ECON 6901
Research Methods for Economists I
Spring 2017

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Class Time & Location: T 6:30 – 9:15 p.m.  Friday 207
Office Hours: T 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.  By appointment

Course Description

ECON 6901. Research Methods for Economists I. (3G) Prerequisites: ECON 6112 or ECON 6113, and either ECON 6201, ECON 6202 or MBAD/FINN 6157. Research programs in economics; problem identification; interpretation of statistical results, bibliographic search, data sources and collection, selection of statistical technique, preparation of reports and proposals.

Course Objective

The objective of this course is to introduce students to critical evaluations of published and unpublished research, to support students in finding suitable research topics, and to develop these into full-blown research projects with the intention that the completed projects (at the end of the ECON 6902 course) be at the level of papers suitable for academic conference presentations and/or submissions to academic journals.

Recommended Reading

Students will find the following to be a very useful guide to academic writing:


Please note that this classic style manual costs less than $10 on Amazon.com.

Newspapers, magazines, anything that can give you research ideas.

Attendance and Class Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes (unless excused by the instructors) and to participate in the classroom discussion of topics and projects presentations. Student participation – not simply class attendance – is essential.

Your performance in this aspect of the class will constitute 15% of your final grade for the course.
Assignments

The remaining 85% of your final course grade will be based on your performance on seven assignments. Due dates and individual weightings for these assignments are listed on the course schedule in the following section.

Assignment 1 (15% of final course grade)

This assignment is a replication and critique of a published journal article by Loree:


Write a paper that summarizes and critiques the author’s research question(s), model specification, data, and empirical results. Replicate the paper’s summary statistics and regression results (as reported in Tables 1, 3, and 4) as closely as you can. We can provide you with links to the data, but you will need to do some data manipulation to obtain all of the variables required for the replication. Do you agree with the paper’s conclusions? Comment on the style/format of the paper.

Your critique should be no more than 5 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins) including tables. Attach your computer program/output as an appendix (these do not count as part of the 5 pages).

Assignment 2 (5% of final course grade)

Each individual must write a topic proposal of one to two pages. This topic proposal should include a research question to be answered, as well as references to at least three or four papers on the topic. One of the papers referenced in this topic proposal will be the basis for Assignment 3.

Assignment 3 (10% of final course grade)

Each individual must choose an article referenced in Assignment 2 and write a critique of the chosen paper. This critique should include a summary of the purpose, theory, methodology, and main findings of the chosen article, but should also be critical of the paper. Note that you do not need to replicate the results of this paper. The critique should be no more than 5 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins).

Assignment 4 (15% of final course grade)

Each individual must have identified a research question. This assignment will begin to form the basis of your final research paper. You should write a partial introduction and a thorough literature review of no more than 15 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins) that discusses the general topic and specific research question, reviews the relevant academic literature, and justifies the particular research question being examined.
Each individual will also make a presentation (most probably using PowerPoint, though other classes of slides are acceptable) to the class and answer questions arising from the presentation. An electronic copy of the presentation should be sent to each instructor at least 48 hours prior to the presentation date. Changes can still be made prior to the presentation, and changes that enhance the presentation are encouraged, but we would like to have some slides to reference during your presentation.

**Assignment 5 (10% of final course grade)**

Each individual will make a presentation of the data to be used. In this presentation the student should discuss the source of the data and how the data will be used to address the research question. The student should also present summary statistics of all variables as well as figures and/or graphs of the data. The intent of this presentation is to provide evidence to the instructors that the dataset being used is relevant to the research question, and that data are complete and not missing observations.

Please note that no paper is required for this presentation. However, as for Assignment 4, please submit an electronic copy of the presentation to each instructor at least 48 hours prior to the presentation.

**Assignment 6 (10% of final course grade)**

Each individual will make a presentation to the class about the preliminary empirical results (or at least, its state of progress).

Again, the no paper is required for submission. However, as for Assignments 4 and 5, please submit an electronic copy of the presentation to each instructor at least 48 hours prior to the presentation.

