

Economics 298: The Honors BA Thesis Workshop

Ground Rules

The Honors BA Thesis workshop has been designed to assist students to completion of an independent and original research project during their 4th year. The paper is written under the guidance of a faculty adviser and the workshop leaders. Our Guidelines for Faculty Advisers will be sent to each student's prospective faculty advisers.

The following calendar and guidelines have been designed to help students understand the necessary steps for successful completion of a research project and paper.

- 1) Attention 3rd year students:
 - a) Take classes in applied economics (Macro, Labor, IO...)
 - b) Learn research methods (Statistics, Econ 211 or 212, Experimental Economics, Game Theory, Auction Theory,...)
 - c) Ask your instructors to guide your reading to explore beyond class syllabi.
 - d) Explore further literature on JSTOR. Econ lit/talk to a librarian!
 - e) Work as a research assistant. (10 hrs a week during term, full time over the summer.)
 - f) Learn about availability of data & find other source material: talk to a librarian.
 - g) Learn the difference between a correlation and a causal relation.
 - h) Find an interesting economic question that you can envision answering, or at least shedding light upon.
 - i) Learn how to write well. Consult:
 - i) William Strunk and E.B. White. Elements of Style
 - ii) Joseph M. Williams. Style U of C Press.
 - iii) The Chicago Manual of Style. U of C Press. (see also www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)
 - iv) Charles Lipson. How to Write a BA Thesis. U of C Press
- 2) For Seniors: Autumn quarter = Research Proposal & Presentation
 - a) Choose an interesting research question. State it concisely.
 - b) Write a literature review of other work on this question.
 - c) Devise a feasible research plan to add to existing knowledge, discussing this with your faculty adviser and workshop leaders.
 - d) Form contingency plan(s). What will you do if plan A does not work? (eg. Data not available for your first question...)
 - e) Match your model's predictions to the real world.
 - f) Respond to suggestions and comments promptly.
 - g) Reach out to your fellow students to give and receive advice: they are an important resource. Be constructive.
 - h) Inform us of your faculty adviser's name and email address.
 - i) Obtain faculty adviser consent (your adviser's direct email to the workshop leaders) by Friday of 5th week. Any Extensions must be discussed with workshop leaders.

NOTE: No projects progress into Winter Quarter without faculty adviser approval.
- 3) For Seniors: Winter quarter = Research activity
 - a) Meet bi-weekly your faculty adviser.
 - b) Meet a minimum of 2 times during Winter quarter with the workshop leaders.
 - c) Execute your research plan. When stuck, consult immediately.

- d) Write your paper from the inside out: Bibliography, Literature review, Data summary, Model, Results, Introduction, Abstract.
- e) Incorporate suggestions promptly.
- f) Ask clarifying questions as needed.
- 4) For Seniors: Spring quarter = Editing and Final presentation
 - a) Use LATEX for technical word processing. Double space your paper. Use cover page template attached below
 - b) Design a 20 minute Presentation. Basically 5 slides!!
 - i) What is your research question & why is it interesting?
 - ii) What prior work has been done?
 - iii) What is your incremental contribution?
 - iv) What *durable* relations does your research uncover?
 - v) What questions remain for further work?
 - c) Incorporate the presentation suggestions into Paper
- 5) **Important Deadlines:**
 - a) 5th week Autumn Quarter: Faculty adviser's consent must be emailed to the workshop leaders. Extensions possible, but you must discuss it with workshop leaders. ABSOLUTELY no later than Friday 9th week.
 - b) 8th week Autumn Quarter: Research proposal presented not later than Friday 8th week.
 - c) 3rd week Winter Quarter: By this time, you must have met at least once with your faculty adviser and once with one of the workshop leaders in Winter quarter to discuss progress.
 - d) 8th week Winter Quarter: By this time, you must have met a total of at least 3 times with your faculty adviser and twice with workshop leaders in Winter Quarter to discuss progress.
 - e) 2nd week Spring quarter: Submit your findings by Friday 2nd week for preliminary review and comments.
 - f) Sign up* to present your research findings and coordinate your schedule to enable your thesis adviser to attend.
 - g) 7th week Spring quarter: Incorporate all comments and suggestions and submit your beautifully written and formatted paper. This allows decisions regarding grades and any special recognition for quality work are made in advance of graduation deadlines.

Attendance is required unless a reason for your absence is reported and approved by workshop leaders. Participation and engaging in making constructive comments is required of workshop participants. Additional information sessions on academic and professional writing, on the Institutional Review Board for research involving human subjects, and library research are also part of the workshop.

Submit your paper as double-spaced papers in .pdf form. There should be a Title Page (see next page) an Abstract, Introduction, Acknowledgements as a footnote at the bottom of the first page of text, Data Summary, Model, Results, and Bibliography, all typeset in LaTeX using either TexShop (for Mac) or ProTeXt (for Windows) or the USITE-version of Scientific Word (a front-end for LaTeX).

Please use the following Cover Page template, and edit to add correct text for "TITLE" "BY AUTHOR", etc.

`\begin{titlepage}`

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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TITLE

`\\SUBTITLE`

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A BACHELOR THESIS SUBMITTED TO `\\`

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THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS `\\`

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FOR HONORS WITH THE DEGREE OF `\\`

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BACHELOR OF THE ARTS IN ECONOMICS

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BY AUTHOR

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS `\\`

MAY 2014

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