

Prof. Stan Masters
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Office Hours: Wed 1 to 2 & by appt.

Syllabus for Economics 594, Fall 2009
Economics Workshop for Master's Students

The learning objectives of this course are; 1) to learn how to do an empirical research project and 2) to learn how to write up the results in an effective manner.

It is important to pick a topic in which you are interested and for which data are available.

Each student is required to meet the course deadlines and to report regularly on your progress. Because this is a small seminar class, attendance at all classes is essential – unless you are excused in advance for reasons such as a job interview. The in-class presentations are important to help provide the motivation to keep making progress, despite the press of other commitments. Equally important, the presentations enable you to learn from each other as you give and receive comments on each other's work. Progress reports, both written and oral, and class participation will count for about 20 percent of the your grade. Progress reports should be typed on a word processor.

The class will meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2:20 to 3:20. Often we will meet only twice a week and sometimes only once a week.

| Week of | Activity |
|-------------------|---|
| Aug.31, Sept. 7 | How to pick a topic, discussion of areas of interest |
| Wed. 9/ 2 | Talk with reference librarian Colleen Hailey, who can help you find data For this one class we will meet in the Instruction Lab in the Newcomb Reading Room, near the coffee kiosk. As you leave the Library Tower elevators, turn left and go past the coffee kiosk. The Newcomb Reading Room and the Instruction Lab both will be straight ahead of you. |
| Sept. 4, 9 , & 11 | further discussion of topics for paper, discussion of writing styles, possible start of presentation of related papers |
| Mon. Sept. 7 | no class, Labor Day holiday |

Week of Sept. 14 student presentations of articles related to their topics

Wed. Sept.16 A short report (one or two pages) is due explaining your topic. You must include the question you will try to answer, why this topic is important, the existing literature on the topic, the theory on which your study will be based and the data you will use. The data often are a major obstacle. Although the library can help you obtain data, sometimes this process takes weeks or even months, thus making it impossible to complete the project in a timely fashion.

As part of your report, please indicate a paper related to your topic that you will present to the class (if you have not already done so) and indicate how this paper relates to what you plan to do

Fri. Sept. 18 no class, Rosh Hashanah

Week of Sept.21 Presentation of related articles. Discussion of any changes in topics and/or any data problems you are having.

Week of Sept. 28 Discussion and presentation of analysis plans

Mon. 9/28 no class, Yom Kippur

Fri. 10/2 An analysis plan is due which

1) describes the data source(s) you will be using and indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the data for your purposes and

2) discusses in full detail how you plan to use the data.

For example, what regressions do you plan to run?

How does your use of the data relate to the question you are trying to answer?

Weeks of Oct. 5 & 12 Discussion of analysis plans, progress being made and problems encountered

Wed. 10/14 Hand in a progress report including
1) an outline of your paper
2) your progress on the empirical work.

- Weeks of Oct. 19, 26
Nov. 2, 9, 16, and 23 Discussion of progress reports and of your progress since writing your progress report. There may also be additional written progress reports. We probably will meet no more than once or twice a week during this period
- Wed. 11/4 Hand in a detailed outline of your paper plus a summary of your empirical work to date
- Wed. 11/18 First drafts of papers due.
- Wed & Fri 11/25 and 27 no classes, Thanksgiving holiday
- Weeks of Nov. 30 and Dec. 7 Present papers to class.
- Mon. Dec. 7 Final paper due, including 1-2 page Executive Summary