**Assignment 7 (20% of final course grade)**

Each individual submits a preliminary research project report. This is to be a formal report (not an outline or list of information) and must include discussions of the research question(s), relevant literature, data sources and descriptions, proposed empirical methods, and (if applicable) preliminary empirical results. Just as importantly, the report will outline plans for completing the project in ECON 6902. These plans should include any proposed extensions to the empirical model, checks for robustness, and additional spinoff research questions to be addressed.

***Important***

Starting with Assignment 2 above, all written work in Research Methods I and II will require that you follow certain style and formatting guidelines. While we will provide further details on these style and format requirements at a later class, we summarize these here. At a minimum:

- All papers should include the student’s name, paper title, and page numbers
- References should be formatted using a single reference style
- Papers that include figures, graphs, or tables should include each on a separate page
• Tables should not simply be a copy and paste of output from STATA or other software used for analysis
• We suggest students adopt the style of the *Journal of Finance*, the *Journal of Political Economy*, or the *Southern Economic Journal* for all submitted work in this course

Also please note that if Assignment 2 does not adhere to these guidelines the student will receive a zero for the assignment. All other assignments that do not adhere to these guidelines will be returned to the student. Students may resubmit the assignments late but at a cost of 5 percentage points for each day late, up to 4 days, after which the grade will be a zero.

**Course Schedule** *(Tentative)*

Week 1 (J 10)  
Introduction, discussion of first assignment, what is a research question

Week 2 (J 17)  
Two examples of an empirical paper critique

Week 3 (J 24)  
Critique (Assignment 1) due at beginning of class  
Discussion of first assignment paper; update on research question progress

Week 4 (J 31)  
Return & review of Assignment 1 in individual meetings with instructors  
Assignment 2 due at individual meeting with instructors

Week 5 (F 7)  
Return & review of Assignment 2 in individual meetings

Week 6 (F 14)  
Literature reviews and data presentation  
Assignment 3 due

Week 7 (F 21)  
Return & review of assignment 3 and discuss progress at individual meetings

Week 8 (F 28)  
No class – work on Assignment 4 which is due by 5pm on Friday March 10

Week 9 (M 7)  
No class – Spring Break

Week 10 (M 14)  
Lit review presentations & discussion

Week 11 (M 21)  
Lit review presentations & discussion

Week 12 (M 28)  
Individual meetings as needed

Week 13 (A 4)  
Student data presentations

Week 14 (A 11)  
Student data presentations

Week 15 (A 18)  
Individual meetings as needed

Week 16 (A 25)  
Final presentations & discussion
Week 17 (M 2)  Final presentations & discussion

Week 18 (M 9)  Assignment 7 due at 8:00 p.m. (beginning of scheduled final exam period)

The above schedule is tentative, and we may need to use some time in weeks 12 and 15 for presentations.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic dishonesty is not tolerated by the Belk College of Business or these instructors. Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of the UNCC Code of Student Academic Integrity (this Code is online at http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html). The Code forbids cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Academic evaluation in this course includes a judgment that the student's work is free from academic dishonesty of any type. Violations will be dealt with in the manner specified the Code. Students observing violations of the Code are expected to report this to the instructors.

**Diversity**
The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to, ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

**Adverse Weather**
If the University is closed or if the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system is closed, there will be no class. If you commute in from outside the county and there is adverse weather there (but not in Mecklenburg County), make your own decision to attend or not, but remember we do not want you to endanger life or limb just to get to class.

**Communication**
To repeat: Dr. Gandar's email address is jmgandar@uncc.edu and Dr. Zillante’s email address is azillant@uncc.edu. Always email both of us. Please include "ECON 6901 student question" in the subject line to ensure a prompt reply. If the question is such that all students could benefit from a reply, we may reply to all students in the class.

When we email an individual or the entire class, we will use your official university email address. You are responsible for monitoring this address: we will not use your private address.

**Disability Services**
UNC Charlotte is committed to access to education. If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services early in the semester. For more information on accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at 704-687-0040 or visit their office at Fretwell 230.