

**Economics 282/285**  
**Introduction to Research**  
**Spring 2011**

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Economics 282 is designed to help students develop their research instincts and eventually lead to a dissertation topic. In some senses, this course and the fall and winter courses that follow it are the most important courses you will take at UCSD. We say this because the ultimate goal of the Ph.D. program is to help you to produce a high-quality dissertation, and this course is designed to help you make strong progress toward that goal. When you are on the job market, potential employers will judge you on the quality of your research and how well you present it—no one asks about course grades. You should aim to create a polished paper by the end of the winter quarter next year.

The course will meet periodically throughout the quarter on Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm - 3:20pm in ECON 300, with the first meeting on *Tuesday March 29*. We will enforce the following *attendance policy*: we expect you to attend all scheduled class and presentation sessions (see schedule in the back). We will be checking attendance during each meeting, and if you have any unexcused absences, you will fail this course. If you have to miss a session for a dire reason, please e-mail us in advance to let us know why.

The course has several elements (with deadlines as follows). No incompletes will be given (except for reasons deemed appropriate by OGSR such as illness).

**A. Preliminary lectures:**

During the March 29 class session, Adele Barsh (UCSD economics librarian) will provide information on off- and on-line research and data resources.

During the April 5 and April 7 class sessions, faculty members in a variety of fields will make short presentations on how they find ideas for research.

**B. Student groups:**

We have formed four student groups according to broad areas of interest (see the last page of the syllabus for your initial assignments). Other students are the most valuable sources of regular feedback for your ideas. These groups will serve as a place for students to brainstorm, problem solve and give preliminary versions of their presentations.

Groups should meet weekly during weeks 1-7. We expect the meetings to last at least 1 hour. As soon as you have picked a time, email Mike Bacci at [mbacci@ucsd.edu](mailto:mbacci@ucsd.edu) to reserve a room for the entire quarter. ECON 300 is already reserved on Fridays from 08:30am - 09:50am, so that time slot is available to the first group that requests it.

Each week, one member of each group should email us a brief report on what took place at the meeting. You might consider taking turns serving as the group liaison.

### **C. Faculty advisers:**

Students must find a faculty adviser. Let us know (by email or in person) as soon as you have identified an adviser and they have agreed to serve in that capacity. We can help you to identify the most relevant faculty members if you are unsure about who would be the best choice. (Do not worry—if you change your research area, you can change advisers!) You should meet several times with your adviser and other faculty members with relevant research interests over the course of the quarter. These individuals will be those who are best able to guide you as your nascent ideas develop, to make sure you are heading in the most productive direction possible. Building relationships with faculty in your fields is another of the major goals of the course.

### **D. Short initial presentations:**

Each student will give a 10 minute talk, and we will allow 5 minutes for discussion. The sessions will be on weeks 3 and 4, with 5 talks per session. We will create a sign-up sheet for these presentations. In the talk, you should discuss the topic that you think you will write your third year paper on. You should present a research plan, including your hypothesis, what type of theory you will use to prove the hypothesis (for a theory paper), and where you will get data to use to test the hypothesis (for an empirical paper). If you haven't decided on a single topic, you could select the most promising one or even talk about more than one.

You should have 3-7 slides for your talk and they should be carefully prepared (large type, not too many words per slide, etc.). We will be strict about sticking to the schedule, so make sure to rehearse your talk beforehand, so that we do not have to cut you off at the appointed time. All students are expected to be at all of the presentations and to make (constructive) comments on the talks. A major purpose of the course is to encourage students to give each other feedback.

### **E. Short initial written project proposal:**

One week after your initial presentation, a short project proposal (2-5 pages) will be due. This proposal should describe your most promising research question and plan of attack. You should incorporate comments and suggestions from your presentation.

### **F. Individual office meetings:**

We want each of you to schedule at least one 30-minute office meeting with Michelle or Ivana, depending on your field.

### **G. Longer final presentations:**

These will be 15 minute talks followed by 5 minutes for questions. You will sign up for a time slot for this presentation during the second meeting as well. *We strongly encourage you to*

*invite your faculty advisor to this presentation!!* These talks will be during weeks 8 to 10 of the quarter (with 4 presentations per session).

### **G. Final paper:**

The final paper (10-20 pages in length depending on your progress) is due by email on Thursday June 2 at 5:00 pm. There will be a 5% reduction in your grade for every day the paper is late.

### **Some advice on the paper:**

We encourage you to be bold in your ideas. We are looking for exciting research topics rather than incremental modifications of existing work (e.g. replicating an earlier study on data from another country, unless the replication offers a unique experimental laboratory in which to explore the issue at hand). Spend time motivating the underlying economic question and providing intuition for your approach/model/analysis. If you use data, make sure to describe in concise ways which sources you used, how you transformed the data, data samples, etc. (perhaps using an appendix for particularly tedious details). If you do theory or econometrics, try to be rigorous in your derivations but provide intuition along the way.

We do not want you to produce a literature survey. At the same time, you don't want to do what others have already done, so put your analysis in context of any existing literature. It helps to ask which important sub-questions have not been answered at all? Which have been answered, but inadequately?

Economics 282 Spring 2011 Schedule

Week 1	March 29	Introduction; Presentation by Adele Barsh
	March 31	No Class
Week 2	April 5	Faculty Presentations
	April 7	Faculty Presentations
Week 3	April 12	Round 1 Presentations
	April 14	Round 1 Presentations
Week 4	April 19	Round 1 Presentations
	April 21	Round 1 Presentations
Week 5	April 26	No Class
	April 28	No Class
Week 6	May 3	No Class
	May 5	No Class
Week 7	May 10	No class
	May 12	No Class
Week 8	May 17	Round 2 Presentations
	May 19	Round 2 Presentations
Week 9	May 24	Round 2 Presentations
	May 26	Round 2 Presentations
Week 10	May 31	Round 2 Presentations
	June 2	Round 2 Presentations; Final Papers due June 2

Economics 282 Spring 2011  
Student Groups and Contact Information

<b>Group</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Applied Micro	Erin Troland	<a href="mailto:etroland@ucsd.edu">etroland@ucsd.edu</a>
	Ling Shao	<a href="mailto:lshao@ucsd.edu">lshao@ucsd.edu</a>
	Stephie Fried	<a href="mailto:sfried@ucsd.edu">sfried@ucsd.edu</a>
	Matthew M Knepper	<a href="mailto:mknepper@ucsd.edu">mknepper@ucsd.edu</a>
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	Juwon Seo	<a href="mailto:jus006@dssmail.ucsd.edu">jus006@dssmail.ucsd.edu</a>
Int'l/Macro	Dora Xia Fan	<a href="mailto:faxia@dssmail.ucsd.edu">faxia@dssmail.ucsd.edu</a>
	Sungje Byun	<a href="mailto:s1byun@dssmail.ucsd.edu">s1byun@dssmail.ucsd.edu</a>
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