

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
Department of Economics
Fall 2023

ECON 43962: Senior Honors Workshop

Section 1: Monday/Wednesday, 2:00-3:15, 205 DeBartolo Hall

Section 2: Monday/Wednesday, 3:30-4:45, 334 DeBartolo Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:15-2:45, or by appointment

In-person and Zoom options (send calendar invite for Zoom).

This course provides structure and support for students writing a senior honors thesis. Class meetings do not replace regular meetings with the faculty advisor, but rather complement them as a platform to acquire general research skills and discuss research progress. The course will focus on how to structure a thesis, how to find the relevant literature, how to read current research, how to find and collect appropriate data, and how to develop an empirical approach. Key elements of the course will include instruction in writing like an economist, a review of Stata, an overview of library and data resources, and some basics of data treatment. We will also have several days for in-class work on your thesis. Regular writing assignments and periodic in-class presentations will help you stay on track, with a goal of completing the thesis by April 1 in the spring. The milestone at the end of the semester is a polished draft of the front end of the paper and a detailed outline for the remaining sections.

Canvas: Our website within Canvas will have class notes, resources, assignment information, and more. I will also use it to collect some assignments.

Stata and laptops: We will do some in-class writing exercises that will require you to have a laptop in class. While it is not required, many of you may also want to acquire a personal Stata license for your laptop. You can purchase deeply discounted student licenses at <https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/>. If you need assistance obtaining these resources, please contact the Office of Student Enrichment at (<https://studentenrichment.nd.edu/resources/funding/>).

Requirements and grading weight:

A. Participation (20%)

Students are expected to contribute to a communal classroom environment. This means attending class (see below), participating in discussion, and offering respectful and thoughtful feedback on others' work. I will let you know if you are not meeting expectations on this front. I may also ask your peers to evaluate your contributions. Your efforts on our in-class work days will also be reflected in your participation grade.

B. Assignments (25%)

There are ten writing assignments due throughout the semester (in addition to the final paper). These are intended to give you a chance to apply skills learned in class and should help you stay on track with your thesis. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date.

C. In-class presentations (15%)

You will give two brief in-class presentations—the first is three minutes, and is worth 5% of your grade, and the second is 7 minutes and is worth 10%. I will describe the expectations for these presentations as they get closer.

D. Final paper (40%)

Draft papers should include polished versions of the front sections of the paper (introduction, literature review, background) and an outline of all remaining sections of the paper in as much detail as possible. The paper should clearly identify the research question you aim to answer, provide background and motivation for the pursuit, place your work in the context of the literature, and explain your plan to answer the question (e.g., data, empirical strategy). The draft should also include a complete bibliography following the style of a major academic journal in economics. The final product for the fall semester is due on **Friday, December 8 by 5pm**. You should submit it to both me and your advisor before the deadline. The draft paper will be graded by your advisor.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. I will start deducting points after two unexcused absences. Please refer to the University's [Academic Code](#) for policies on excused absences, but I include here a section that is often relevant for students in this class:

A junior or senior with a mandatory admission interview for professional or graduate school, a post-graduate employment interview that cannot be rescheduled, or a presentation of original academic research that requires participation of external reviewers. Students requesting an excused absence under this provision must present documentation of the qualifying event to the student's dean (or dean's designee) at least one week prior to the anticipated absence. The dean (or dean's designee) will determine whether the event qualifies for an excused absence and will notify the instructor(s) of the affected course(s). A student can request excused absences for no more than two class days per semester under this provision. Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to manage scheduling of such events to minimize class absences, and to use fall, Christmas, and spring breaks for scheduling interviews whenever possible.

Late Work: I will accept late work up to 24 hours after the due date, with a 25% penalty. After that, no credit will be given. If you need an extension for an academic reason (e.g., your advisor's timeline for your work), reach out to me as soon as possible and we will work something out.

Honor Code Information: In signing the university's honor code, you agreed not to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect you to adhere to this strictly, and any violations will be reported to the Associate Provost. You are expected to submit your own work; plagiarism is unacceptable and will be harshly penalized. Please ask if you have any questions or need clarification about the expectations.

Use of AI: For the purposes of this class, you may not use ChatGPT or other AI software to complete an assignment without checking with me first. If you have ideas about how to use AI in a way that is complementary with the work you are doing on your thesis, I would be happy to hear them.

Privacy: As a learning community, we are collectively responsible for upholding privacy protection standards. While there has always been a need to maintain and respect each other's privacy, it is especially important as aspects of our teaching and learning have moved online, beyond the traditional confines of the classroom. As your instructor, I am committed to protecting your privacy by only using University-approved course technologies and adhering to Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. This includes only using your educational data for legitimate educational purposes and only sharing that with the University for legitimate purposes (for instance, submitting your final grades to the

Registrar). As learning community members, I ask that each of us commit to the following basic privacy protection standards:

- Do not post images or identifiable conversations that occur in class or online to social media or to those beyond our learning community (this violates both general privacy and FERPA standards).

