

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Department of Economics

**ECON4309–801:
ECONOMICS HONORS SEMINAR 1**

Fall 2014

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Objective

The main objective of this course (and of the companion course *ECON 4339–801 Economic Honors Seminar 2*) is to help you write a successful undergraduate honors thesis in economics. A successful undergraduate thesis embodies the results of well executed, original, and significant research in economics. The thesis must show a proficient use of the tools of economics. It must contain independent and creative work (which precludes plagiarizing previous research). The thesis must be important. The judges of the execution, originality, and importance of the thesis will be your advisor and the other members of the defense committee.

The thesis must be defended by 7 April 2015 to graduate in Spring 2015. Until then, you will have to accomplish a number of tasks. These include:

1. Identify a research topic.
2. Find a willing faculty advisor.
3. Identify an interesting and answerable research question.
4. Write a review of the literature relevant to your research question.
5. Write a research proposal that describes your question, the methodology required to answer the question, and the required data.
6. Collect and organize the required data.
7. Perform the necessary analysis to answer your question.
8. Write and present a working paper version of your thesis.
9. Write the final version of the thesis.
10. Defend your thesis.

Adequate progress toward the completion of your thesis requires that you be somewhere between tasks 6 and 7 at the end of *ECON 4309*.

Prerequisites and Texts

Course enrollment is granted by the Economics Honors Program only. To be considered, the students must have a high cumulative and economics GPA. In most cases, the tools required to complete the thesis are presented in your undergraduate economics courses. Past experience however suggests a number of areas where students need further emphasis.

Doing: This text offers research guidelines:

Greenlaw, S.A. (2005) *Doing Economics: A Guide to Understanding and Carrying Out Economic Research*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Writing: The following texts offer writing guidelines:

McCloskey, D.N. (1999) *Economical Writing*, Second Edition. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.

Strunk, W. and E.B. White (2000) *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition. New York: Longman.

Econometrics: The vast majority of undergraduate thesis in economics use the tools of econometrics. So, it is strongly recommended that students complete *ECON 4818 Introduction to Econometrics* and *ECON 4848 Applied Econometrics*. Students can also learn viable and useful tools to complete their thesis in both *ECON 4858 Financial Econometrics* and *ECON 4868 Simulation Modeling in Microeconomics*.

Evaluation

Critical Reviews	10 %
Literature Review	15 %
Development Reports	10 %
Research Proposal	25 %
Presentations	20 %
Class Participation	20 %

Evaluative Criteria: To earn a passing grade in the course, you must complete and turn in your research proposal by the last day of class. There will be no exceptions to this requirement. Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled classes.

Honors Program

The Honors Program has a website with useful information:

<http://www.colorado.edu/honors/>

The Honors Program stores past theses. To access them:

<http://www.colorado.edu/honors/honorsthesisarchive>

University Policies

You should familiarize yourself with the following University of Colorado policies:

1. University policies regarding classroom behavior are available at
<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>
2. University policies regarding disabilities are available at
<http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.
3. University policies regarding religious practice are available at
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.
4. University policies regarding Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships are available at
<http://www.colorado.edu/odh/>.
5. Information regarding the Honor Code Council is available at
<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html>
<http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>.