9 Literature review presentations. Students attend all presentations. Written literature review due to me 10/30.

10/16 “

10/23 “

10/30 “

11/6 Methodology presentations. Students attend all presentations. Written Methodology sections due to me 11/20.

11/13 “

11/20 “

12/4 Final presentations (30 min) to me and your advisors. Can be scheduled during or outside class time. Final proposals due to me 12/13.

12/11 “