Accommodations and Resources: If you are in need of support for your mental or emotional health for any reason, you can talk to me. You can also find helpful resources at <https://supportandcare.nd.edu/>, including information about Care and Wellness Consultants. The Writing Center, Gender Relations Center, Multicultural Student Services and Programs, and International Student and Scholar Affairs are also available on campus. Information on requesting accommodations for students with disabilities is available at <https://supportandcare.nd.edu/for-students/current-students/accessibility-support/>.

Lauren’s Promise: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening or harassing you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year old student at the University of Utah and the daughter of economist Jill McCluskey, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018 by a man she briefly dated. I am committed to doing what I can to make sure this does not happen again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, or harassment you can report it to me. You should be aware that I am a mandatory reporter, which means that I am required to report these instances to the university’s Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator to investigate. **You can also learn about your options (on-campus and off-campus, confidential and not) at <http://titleix.nd.edu>.**

Schedule

(Subject to change.)

Assignments with an asterisk receive double weight.

Dates	In-Class Topic	Assignment Due
Aug. 23	Introduction, thesis guidelines, how to be a good advisee.	
Aug. 28	Launching the research process, formulating a research question. Brief introduction to literature searches and Zotero.	
Aug. 30	Reading an academic article. How to get your thesis (& other stuff) done.	Submit questions for student panel.
Sept. 4	Work in class.	
Sept. 6	Panel of former thesis writers.	* Summary of journal article.
Sept. 11	Getting organized. Making a work outline.	
Sept. 13	Work in class.	Goals exercise.
Sept. 18	Visit from economics subject librarian.	

Sept. 20	Three-minute thesis presentations.	
Sept. 25	Work in class.	
Sept. 27	Literature reviews, writing like an economist.	
Oct. 2	NO CLASS	
Oct. 4	The power of summary statistics.	* Draft of literature review.
Oct. 9	Writing estimating equations, prep for lab time.	
Oct. 11	Stata review, data work in class.	Estimating equation.
Oct. 16/18	Fall Break, no class.	
Oct. 23	Work in class.	
Oct. 25	Introduction to introductions.	* Data analysis plan.
Oct. 30	Effective Presentations. Revisit goals and work outline.	
Nov. 1	Work in class.	Revised goals exercise.
Nov. 6	Peer review of introduction drafts (bring to class).	
Nov. 8	Work in class.	* Draft of introduction.
Nov. 13	Seven-minute thesis presentations.	
Nov. 15	Seven-minute thesis presentations.	
Nov. 20	Outlining the thesis. Looking ahead to your methods and results sections.	
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving Break, no class	
Nov. 27	Work in class.	
Nov. 29	Work in class.	* Detailed outline.
Dec. 4	In-class peer reviews of drafts (bring to class).	
Dec. 6	In-class peer reviews of drafts and wrap-up.	Revised goals exercise.

Resources

A. On Writing

Lamott, A. (1995). *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor.

Lipson, C. (2018). *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide From Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*. University of Chicago Press.

Nikolov, P. (2022). *Writing Tips for Economics Research Papers—2021-2022 Edition* (No. 15057). IZA Discussion Papers.

Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. American Psychological Association.

Strunk Jr, W., & White, E. B. (2007). *The Elements of Style Illustrated*. Penguin.

Wooldridge, J. M. (2015). *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach*. Chapter 19: Carrying Out an Empirical Project. Cengage learning.

Ziliak, S. T., McCloskey, D. N. (2019). *Economical Writing, Third Edition: Thirty-Five Rules for Clear and Persuasive Prose*. United Kingdom: University of Chicago Press.

B. On Empirical Analysis

Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2009). *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton University Press.

Cunningham, S. (2021). *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. Yale University Press.

* This book is available for free online.

Huntington-Klein, N. (2021). *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality*. Chapman and Hall/CRC.

C. Notre Dame-Specific Resources

Guidelines: https://economics.nd.edu/assets/422007/senior_thesis_guidelines_2019.pdf

Thesis page including links to slideshows of previous theses:

<https://economics.nd.edu/undergraduate-program/student-opportunities/research/senior-thesis/>

Honors track info: <https://economics.nd.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-programs/honors-track/>

Economics thesis examples:

<https://economics.nd.edu/undergraduate-program/student-opportunities/research/senior-thesis/2019---theses-honors-capstones-and-international-economics-senior-research-projects/examples-of-theses/>

Senior thesis grants: <https://isla.nd.edu/for-students/funding/senior-thesis-grant/>

Arts & Letters thesis page:

<https://al.nd.edu/advising/student-opportunities-and-resources/independent-research/the-senior-thesis/>