

Econ 7130

Research Development & Presentation

Prof. Usha Nair-Reichert

Fall 2015

Workshop

Office Hours: by appointment

Office: 206 Old CE

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Class Times: T, 5.05-7.50pm

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Course Objectives:

The Research Development and Presentation Workshop is a course for 3rd year Economics Ph. D. students. It will enable you to understand how to undertake research in economics, communicate your research findings, and navigate the publication process in economics journals. We will cover topics such as the research production process, how to be productive in research teams, multiple authorship, the distribution of intellectual property rights, and inter-disciplinary aspects of research. We will discuss journal quality, what constitutes good writing, how to communicate with both specialized and general audiences including media, and the protocol for refereeing papers. We will also examine how to structure and deliver your research findings in a professional manner. In this class, you will have several opportunities to present your own research and provide constructive feedback to your classmates on their presentations.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this class, you are expected to be able to:

- a. Critically analyze journal articles and working papers in a cogent, well-reasoned manner, and recognize their strengths and weaknesses.
- b. Identify interesting research questions, and develop one of them into a tractable research project (the research production process).
- c. Understand how to communicate/market the findings of your research at various professional avenues, and effectively address questions from your audience (even if you have very important results, if you don't present them well, your audience may not be able to appreciate their significance).
- d. Understand the publication process in economics and how to respond to referees.
- e. Develop a research idea in (b) above for your final term paper and implement what you learn about the research process in completing your term paper.

Text

A Guide for the Young Economist by William Thompson is the required book for the class. I will also reference *Economical Writing*, by Diedre N. McClosky. Some general readings on various aspects of doing research in economics are included below. I will periodically supplement this with other readings specific to each student's research interests.

Grades

The course grade will be based on 2 referee reports and journal entries which are described later in the syllabus (30), class presentations (20 points) and a final paper (40 points).

Grades will be assigned as follows:

90% of the total points and above	A
80% to less than 90% of the total points	B

70% to less than 80% of the total points	C
60% - to less than 70% of the total points	D
less than 60% of the total points	F

If you are taking this class pass/fail, you need to attend all classes, take all the required exams, and obtain a letter grade C to pass the course.

All class presentations should use PowerPoint, Prezi etc. – that is how you will be presenting your research at seminars and when you are on the job market. Please email your presentation to the class the day before your presentation. Late submissions of referee reports and other deliverables will not be accepted.

Attendance and Class Participation

You are required to attend all classes and be in class on time. You are also required to attend the SOE seminars. **In general, the best way to reach me is by email. Please include Econ 7130 in the subject field** (I receive a lot of emails, so this will help me identify any email from the class) If you don't hear from me with 24 hours please email me again - it is very likely that I did not get your email.

More Details about the class

This class uses several methods to enable students to understand the research, presentation and publication process in economics

a. We will discuss various topics covered in the Thompson book, supplemented by other relevant journal articles.

b. This will be reinforced by guest speakers who discuss how they do research, and respond to referees. During the first part of a class where we have guest speakers, each speaker will be requested to discuss their approach to research, and how they identify interesting questions and get a research project started. In addition, each of them will address a particular aspect of the research process, depending on their area of expertise. During the second part of the class (after the guest speaker has left), we will cover additional material on the topic of the day, the key take-away from the guest lecture, and how they may impact the development of your own research.

c. You will be asked to

Critically analyze and present journal articles

Write literature reviews.

Present your ongoing research in class.

Write detailed referee reports (2 pages) for 2 seminar papers. You will lead the discussion of your referee report presentations.

Prepare and present your final term paper – 12-15 pages.

d. Everyone in the class (and that includes your professor) will maintain an electronic journal that documents the research each person does each week. This will help us monitor our progress and identify some of our strengths and challenges in doing research. Each class will begin with a review of our journal entries. This journal will be graded – not on how much research you did but how well you documented your research process each week. You will also bring to the class and

discuss one article each week from the Wall Street Journal, Economist, New York Times etc which raised an interesting research question in your mind.

There will be intensive discussions and critical feedback on your presentations both from faculty and from your classmates. So please come prepared to receive provide constructive criticism.

Course Outline

(subject to change depending on the guest speaker's schedules)

Week 1: Overview of the course; challenges in doing research;

Brief presentations by student (15 minutes) about

- a. Their research interests.
- b. Any paper they have previously written.

Week 2: WT - chapter 1 - 1.3, 1.4; Chapter 2

Don Davis, "Ph.D. Thesis Research: Where do I Start?"

<http://www.columbia.edu/~drd28/Thesis%20Research.pdf>

N. Gregory Mankiw, "My Rules of Thumb,"

http://www.economics.harvard.edu/files/faculty/40_My_Rules_of_Thumb.pdf

Week 3: The Ph D journey

WT: Chapter 2 continued

Generating interesting research question

Week 4: Key points in writing a good paper; why the introduction to your paper is critical and how to write a great introduction.

Please bring a copy of a paper you have written. We will go over the introduction to your paper, critique and provide suggestions for improvement.

Keith Head, "The Introduction Formula" Jim Brander's valuable advice on how to write introductions to papers. <http://strategy.sauder.ubc.ca/head/brander.htm>

Week 5: The journey of a published paper from its inception to its final publication

Literature reviews and identifying gaps in the literature.

Presentation of initial outline for your term paper

Week 6: Insights into building economic models

Discussion on motivating the research and telling the story;

Hal Varian, "How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time,"

<http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/how.pdf>

Presentation of your own research

Week 7: The research production process; co-authorship; intellectual property.

Student-led discussion of 1st referee report.

Week 8: Brief overview of programming in Stata and documenting your work.

Documenting your research---continued; replication

Daniel S. Hamermesh, "Viewpoint: Replication in economics,"

<https://webspace.utexas.edu/hamermes/www/CJE82007.pdf>

Week 9: **Fall Break**

Week 10: How to conduct good empirical research; interpreting and presenting results; The importance of robustness checks

Francis Kramarz et al. "How to do empirical economics",

<http://www.crest.fr/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Pageperso/kramarz/v30i2a1.pdf>

Keith Head, "10 commandments for regression tables,"

<http://strategy.sauder.ubc.ca/head/tabcoms.htm>

Keith Head, "10 commandments for figures,"

<http://strategy.sauder.ubc.ca/head/figcoms.htm>,

Week 11: The Editor's Perspective; the art of refereeing; how to respond to referee reports

Read Chapter 3 of Thompson's book, pp 103-113

Example of guidelines for referees – JIE

R. Preston McAfee, "Edifying Editing." <http://vita.mcafee.cc/PDF/EditorExperiences.pdf>

Presentation of your own research

Week 12: Your paper has been accepted at a conference - Congratulation! What are the next steps?

Read Chapter 2 of the Thompson book

Example of a well crafted presentation

Individual meetings regarding final paper

Week 13: Next steps if you receive a rejection letter.

Daniel S. Hamermesh "How to publish in top journals"

<https://webspace.utexas.edu/hamermes/www/HowtoPublish.pdf>

Student-led discussion of 2nd referee report.

Next week please analyze an agency that can fund your research.

Week 14: Your analysis of a funding agency due today.

How to secure funding for your research.

Integrating the ideas developed in this class and applying it to your term paper

Weeks 15 and 16: Presentation of final papers.

Review of key ideas discussed during the semester

Your final paper is due by 3pm on December 8, 2015.

Please email it to me.