

Economics 8209- Research Methods **Fall 2010, Mon/Wed 12:00-1:15, ECON 5**

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Office Hours: MW 2-3, Thurs 10:30-11:30, and by appointment

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to transition you into the research phase of your doctoral studies.

The primary goal is that you end this semester with a research proposal that includes:

- a) a well-specified research question
- b) a literature review that explains the innovation and contribution of the proposed research
- c) the proposed methodology (theoretical and/or empirical)

Course Content

The semester will consist of 6 activities:

1) Introductory lectures and exercises: lectures on: What is research? Where do research ideas come from? How do I pick and work with advisors? What do I need to know now about the job market for economists? What makes a good literature review? What makes a good presentation? Students will be assigned several literature reviews and one published paper to read as part of the discussion. They will also make “practice presentation slides” for one of these papers and discuss them in groups.

2) Paper presentation: Students will pick an important paper related to their area of interest and make a 20 min presentation to the class.

3) Literature review: Students will write a 3-5 page literature review for their proposed topic and make a 20 min presentation to the class. Ideally, the literature review will start with a well-specified research question around which you organize your literature review.

4) Proposed methodology: Students will write a 3-5 page paper describing the methodology (theoretical and/or empirical, as appropriate) that will be used to answer the research question. Students should strive to be as specific as possible (e.g. actual equations). They will make a 20 minute presentation of the methodology to the class.

5) Final presentation and proposal: Students will use their literature review and methodology papers, and the feedback they received during the semester, to write a final proposal of 8-12 pages. Students will make a 30 minute presentation of their proposal to me and their advisor(s).

6) Peer-Editing of Manuscripts: For both the literature review and the methodology assignments, students will provide an early rough draft to two designated classmates at the beginning of the week the assignment is due. Each student will then edit the two drafts they receive and provide feedback to their classmates.

