

Purdue University · Department of Agricultural Economics

**AGEC 692: Workshop in Applied Economics
Fall 2016**

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Class Meetings:	Tuesdays, 9:30-10:20, in KRAN G009		

Course description and objectives. This is a 1-credit course designed to help prepare students for PhD-level applied economic research. The goal is to explain what constitutes a desirable research program for a PhD student and to provide guidance on research design, ethical conduct of research, and preparation of the PhD prospectus document and presentation.

Prerequisites. The course is designed for 2nd year PhD students in Agricultural Economics. Before enrolling students must have passed the 1st year microeconomic theory qualifying exam, but should not yet have defended a prospectus.

Structure. The course includes weekly meetings incorporating lectures, student-led discussion of assigned readings and topics, and presentation and discussion of student projects.

Readings. A list of required readings appears on the class schedule. Most readings will be provided in a course reading packet, available in electronic or hard copy at BoilerCopy in Room 186 of Purdue Memorial Union. Some instructor-provided readings will be distributed in class. The main sources are:

Peters, R. L. 1997. *Getting What You Came For*. NY: Farrar
Roberts, C. M. 2010. *The Dissertation Journey*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin
Oliver, P. (2010) *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. New York: McGraw Hill
Angrist, J. D. and J. Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press

Course requirements and grading. Grading and credit will be based on class attendance (40%), department seminar attendance (5% each for 2 seminars) and course assignments (50%). Grades will be assigned on an A (90-100%), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%) and F (0-59%) scale. A student may be excused from one class meeting without penalty.

Course learning objectives

- Identify gaps in knowledge and appropriate research problems
- Appropriately frame an applied economics research question/topic
- Understand what constitutes ethical conduct of social science research
- Understand the regulatory environment for social science research
- Communicate a sound research plan in a written and oral prospectus

General Expectations. Effort and integrity, including respect for instructors and fellow students; academic honesty consistent with Purdue policy; preparation for and participation in all class meetings.

Communication. Please note that the primary out-of-class method of communication will be via email to your Purdue email address. Instructors will not generally attempt to contact you at email addresses other than your Purdue email address. It is your responsibility to check for mail on a regular basis. You should check your Purdue email account at least once every 24 hours.

Special needs. If you have a disability that requires academic adjustments, please make an appointment to meet with one of the instructors during the first week of classes to discuss your needs. Please note that university policy requires all students with disabilities to be registered with [the Disability Resource Center](#) in the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) before classroom accommodations can be provided.

Academic integrity. University policy on academic dishonesty is clear: academic dishonesty in any form is strictly prohibited. Anyone found to be cheating or helping someone else cheat will be referred directly to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Penalties are severe and may include dismissal from the University. The risks associated with cheating far outweigh the perceived benefits. Academic dishonesty includes citing someone else's work as your own or misrepresenting your work or the work of others by sharing it in a non-transparent manner. If you are unsure whether your planned action constitutes academic dishonesty, seek clarification from your instructors. Information regarding student rights and responsibilities is contained in the Purdue University [Code of Conduct](#). Writing assignments will be checked for originality using the iThenticate software.

Campus emergencies. In the unusual event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. To get information about changes in this course contact one of the instructors by email, or call one of them at the phone numbers provided above.

To report an emergency, call 911. To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, sign up for Purdue Alert text messages, view www.purdue.edu/ea. There are nearly 300 Emergency Telephones outdoors across campus and in parking garages that connect directly to the PUPD. If you feel threatened or need help, push the button and you will be connected immediately.

If we hear a fire alarm during class we will immediately suspend class, evacuate the building, and proceed outdoors. Do not use the elevator. If we are notified during class of a Shelter in Place requirement for a tornado warning, we will suspend class and shelter in the basement. If we are notified during class of a Shelter in Place requirement for a hazardous materials release, or a civil disturbance, including a shooting or other use of weapons, we will suspend class and shelter in the classroom, shutting the door and turning off the lights.

Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information:

http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/index.html

Class Schedule (revised Aug 16, 2016 – subject to change)

Section 1: Choosing a research topic

Assignments/expectations for this section include:

- Read and think about the news and current events
- Read relevant academic literature to learn what has been done on topics of interest
- Meet with a faculty member (face-to-face) to discuss your research ideas and research matrix
- Successfully complete the CITI online training for human subjects research
- Submit a research matrix and a written summary of your meeting (part c) at the 3rd class meeting

Class	Date	Topic	Reading
1	23-Aug	What is a dissertation?	Roberts, Ch. 2
2	30-Aug	Ethics and research integrity	Oliver, Ch. 1
3	6-Sep	How to review the literature	Roberts, Ch. 9

Section 2: Formulating the research question

Assignments/expectations for this section include:

- Read Hal Varian's "How to do economic modeling in your spare time"
- Narrow your research questions and refine testable hypotheses
- Exchange and discussing research ideas with your classmates
- Turn in one written paragraph on each of four prospective topics at the 6th class meeting

Class	Date	Topic	Reading
4	13-Sep	Ethical issues in data collection	Oliver, Ch. 2
5	20-Sep	Committee issues	Peters, Ch. 15
6	27-Sep	Outlining the prospectus	Peters, Ch. 17

Section 3: Conceptual modeling and refinement

Assignments/expectations for this section include:

- Continue to read the literature and refine one research topic (your best one, at this point)
- Write a literature review that frames your topic/hypothesis
- Sketch a simple economic model to test your hypothesis
- Turn in a 2-3 page document at the 9th class meeting that summarize your research question, past research on the topic, hypotheses of interest and a conceptual modeling framework

Class	Date	Topic	Reading
7	4-Oct	Ethics, funding and scholarship	Oliver, Ch. 7
8	11-Oct	October break – no class	Roberts, Ch. 12
9	18-Oct	Causality & identification	Angrist & Pischke, Chs. 1 & 2

Section 4: Empirical implementation

Assignments/expectations for this section include:

- a. Focus on and read the empirical literature on your topic
- b. Develop an empirical approach to model/test your hypotheses
- c. Assess feasibility in terms of empirical tools and data
- d. Expand your document to include a methods (strategy & data) section and submit at 12th class meeting.

Class	Date	Topic	Reading
10	25-Oct	Writing strategies	Peters, Ch. 18
11	1-Nov	Academic style and conduct	Roberts, Ch. 10
12	8-Nov	Publication issues	Oliver, Ch. 9

Section 5: Writing, presentations and strategy

Assignments/expectations for this section include:

- a. Turn in a draft of a prospectus-style write-up for your topic (8pp maximum) by the 16th class meeting
- b. Present your idea to the class in 10 minutes

Class	Date	Topic	Reading
13	15-Nov	Introductions and frameworks	Roberts, Ch. 11
14	22-Nov	The prospectus defense	Roberts, Ch. 13
15	29-Nov	Class presentations (group A)	
16	6-Dec	Class presentations (group B)	
