

Econ8219: Research Methods Spring 2011 Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: By appointment
Course Website: <http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/hb/barham/courses/econ8219/>
Class Time and location: Econ 5 Tuesday and Thursday 2 - 3:15pm

Course Goals

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

Course Content

Students will participate in the following activities:

1. *Executive Summary or Detailed Abstract or Research Proposal:* Students will be given guidelines for generating a 1-3 page executive summary or detailed abstract of their research proposal. It will cover basic motivation, main research question, the contribution of their research to the literature, and the 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.
2. *Group Editing of Executive Summaries:* Students will be sent draft executive summaries in advance of class for their group members and be expected to edit the executive summaries. 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:* Mid-way through the semester students will make a short (15 minute) conference style presentation of their research. See more details below.
4. *Group Editing of Draft Final Proposals:* Students will be sent draft final proposals in advance of class for their group members and be expected to edit the executive summaries. 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 should hopefully be a meaningful draft of their comprehensive exam proposal. 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. Students have the option of using this presentation as their oral comprehensive exam; those doing so will have the first pick amount the 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. See below for more details regarding the guidelines for the oral comprehensive exam.

Due Dates

1. Draft Executive Summaries: Due Jan. 17 (Mon.). Email to me and your group members.
2. Final Executive Summaries: Due Jan. 24 (Mon.). Email to me and printed copy in mail box.
3. Copies of Proposal (Fall version): Due Jan. 24 (Mon.). Email to me and printed copy in mail box.
3. Draft Final Proposals: Tentative Date Mar. 28 by noon. Email me and group members
4. Final Proposals: Due April 28. Email me and printed version in mail box.

Grading

Peer Grading of Edits and my class presentation grade	15%
Short Presentation	15%
Final Presentation	30%
Final Proposal	40%

Tentative Class Schedule

This class schedule is tentative. It will be adjusted once we know how many students' final presentation will search as their comprehensive exam. It is possible we will need to start final presentations the week after and perhaps the week before March Break.

WEEK OF	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
1 – Jan 10	No Class	Introduction / Executive Summaries / Paper Advice / Create groups
2 – Jan 17	Presentation Advice / Descriptive Data Analysis	Group Discussion Executive Summaries
3 – Jan 24	Individual meetings	Individual meetings
4 – Jan 31	Individual meetings	Individual meetings
5 – Feb 7	Individual meetings	Individual meetings
6 – Feb 14	Short presentations	Short presentations
7 – Feb 21	Short presentations	Short presentations
8 – Feb 28	Short presentations	Short presentations
9 – Mar 7	No Class – available for meetings	No Class – available for meetings
10 – Mar 14	TBD- probably no class	TBD – probably no class
11 – Mar 21	MARCH BREAK	
12 – Mar 28	Editing draft proposals (no class on your own)	Group discussion final proposals Prof. Barham out of town
13 – Apr 4	Final Presentations	Final Presentations
14 – Apr 11	Final Presentations	Final Presentations
15 – Apr 18	Final Presentations	Final Presentations
16 – Apr 25	Final Presentations	Final Presentations

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 research question and its contribution to the literature. Your previous work writing and revising your executive summary 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 more than one form. Some suggestions:

A) If you have preliminary results, theoretical or empirical, go ahead and present them just as you would at a conference.

B) If you are doing empirical research, and you do not have results, you can lay out the empirical model, describe the variation you are taking advantage of and any biases you are concerned about (maybe we can help solve some of those), generate descriptive analysis to describe the quality of information and the key variation in the data, discuss any major road blocks you have encountered.

C) You can update us on one specific aspect of your research on which you have made progress since the end of the fall semester.

D) 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, the basic set up of your model and again problems you are facing.

E) 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.”

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 of time for questions after your presentation. You need to email the class your executive summary at least two days before you present (send by Sunday if present on Tuesday). I expect each student to have read the executive summary for that day's presentations and to have prepared questions.

We will do 2-3 presentations per day and presenters should get to the classroom 10-15 minutes early and get their presentations loaded onto the laptop by the start of class. If that day's presentations are using a student laptop, I would prefer that other presenters get their slides to him/her in advance so that they will already be on the laptop before coming to class.

Final Presentations

One hour presentations for those doing their comprehensive oral exam; half an hour otherwise. All students are expected to attend all presentations.

I have allotted time for 5 hour long presentations and 6 half an hour presentations. We will need to adjust the schedule depending on the number of oral presentations.

Oral Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

A. Basic Guidelines

- 1) The oral Comprehensive is to be a one hour presentation based largely on the student's 3rd year paper.
- 2) The presentation can be open but must be attended by at least 3 faculty members designated as the comprehensive examiners for the student (more details below in B).
- 3) A student is deemed ready to present if, in the opinion of her 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 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. The expectations regarding the student's familiarity with the literature are simply lower if the faculty examiner has not raised the issue in advance.
- 7) At the end of the oral comprehensive, all attendees except the examining committee must exit the room so that the examiners may discuss the performance of the student.

B. Faculty Examining Committee:

Each student's comprehensive examining committee will consist of 3 faculty members, two of which should be the student's primary and secondary dissertation advisors.

- 1) For comprehensive exams that take place in 8219, the 8219 instructor will serve as the 3rd committee member.
- 2) In consultation with the dissertation advisors, students are responsible for scheduling the remaining faculty members to serve on their comprehensive committee.