The principal aim of this course is to develop the skills and techniques needed for carrying out a substantive original research project in economics. To achieve this purpose, the course will focus on the writing and presentation of a senior thesis. Students may choose from a wide variety of topics. Along the way, students will learn how to evaluate scholarly literature, formulate and model a hypothesis, locate data and test the hypothesis, write an elegant paper and give a convincing presentation. This course marks the culmination of the economics and international economics majors and an introduction to the world of scholarly research.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions and complete all assigned reading before the class. All students are expected to abide by the university honor code, which can be found at [http://www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor). Students are encouraged to share ideas and help one another throughout the course, but their work must be original and completed independently. If you have even the slightest inkling that you might be violating the honors code, stop what you are doing, consult the website, and, if you are still unsure, ask a professor. Final papers will become part of the database at turnitin.com.

The research paper: Each student will be responsible for writing an article-length paper, approximately 20-25 pages in length, excluding tables, charts, figures, etc. In the paper, students are expected to evaluate, critique, test, and build upon a current debate of their choosing in the field of economics. Students should develop competing hypotheses, model them formally, and test them using quantitative methods. The papers will account for 60% of the final grade. The papers should be written as if they were being presented at a professional conference or submitted to a scholarly journal. Final papers are due (both a hard copy and an electronic copy) at the beginning of the last class meeting on May 2.
The thesis is to be written in a series of steps. Each step is marked by the completion of a short paper or class presentation. The steps are as follows:

1. **Paper topic:** students are responsible for selecting a topic for their paper in consultation with the professors. A one-page topic statement, consisting of tentative title and abstract, must be submitted to both professors by January 19. One of the professors will contact you, either approving your topic or asking for revision. Revisions are due on January 26. The professor who approves your topic will serve as your thesis mentor for the remainder of the semester. Failure to obtain an approved paper topic will result in withdrawal from the course.

2. **The research proposal:** Once the topic is approved, each student must submit a formal research proposal in writing and make a spoken presentation to the class. The written proposal should be 2-3 pages in length. It should state the research question to be answered, why the question is important, and provide an overall strategy for answering the question. A preliminary outline, list of references, and potential data sources should also be included. The in-class presentations will be strictly limited to 10 minutes -- 6 minutes for the speaker, followed by 4 minutes of discussion. Paper proposals are due in hard copy to both professors at the time of the presentation. All SFS students who wish to be considered for honors must submit a formal request with their paper proposal.

3. **Literature review and model:** a detailed review of the literature and a formal statement of the theoretical model. The aim of this 3-5 page paper is to state the theory that you intend to test and to explain how it relates to the existing literature. Students will meet in groups of four or five with their mentor to discuss this paper. A hard copy of the paper must be sent to your mentor and an electronic copy to your group by 10 am on the day before the meeting.

4. **Data sources and empirical strategy:** a detailed presentation of the data and appropriate estimators. The aim of this 3-5 page paper is to present the data you have obtained and explain the econometric methods you intend to use in testing your hypothesis. Students will meet in groups of three or four with their mentor to discuss this paper. A hard copy of the paper must be sent to your mentor and an electronic copy to your group by 10 am on the day before the meeting.

5. **Preliminary empirical results:** a detailed presentation of the econometric estimates. The aim of this 3-5 page paper is to present the results of the first pass at your regression analysis. Students will meet in groups of four with their mentor to discuss this paper. As these are preliminary results, you will almost certainly be asked to revise or extend your empirical analysis, before the final presentation. A hard copy of the paper must be sent to your mentor and an electronic copy to your group by 10 am on the day before the meeting.

