

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

01:220:493 Honors Research I
Fall 2017

Class Hours: Wednesdays, 8:10-11:10am
Classroom: 201 Scott Hall
Coordinator: Professor Carolyn Moehling
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description: This course will guide students through the first stages of a research project. Students will learn how to search for references and data; read scholarly papers; develop a valid research methodology; write a literature review; give an oral presentation of their work; and write a research proposal. The oral presentation and research proposal will serve as the student's application for 01:220:494 Honors Research II.

Learning Outcomes: This course aims to help students achieve all four of the Economics Department Learning Goals: economic literacy, economic numeracy, economic citizenship, and economic scholarship.
<http://economics.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/courses-and-syllabi/learning-goals>

The specific goals for the course are to:

- Guide students through the first stages of a research project.
- Help students develop research proposals for honors theses.
- Teach students to give research presentations.

Method of Evaluation: Course grades will be determined as follows:

Active Participation:	30%
Research proposal:	
Written proposal due December 4	50%
Presentation (December 6 or 13)	20%

* The presentation schedule will depend on the number of students participating in the Honors Research Program and the schedules of those students, their advisors, and the Honors and Awards Committee

** Final course grades will be assigned in consultation with a student's thesis advisor.

Active Participation: Students are expected to attend all class meetings and actively participate in class discussions by asking and answering questions. There are also three written assignments intended to help students make progress toward completing their research proposals:

October 4: Research prospectus (1 page) stating research question and proposed data and methods
October 25: Draft of literature review
November 15: Draft of data and methods sections of proposal

Research proposal: Students will be required to develop a proposal for their honors thesis project.

The research proposal should contain the following:

- A clear statement of the research question.
- A discussion of why this is a question worthy of study.
- A review of previous studies on the topic or related topics.

Some questions to consider in this review:

-- *What questions have been addressed by other scholars and how do they relate to the proposed research?*

-- *What are the problems or limitations of the previous research?*

-- *What key questions are still unanswered?*

-- *How will the proposed project contribute to the existing literature?*

- A discussion of the theoretical and empirical challenges to addressing the research question.
- A discussion of the proposed empirical methodology.
- A description of the data to be used in the analysis. If the student is using an existing dataset, the proposal should include some descriptive statistics. If the student is going to collect new data either by survey or conducting an experiment, the proposal should include a description of how the data will be collected and what they will include.

The written proposal is due on Monday, December 4. Students will give a presentation of their research proposal during the scheduled class time on either Wednesday, December 6 or Wednesday, December 13.

The research proposal and presentation will serve as the student's application to 01:220:494 Honors Research II. Enrollment in Honors Research II is required for any student who wishes to submit an honors thesis to be considered for an honors designation from the Economics Department.

Course website: I have set up a website for this course on Sakai (<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>). This website will be used to make announcements and post course materials. You should check the website regularly.

Tentative Course Schedule

***** Please note: We will meet only some Wednesdays during the term.**

For some class sessions, there will be short assigned readings. These will be posted on the course website.

September 6: What makes a good honors research project?

Examples of theses from previous years

The Economics Honors Research Rubric

What are the characteristics of a good economic research question?

Ground rules for the course and the Honors Research Program

& Searching for references and data

September 13: How to read a scholarly article

September 20: Creating a valid research design

- October 4: Progress reports
- ***** Research prospectus due *****
[We will discuss these in class. Students will be expected to provide feedback on each other's proposed projects.]
- October 11: How to write a literature review
- October 25: How to write a research proposal
- ***** Draft of literature review due *****
- November 15: Progress reports
- ***** Draft of data and methods sections due *****
- November 29: How to give an oral research presentation
- December 4: Research proposal due
- December 6 and 13: Oral presentations of research projects to Department Honors and Awards Committee

**Economics Department Honors Research 2017-2018
Timeline**

** This timeline applies to all Economics Department Honors Research projects – both independent launches and course-based launches.*

December 4, 2017: Research proposal due

The research proposal should contain the following:

- A clear statement of the research question.
- A discussion of why this is a question worthy of study.
- A review of previous studies on the topic or related topics.
Some questions to consider in this review:
 - *What questions have been addressed by other scholars and how do they relate to the proposed research?*
 - *What are the problems or limitations of the previous research?*
 - *What key questions are still unanswered?*
 - *How will the proposed project contribute to the existing literature?*
- A discussion of the theoretical and empirical challenges to addressing the research question.
- A discussion of the proposed empirical methodology.
- A description of the data to be used in the analysis. If the student is using an existing dataset, the proposal should include some descriptive statistics. If the student is going to collect new data either by survey or conducting an experiment, the proposal should include a description of how the data will be collected and what they will include.

December 6 or 13, 2017: Oral presentation of research proposal

December 21, 2017: Notification of admission to 01:220:494 Honors Research II

April 9, 2018: Draft of thesis for Honors and Award Committee due

Week of April 9, 2018: Presentation of thesis project

April 30, 2018: Archival copy of thesis due