

ECONOMICS 1960
HONORS TUTORIAL FOR ECONOMICS MAJORS

Course Time: TuTh, 10:30 – 11:50 am in Bio Med Center 081

Course Website: MyCourses and Brown Google Sites

Office Hours:

Tuesday, 2:45-3:45 pm; Friday, 1:30-2:30 pm
70 Waterman St, rm. 303

Overview and Objectives:

This class has three primary objectives: i) cover, in detail, papers that use different approaches to constructing decisive empirical evidence on questions in applied microeconomics; ii) have students critically evaluate an important research paper in their topic of interest; iii) have students develop a thesis topic and present their proposed approach to the topic in a seminar-style setting.

The class is collaborative, with professor and students providing feedback. There are three phases to the course that match the three objectives. By the end of the course, students should have developed a full proposal for an Honors Thesis that is feasible and likely to be completed before graduation.

Required Background: In good standing for completing an Honors Thesis before graduation.

- i) GPA of 3.7 or above in Economics concentration courses (or permission from Prof. Louis Putterman, Director of Undergraduate Studies)
- ii) Obtained a faculty advisor for the thesis.

Course Requirements:

For one-third of the course, the Instructor will cover research papers. Students are expected to read the papers before class. For another third, *half of the class* will critically evaluate an important research paper in their topic of interest by giving a 35-40 minute presentation in class. In the final third, *half of the class* will give a 35-40 minute class presentation of their thesis idea, its feasibility and preliminary findings. In all presentations, the professor and students will provide feedback. Students are expected to attend all classes. The final course requirement is a 10-12 page thesis “proposal” that is due on December 12.

Class handouts will be available at the MyCourses website. There will also be a class page on Brown’s Google Sites, where students will post their class presentations and thesis proposals.

Course Grading:

25% In-class Presentation
50% Thesis proposal (10-12 pages, due December 12)
25% Class participation

Failure to complete any of the course elements will result in an Incomplete for the course.

ROUGH SCHEDULE

The course will be conducted in three phases: i) instructor discussion of research papers; ii) student's in-class presentation of an important research paper in the topic of interest; and iii) student's in-class presentation of thesis idea and feasibility.

9/8 Background, Names of Thesis advisors

Phase 1: Instructor presentation of research examples

9/13, 9/15

9/20, 9/22

10/25, 10/27

11/1, 11/3

Phase 2: In-class presentations (14-16 students)

35-40 minute presentation of "best" research paper in thesis topic

9/27, 9/29

10/4, 10/6

10/11, 10/13

10/18, 10/20

Phase 3: In-class presentations (14-16 students)

35-40 minute presentation of thesis idea, feasibility, early findings

11/8, 11/10

11/15, 11/17

11/22

11/29, 12/1

12/6

12/8 If needed (Reading period)

Thesis Proposal due December 12

Empirical Honors Thesis

- Double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 11-12 point font
- 24 to 30 pages of text
- References/Bibliography
- Tables and Figures

Approximately 40 to 50 pages total

1. Title page, Acknowledgments, Abstract
2. Text
 - I. Introduction (2-3 pages)
 - II. Motivation and Background (3-5 pages)
 - III. Data description (2-3 pages)
 - IV. Empirical/Econometric Methods, Hypotheses tested (2-4 pages)
 - V. Results/Findings
 - VI. Implications, Competing Hypotheses (robustness), Caveats
 - VII. Conclusion
3. References
4. Appendices
5. Tables and Figures