Fall 2016 ECON 401 - Research Project Seminar
Instructor: Guido Giuntini
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Course Time/Location: Mo 10:00am – 11:45am (MBEB 1210)
We-Fri 10:30-11:45 Room Location – MBEB 1210

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:45 – 12:45, or by appointment
Location: MBEB 3212

Description: ECON 401 is the Economics Department capstone course that challenges students to conduct original research. Students will identify an applied research problem, an economic model and methodology, review the literature, gather data, and run preliminary analysis. Students will be discussing the practice of research design, data collection and challenges as well as the analysis of their data. Emphasis throughout is placed on developing communication skills critical to working as an applied economist. Important note: Boise State’s Foundational Studies Program provides undergraduates with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience.

ECON 401 satisfies the Foundational Studies Program’s Communication in the Discipline (CID) requirement. It supports the following University Learning Outcomes, along with a variety of other course-specific goals:
1. Write effectively in multiple contexts for a variety of audiences.
2. Communicate effectively as speaker and listener.
3. Engage in effective critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering and evaluating evidence, and determining the adequacy of argumentative discourse.

University Required Syllabus Statement:
Disability Accommodation
Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Educational Access Center (EAC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the EAC. Please stop by Administration 114 or call 208-426-1583 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit our website at http://eac.boisestate.edu

COBE Required Syllabus Statements:
Statement of Shared Values Boise State University upholds the following values as the foundation for a civil and nurturing environment. Campus community members and all who are part of COBE are expected to adhere to the following values:
Academic Excellence – engage in our own learning and participate fully in the academic community’s pursuit of knowledge.
Caring – show concern for the welfare of others.
Citizenship – uphold civic virtues and duties that prescribe how we ought to behave in a self-governing community by obeying laws and policies, volunteering in the community, and staying informed on issues.
Fairness – expect equality, impartiality, openness and due process by demonstrating a balanced standard of justice without reference to individual bias.
Respect – treat people with dignity regardless of who they are and what they believe. A respectful person is attentive, listens well, treats others with consideration and doesn’t resort to intimidation, coercion or violence to persuade.
Responsibility – take charge of your choices and actions by showing accountability and not shifting blame or taking improper credit. We will pursue excellence with diligence, perseverance, and continued improvement.
Trustworthiness – demonstrate honesty in our communication and conduct while managing ourselves with integrity and reliability.

Students in this class will learn or practice the following COBE Core Curriculum concepts, methods, and skills:
1. Understand and apply analytical and disciplinary concepts and methods related to business and economics:
   1.3. Economics
2. Communicate effectively: Write messages and documents that are clear, concise, and compelling.
2.2. Communicate effectively: Give oral presentations that use effective content, organization, and delivery.
3. Solve problems, including unstructured problems, related to business and economics.
4. Use effective teamwork and collaboration skills.

Texts:

Class structure: The first portion of the class time (approximately 45 min to 1 hour) will be allocated to the discussion of topics on research methodology in Economics. Students are expected to read the relevant text and supplementary readings (if any) and be prepared for discussion before coming to class. Also, students are encouraged to read economic papers either from the suggested reading list at the end of the syllabus, or searching Academic Journals. Lecturing will be limited. The second part of the class will be allocated to group work.

Course Schedule / Required Readings

Week 1 (8/21): Eclipse, no class!
Week 2 (8/28): Research and Methodology [E] Ch. 1 and Ch. 2 Colander and Klamer, 1987; Colander, 2005 Prepare proposal; nothing due, Task assigned in class.

Week 3 (9/4): Labor Day, No Classes.


Week 6 (9/25): Planning the Research [E] Ch. 5 Moffat, 1994 Revised research proposal due based on feedback. Read and provide written feedback on other revised proposals.


Week 8 (10/9): The Literature Review [E] Ch. 7 Berzonsky and Richardson, 2008 Keep working on your paper. Paper review presentations.


Week 10 (10/23): The Conceptual Framework [E] Ch. 8 N/A First draft of literature review due. Read and provide written feedback on other literature reviews. Guest speaker. How to construct an economics paper both for academic journals or business, Dr. Kevin Cahill of Boston University and ECONortwest, Boise office.

Week 11 (10/30): Methods and Procedures [E] Ch. 9 N/A First draft of the framework section is due. Read and provide written feedback on other conceptual frameworks.

Week 12 (11/6): Reporting the Research [E] Ch. 10 Thomson, 1999; Levins, 1992 First draft of the methods and procedures section is due. Read and provide written feedback on other methods.

Week 13 (11/13): Writing [M] Ch. 1-14 N/A Keep working on your paper. Rough draft due.

Week 14: Thanksgiving Holiday! No classes, November 20 – 24.

Week 15 (11/27): Writing [M] Ch. 1-14 N/A Keep working on your paper. Written feedback on first full draft.

Week 16 (12/4): Final draft due.
Grading

Class participation 15%
Review of paper 10%
Presentation 15%
Rough draft 20%
Critique of draft 10%
Final draft 30%

Explanation of grading

The best way to learn to write well in economics is to read good economic writers.

Class participation
Part of most classes will be devoted to the discussion of the readings. Completing the readings in advance and actively participating will help you become a better writer.

Review of paper
When an author submits a paper for publication, it is reviewed anonymously by academic peers. You will choose a published paper, either from the list at the end of the syllabus or one of your choice, and write a 2 - 3 page review.
This is what you should be looking for:
1. Is the article well-organized?
2. Does the article contain all of the components you would expect (Introduction, Methods, Theory, Analysis, etc)?
3. Are the sections well-developed?
4. Does the author do a good job of synthesizing the literature?
5. Does the author answer the questions he/she sets out to answer?
6. Is the methodology clearly explained?
7. Does the theory connect to the data?
8. Is the article well-written and easy to understand?
9. Are you convinced by the author’s results? Why or why not?

Presentation
You then will prepare a 10 - 15 minute presentation on the paper you chose to review, followed by time for Q&A. Remember that the other students have not read the paper.

Rough draft
The rough draft should contain all the sections of your final draft, although they might be at different stages of completion.

Critique of draft
You will be assigned a rough draft from another student to read. Use the same guidelines you employed to review other papers while keeping in mind that you are reviewing a preliminary draft.

Final draft
This course is the first of a two-part series, and you are not expected to submit a research paper with final results. When writing, make sure to keep your target audience in mind. Your research might be written differently if you are writing to submit to a journal or present to a board meeting.

No late submissions will be accepted. You have ample time to work on assignments, and you need to learn how to manage your time. The type of assignments required in this class require much more than an all-nighter the day before the due date.

Academic Integrity: See http://registrar.boisestate.edu/catalogs/online/general-policies.shtml#honesty

References (please find/download those through the Boise State Library):


Suggested Papers for Review (Please feel free to find your own)


