Fall 2016

ECON 401 - Research Project Seminar

Instructors: Dr. Zeynep Hansen and Dr. Michail Fragkias

Course Time/Location: Mo 10:00am – 11:45am (MBEB 1210)
Office hours: Mon and Wed 2pm – 3 p.m. (Hansen) and Tue 2pm-3pm (Fragkias)

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.

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 (using their ‘talking-points’ assignment) before coming to class. Lecturing will be limited.

The second part of the class will be allocated to group work.
### Tentative Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Theme</th>
<th>Text Reading</th>
<th>Supplementary Reading</th>
<th>Research Project Activity;</th>
<th>Group Work (in class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/22</td>
<td>Introduction to course &amp; research methodology</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 1</td>
<td>Colander and Klammer, 1987; Colander, 2005</td>
<td>Start thinking about your project; nothing due</td>
<td>Discuss previous experience with research, methods, literature reviews, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Research and Methodology</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 1 and Ch. 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Task assigned in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY WEEKEND</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Methodological Concepts and Perspectives</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 3</td>
<td>Hausman, 1989</td>
<td>Research project proposal due</td>
<td>Read and provide written feedback on others’ proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Philosophical Foundations</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 4</td>
<td>McCloskey, 1983</td>
<td>Work on revisions of proposal; nothing due</td>
<td>Task assigned in class.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Planning the Research</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 5</td>
<td>Moffat, 1994</td>
<td>Revised research proposal due based on feedback.</td>
<td>Read and provide written feedback on others’ revised proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>The Research Problem and Objectives</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Keep working on your paper. Nothing due.</td>
<td>Task assigned in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>The Literature Review</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 7</td>
<td>Berzonsky and Richardson, 2008</td>
<td>Keep working on your paper. Nothing due.</td>
<td>Task assigned in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>The Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>First draft of literature review due.</td>
<td>Read and provide written feedback on others’ literature review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Methods and Procedures</td>
<td>[E] Ch. 9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>First draft of the framework section is due.</td>
<td>Read and provide written feedback on others’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Important note:**
- **Talking Points assignment on Text and Supplementary Readings due every week.**
- **Research project assignments due periodically; see below.**
- **Group work submitted at the end of every class meet-up.**

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- **Deadline for paper assignments:**
  - Text and Supplementary Readings due every week.
  - Research project proposal due based on feedback.
  - First draft of literature review due.
  - First draft of the framework section is due.
  - Nothing due.
Grading:

- **[20%] Talking points assignment / participation / discussion:** Every week, students are expected to complete all assigned readings and write a short review prior to coming to class on Monday. You are asked to hand a hard-copy to the instructor at the beginning of the class and upload a Word doc or pdf in the Assignments section of the course Blackboard site. No late assignments will be accepted. The review is meant to help you frame your thoughts about the readings for the week. Treat the review assignment as a set of “talking points” or a memo for our class discussion. It can include a discussion of issues or ideas spurred by the readings, a critical summary of the week’s readings, or an in-depth critical discussion of a particular point of the readings. The review should include (but is not limited to) 3-4 questions that arise from the readings. Keep your reviews to 2 pages of writing. The review assignments are designed to ensure that everyone does the reading comes to class prepared to discuss them.

- **[20%] Group work in class / quality of feedback on other students’ writing:** All students will be active learners during class periods. This will entail participating in two or more scenarios:
  - Students may be asked to provide written comments (use pen and paper) on in-class exercises submitted by other students.
  - All students will provide written comments (use pen and paper) on other students’ research.
  - All writing will be submitted to the instructor at the end of each class period.

- **[50%] Research Paper/Portfolio:** Students will be graded on their progress and final product of their research activities. Throughout the semester, students will be graded on the submitted...
components of their research (proposal, revised proposal, literature review, etc.). Students will also be graded on the quality of the final product. Note that this course is the first in a two part series so the instructors do not expect a research paper with final results.

- [10%] Presentation: the students are asked to present their work for the semester by following a research talk format. Each presentation will be approximately 20 minutes in length, followed by a short Q&A period. Non-presenting students are expected to participate in the discussion following each presentation. More details on presentations will be shared in class.

**Academic Integrity:**

See [http://registrar.boisestate.edu/catalogs/online/general-policies.shtml#honesty](http://registrar.boisestate.edu/catalogs/online/general-policies.shtml#honesty)

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