6. **Final presentation:** Each student will also present a penultimate version of his or her paper to the class. Student presentations should be no more than 15 minutes in
length and will be followed by 10 minutes of questions and answers. The presentation should be treated as if it were a formal paper presentation at a scholarly conference. Use of overheads, PowerPoint slides, and other presentation materials are encouraged. A complete draft of your paper is due by 5 pm seven (7) days prior to the day of your classroom presentation. One hard copy shall be given to each professor. Electronic copies must be delivered to two student referees. You may also identify an article, book chapter, or other material for the class to read in preparation for the discussion of your paper.

7. **Referee reports:** each student will serve as a referee and discussant for the penultimate paper of two other students. Written referee reports of 2-3 pages must be provided to the paper writer and each professor the time the paper is presented. Referees also act as discussants and is responsible for coordinating classroom discussion when the author presents the penultimate version of the paper to the class.

**Grades** will be determined as follows:

- Written paper proposal 5%
- Write-up of the literature review and model 5%
- Write-up of the data sources and empirical strategy 5%
- Write-up of the preliminary results 5%
- Penultimate paper submission and final presentation 10%
- Referee reports on your colleagues’ papers 10% (5% ea.)
- Class participation 10%
- Quality of final paper 50%

All assignments will be down graded a letter grade per day after the due date. Except in truly extraordinary circumstances, no extensions will be granted.

For SFS students: to receive honors, a student must submit an application for honors with the paper proposal and fulfill all of the requirements specified in the description of the majors. Among other things, these requirements specify that honors students must receive an A in this class. Professors will determine whether a thesis is of honors quality in consultation a committee including at least one other member of the IECO field committee.

The Carroll Round is scheduled for April 22 – 24. This is an excellent opportunity to see students from elsewhere present their research and we encourage you to consider applying to present your work. For more information, you can consult the web page, [http://carrollround.georgetown.edu](http://carrollround.georgetown.edu). We would like all students in this seminar to attend at least 2 sessions of the Round, regardless of whether or not your own work will be presented.
Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction (January 12, ICC 118)

Classes 2 & 3: How to write research a paper (January 19, ICC 105, January 24 ICC 118)


Brander’s “Introduction Formula”: [http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/brander.htm](http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/brander.htm)

Ten Commandments of regression tables: [http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/tabcoms.htm](http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/tabcoms.htm)
Ten Commandments for figures: [http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/figcoms.htm](http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/keith/figcoms.htm)


Paper topics (title and abstract) are due on January 19. Electronic and paper copies should be submitted to both Professor Cumby and Professor Levinson.

Classes 4 - 7 Presentation of Proposals (January 26, 31, February 2, 7)

Written proposals are due at the presentation. A hard copy should be submitted to both Professor Cumby and Professor Ludema.

Classes 8 - 11: Group Meeting to Discuss Literature Reviews and Models (February 9, 14, 16, 23)

Papers (3-5 pages) are due at 10 am the day before the group’s meeting. A copy of the literature review need only be submitted to the faculty member working with the group. Additional copies should be distributed to group members.

Classes 12 - 15: Group Meetings to Discuss Empirical Strategies (February 28, March 2, 14, 16)

Summaries of data and empirical strategies (3-5 pages) are due by 10 am the day before the group’s meeting. A copy of the summary of the empirical strategy need only be submitted to the faculty member working with the group. Additional copies should be distributed to group members.
Classes 16-19: Group Meetings to Discuss Preliminary Empirical Results (March 21, 23, 30, April 4)

Preliminary empirical results (3-5 pages) are due by 10 am the day before the group’s meeting. A copy of the preliminary empirical results need only be submitted to the faculty member working with the group. Additional copies should be distributed to group members.

Class 20: Meetings to deal with issue arising in previous group meetings (April 6)

Classes 21 – 26: Presentation of Draft Papers (April 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27)

Drafts are due by 5 pm one week prior to the presentation. One hard copy shall be given to each professor. Electronic copies shall be delivered to student referees. Referee reports are due at the presentation.

Class 27: Final Meeting (May 2, ICC 118)

A hard copy of your final paper is due in class. An electronic copy must also be submitted by the end of the day.