

Economics 8219- Research Methods **Spring 2007, Tues/Thurs 12:30-1:45, ECON 5**

Professor Terra G. McKinnish
Econ 115, 303-492-6770
mckinnis@colorado.edu
<http://spot.colorado.edu/~mckinnis>
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Goals

The first and most obvious goal of this course is to make significant progress on your 3rd year paper and, hopefully, defend your comprehensive exam. We will also focus on developing some generally useful skills: making clear and concise statements of research question and contribution, making short conference presentations, creating descriptive data analysis, and editing written work.

Course Content

Students will participate in the following activities:

1) Executive Summary of Research Proposal: Students will be given guidelines for generating a 1-2 page executive summary, or detailed abstract, of their research proposal that will cover their main research question, the contribution of their research to the literature, and the key points of their methodology. This is often the form in which you submit your work for a conference. This is also the type of summary of your work you will write up and memorize when you prepare for job market interviews.

2) Group Editing of Executive Summaries: Students will divide into small groups and help each other revise their executive summaries.

3) In-Class Descriptive Data Analysis (DDA) Exercise: Students will break into groups, be assigned a hypothetical research topic and data description; will describe appropriate tables and graphs; will report back to the rest of the class and, hopefully, defend your contribution.

Jan. 23- In-Class Descriptive Data Analysis Discussion

Executive Summaries Due at Noon, Wed. Jan 24 to Me and Your Group

Jan. 25- Group Discussions and Editing of Executive Summaries

Final Executive Summaries and Copies of Proposals Due Mon, Jan 29.

Individual Meetings:

Jan. 30-Feb. 13 – No Class; Individual meetings to discuss paper progress

“15 Min” Presentations:

Feb. 16- Feb 27- All students expected to attend all presentations. More detail below.

Office Hours:

Mar.1-Mar. 15- No Class; Available for individual meetings to discuss paper progress, excluding Feb 28-March 6.

Final Presentations

Mar.20-May 3- 1 hour presentations for those doing their comprehensive oral exam; ½ hour otherwise. All students expected to attend all presentations.

Final Paper Due May 3.

Grades

The primary determinant of your grade will be the quality of your final paper and presentation; however, your performance on the 15 min presentation, as well as your participation in the exercises during the first 2 weeks of class and your attendance/participation in the final presentations of your classmates will also be factored in.

15 min Presentation, more details

The purpose of the 15 min presentations are to give you practice at a short conference-style presentation. The most important part of the presentation is the first five minutes, in which you are expect 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 generate descriptive analysis to describe the quality of information and the key variation in the data.

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.

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

Note the implication that the proposal must therefore contain at least one virtually complete paper.

C. Faculty Examining Committee:

Each student's comprehensive examining committee will consist of 5 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 Director of Graduate Studies and/or dissertation advisors, students are responsible for scheduling the remaining faculty members to serve on their comprehensive committee.
- 3) To aid the students, a department-level Comprehensive Exam Committee will be formed of 6 faculty members. Faculty members serving on this committee will make themselves available to act as the additional members of comprehensive committees, but students are not required to use faculty from this committee.