

SENIOR RESEARCH WORKSHOP**ECON 701/2**

FALL - WINTER 2017-18

Office Hours: Mon. 10:15 – noon & Thur. 10:45 - noon

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OVERVIEW

The aim of this “workshop” is to give interested seniors an independent research experience before they graduate. We will meet as a group only infrequently and the majority of the meetings will occur during the beginning and the end of the semester as we “ramp up” to perfect your research designs at the beginning and to discuss results at the end of the class. The rest of the details with individual projects can be sorted out in one-on-one meetings. Each participant will schedule a weekly meeting with me.

Students are free to pursue their own research ideas, conditional, of course, on the ideas being viable (i.e., asking a clear empirical question that can be answered in the time permitted). Having a solid idea isn’t, however, a requirement for being admitted into the program. I have collected a long list of what I think are both manageable and interesting projects on which to work. I will distribute this list to those with interest in the program early in the term. Picking a topic from the list is the risk-averse strategy because the list contains ideas that I know something about and would, therefore, also be interested in working on. In other words, picking one of these topics aligns our incentives.

GRADING

Your performance in the class will really depend on just two things: your participation and final your research paper. Along the way, there will be a number of places in which our joint efforts might be required. For example, some of you will have to recruit subjects and we may have to help each other run some experiments. In addition, I will ask each of you to comment on drafts generated by your classmates and an interim slideshow each of you will do to give us a sense of your progress and the places where you might feel “stuck”. All this will comprise a participation score which will account for no more than 20% of your final grade.

On the next page is a calendar of important dates for the class.

CALENDAR

September 11 - 15: Group meeting. We will meet briefly during the first week of classes to discuss the syllabus, individual meeting times, topics or how to pick a topic and any other logistics of the thesis program.

September 25: Project prospectus due. A prospectus is a brief document (2-3 pages) that describes your project. It should include: (i) a clear statement of the specific question you are asking (i.e., what exactly is the puzzle you are trying to solve); (ii) a few paragraphs on the literature that you will look at (i.e., the most relevant papers); (iii) ideas on the research design (of the econometric model or notes on how you will get naturally occurring data or experiment/survey); (iv) if necessary, an expected budget for the experiment (count on paying people between \$15 and \$20 each), and (v) a bibliography of related papers that you will read.

October 1: Senior Work Fund application due. For those of you who will need funding, we will take advantage of the money set aside for senior research projects. The program and application process is described at: <http://go.middlebury.edu/srps>.

November 10: Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification (and application, if necessary) due. Because your projects may involve human subjects, you will need to get the approval of the IRB. You will have to do the NIH short course to get certified and there is an application to complete. Both are discussed at: <http://go.middlebury.edu/irb>.

November 27: Draft of literature review due.

December 15: Draft of methods section due.

January 12: Tables and figures for an analysis of your data due.

January ? : Thesis Presentations. You will each create poster for the combine thesis mini-conference in BiHall.

February 2: Full paper drafts due. Comments will be made by the other EC700 students.

February 9: Thesis due (including data sets and do files for replication).