

Ec 3001 and 3002: Behavior in Games and Markets

HARVARD UNIVERSITY: DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Spring 2019

Time and Location: Wednesdays 12:00 pm -1:15 pm, Littauer M-15

Regular Faculty for Spring 2019:

- Benjamin Enke (*on leave for Spring 2019*)
- Ben Golub
- Jerry Green
- Scott Kominers
- David Laibson (*on leave for the academic year*)
- Shengwu Li
- Eric Maskin (*for theory talks only*)
- Matthew Rabin
- Gautam Rao (*for behavioral/experimental talks only*)
- Tomasz Strzalecki (*on leave for Spring 2019*)

Course Description:

- Economics 3001 and 3002 covers the following fields: behavioral economics, experimental economics, and theory.
- These lunch seminars are for new ideas that have not been deeply explored as well as polished papers (and everything in between).

Rules:

1. Presentation in Economics 3001/3002 is limited to Harvard doctoral students in the Economics, Business Economics, and PEG programs who have a primary adviser that regularly attends this lunch. In extraordinary circumstances (such as practice job talks), other Harvard students may also present in the seminar, with the permission of one of the faculty members who regularly attends the seminar. In particular, presentations are not open for post-docs, visiting PhD students, or visiting faculty.
2. Enrollment is open only to Econ/Bus Ec/PEG Econ students.
3. Attendance is mandatory and will be checked at each seminar.
4. Each student needs a faculty sponsor to present. The sponsor is a faculty member who regularly attends the seminar – in almost all cases this should be one of their main advisers. The faculty sponsor should be listed when signing up for the slot at the beginning of the semester.
5. Students are required to share their slide deck with their sponsor before the presentation. Please do this with enough lead time so the adviser can give detailed comments and you can revise your deck accordingly. We want to make your lunch and job market presentations maximally effective. If you have been working with multiple advisers on a project, just choose one, and let the other advisers know who has agreed to review your

slides so that they know it is taken care of. (Don't worry, your other advisers won't be offended.) You can update the information later if you change the faculty member who gives you feedback on your presentation. Bring paper copies of slides for all advisors.

6. Students may make two presentations in a semester if they first clear it with the seminar organizer (we want to make sure that no student is crowded out).
7. General Departmental Rule: All students in G4 and above must make a lunch seminar presentation twice a year. These presentations need not be in the same lunch seminar, but they must show considerable progress from one semester to the next. All students in G3 must make a presentation in the Spring semester, though they are also encouraged to make a presentation in the Fall semester.

Format:

- The seminar starts promptly at 12:00. Presenters should set up their slide decks as early as possible, since the computer and the projector in the room are sometimes non-cooperative. Lunch is available at 11:50.
- There are four presentation length formats: 75 minutes, 50 minutes, 36 minutes, or 23 minutes.

Please note that 75-minute presentations are reserved for job market papers only and are not available in the Spring semester.

- 50-minute presentations should have about 20 slides, and seldom more than 25 slides.
- 36-minute presentations should have about 13 slides, and seldom more than 18 slides.
- 23-minute presentations should have about 8 slides, and seldom more than 13 slides.

Allocation of Slots and Cancellation Policy:

- The allocation mechanism for presentation slots is based on the Deferred Acceptance Algorithm. Students are asked to rank all dates in the semester. As far as possible given varying slot lengths, priority will be given lexicographically according to the following criteria:
 1. at least one advisor attends the lunch
 2. regular attendance of the lunch
 3. seniority in class year.

(Please note there is no special priority for job-market candidates in the Spring semester.) Ties will be broken randomly. In case of cancellations, the same mechanism will be used to allocate slots to students on the wait list.

- In consideration of students on the wait list, presenters who need to cancel their presentation should notify the organizer no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled date. Except in unforeseen contingencies (as approved by a faculty advisor), presenters who cancel with less than two weeks' notice will move to the bottom of the priority ranking the next time they request a slot.

Deciding Whether to Present:

- If you are at the stage where you are interested in a general topic, e.g., bounded rationality in games, but haven't gotten much further than that, you should talk with your adviser, but not present until later in the semester.
- If you have identified a specific question, e.g., "How does iterated reasoning affect equilibrium in one-player 'games' with dynamically inconsistent preferences?" and want to discuss your ideas for pursuing this question, sign up for a 23-minute slot.
- If you have started working on the question and have interesting results, sign up for a 36-minute slot.
- If you have polished results, ask for a 50-minute slot.

The Value of Presentation Skills:

- Presentations are a key part of your job as an economist. Start honing your presentation skills early on. It will not happen overnight and you need to shine by the time you have to give your job talk(s). Use all available resources.
- Not only will this help you get a job (or cost you a job if you cannot explain your work clearly) but it is a long-term investment. Once you get your dream job, you will be using these skills every day when teaching and giving seminars. If you know your trade well, you will do it effectively and save energy for writing your next *Econometrica* paper.

Specific Presentation Advice:

- The most common mistake in these seminars is students overestimating how much material they can squeeze into the allotted time. Please think very hard about how much time your slides will need, taking into account the nearly continuous interruptions that you will get from other seminar participants.
- Keep introductions short. Provide some motivation. State your result clearly. Provide some intuition.
- Keep literature reviews short.
- It is important that you don't make unnecessary claims or vague statements in your introduction because this can throw the lunch off track.
- Include a talk outline slide in your introduction so we know where we are going.
- Get to the model quickly (if you have one).
- Make sure that you leave enough time to get to the key elements of your paper.
- If necessary, manage questions to prevent your presentation from spending too long on one issue to the detriment of other issues that may be even more important.
- Focus our attention on questions for which you want feedback. You know where the key open questions are. Help us locate them so we can spend the most time on these key issues.
- Assume that once you lose someone in your audience, that person is gone and will never come back.
- There are two kinds of people: those who listen to you and those who read your slides. You need both kinds to love you.
- The amount of time that you spend on each part of your talk should be proportional to how important that part is in explaining your contribution.
- Do not introduce a new piece of notation unless you are going to use it at least three times (not counting the definition).
- End on time (without the need for someone else to stop you).

- Time and practice your talk at least once, for example with a couple of classmates, before you present it in the lunch.

How to Get Started on Your Presentation:

- Identify your contribution. This is difficult because we are all insecure about the value of our paper. We make things fuzzy to feel better about it. This may be somewhat helpful to gain momentum in the development stage of the project, but can be lethal when it comes to presentation. The only thing this does is to confuse the non-experts and may even cost you a job if there is an expert in your audience who announces to everyone that everything can be done much more simply.
- It may take several days to get there. Besides the emotional issue there is also a cognitive one: you have spent so much time thinking about your paper that it may be genuinely hard to know what the value added is and things that may seem obvious to you will not be so to most other people. Conversations with fellow students may be helpful at this point.
- Start by making just one slide. Make sure your whole contribution fits on that slide and do not use any mathematical symbols or cite any papers. This may take up to a day. You don't actually have to use this slide (but there is a good chance you will want to once you make it).