

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

**01:220:494 Honors Research II
Spring 2018**

Class Hours: Wednesdays, 9 - 11am
Classroom: 101 NJ Hall
Coordinator: Professor Carolyn Moehling
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description: This seminar will support students as they engage in independent research projects. Students will learn how to develop timelines for conducting their research; to structure and implement empirical analyses; to report the results of these analyses verbally and graphically; to write a final report on their research project; and to give an oral presentation of their work.

Learning Outcomes: The Economics Honors Research program promotes students achievement of the four Economics Department Learning Goals: economic literacy, economic numeracy, economic citizenship, and economic scholarship.

Students will be able to:

- Understand the process of formulating and conducting an independent research project.
- Use economic theory and reasoning to identify a research question and develop a strategy to answer this question.
- Identify and critically evaluate previous scholarship relevant to the research question.
- Employ economic theory and econometric methods to conduct empirical analyses appropriate for the research question and the available data.
- Communicate effectively the results of their research projects both in writing and in oral presentations.

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

Active participation:	25%
Research project:	
Oral presentation (Week of April 9)	25%
Final paper (Draft due April 9; Archival copy due April 30)	50%

* Final course grades will be assigned in consultation with the 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 some assignments intended to help students make progress toward completing their research projects. (Dates in bold indicate that there will be a class meeting.)

January 17: Progress report

You should prepare a 5-minute, informal (no slides) oral report on your research progress over winter break. You should conclude by outlining your next steps.

January 31: Schedule/timeline for research project

In consultation with your advisor, you should set a schedule for the tasks necessary to carry out and complete your project. The first step is to identify all those tasks. Then you need to estimate how long each will take to complete and determine the most efficient order in which to tackle them.

February 21, 28 & March 7: Project workshops

On these days we will “workshop” our projects. Each student will give a short oral description of their project and discuss what has been completed and what still needs to be done. You may prepare slides to project or materials to distribute (e.g., tables and figures) if you feel that would foster more productive discussion. This is an opportunity for you to get feedback and suggestions from your peers.

March 26: Preliminary draft of thesis due

This is a *preliminary* draft and is not expected to be complete. The goal should be to have all the “front matter” -- introduction, motivation, survey of previous studies, data description, methods, etc. You may only have preliminary empirical results at this point and likely will not yet have your conclusion. The goal for this assignment is to get you engaged in writing your thesis. Writing is a crucial part of the research process. For instance, as you write, you may realize there are gaps in your argument or you may gain greater insight into the strengths and weaknesses of your empirical method.

March 28: Practice presentations and progress reports

This is your opportunity to try out your presentation on a very friendly audience. Some of you will still be working on the final stages of your research projects, but you can still prepare the first half to two-thirds of your slides.

Research project:

Your final research report should contain the following:

- Clear statement of the research question.
- Discussion of why this is a question worthy of study.
- 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?*
- Discussion of the theoretical and empirical challenges to addressing the research question.
- Discussion of the empirical methodology.
- Description of the data used in the analysis.
- Description and discussion of the results of your empirical analysis.
- Conclusion in which you discuss the economic significance of your findings.

A draft of the paper for review by the Economics Department Honors and Awards Committee is **due Monday, April 9 by noon (12pm)**.

You will present your research to the Honors and Awards Committee during the week of April 9. The days and times will be set later in the semester.

The archival copy of the paper is due Monday, April 30. This version of the paper will be kept on file by the Department of Economics and will be made available to future classes of Honors Research students.

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. Meeting dates are in bold ***

January 17:	Introduction and progress reports
January 31:	Timeline due by 9am on sakai (No class meeting)
February 21:	Workshop – informal presentations and discussion
February 28:	Workshop – informal presentations and discussion
March 7:	Workshop – informal presentations and discussion
March 26:	Preliminary paper drafts due 9am on sakai (No class meeting)
March 28:	Practice presentations
Monday, April 9:	Draft of paper for review by Department Honors and Awards Committee due by 12pm (noon) on sakai
Week of April 9:	Oral presentations of research projects to Department Honors and Awards Committee. Times TBA.
Monday, April 30:	Archival copy of thesis due by 5pm on sakai