

Economics 8209
PhD Research Methods
Fall 2007

Department of Economics
University of Colorado Boulder

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General Details

This course will be team taught by Jim Markusen and Randy Walsh.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to push you into the process of conducting original research in economics. Although the course is called “research methods”, it is only partly a course in econometric applications, theoretical modeling, or library searches. Most of the course is in fact a “learn-by-doing” introduction to economic research. By the end of the first semester, we expect that you will have prepared and defended an extensive literature review, initial modeling, and proposal for your third-year research paper. During the process, you will have many opportunities to think, write, and speak analytically and critically.

The third-year research paper that you will research and write during this academic year will ideally serve as a key analytical chapter for your dissertation, to be completed in the following year. By the end of the academic year, you should thus have a principal chapter for your thesis essentially finished, and an outline for the remaining content of the thesis.

This course will be run as a true seminar, which means that students are expected to participate actively, by reading all relevant materials and contributing to classroom discussions in addition to making the presentations listed below. Classroom participation will be a large element in our assessment of your progress into a sustainable research process.

Course Activities

Each student must identify a primary and secondary advisor by Monday September 24th. For almost all of you, this will not be either Markusen or Walsh.

Part 1: Understanding Elements of Research

Walsh and Markusen will give lectures during approximately the first three weeks (note: there will be no class on Wednesday September 12th). We are not setting too rigorous a schedule, since we want to be flexible as contingencies arise. The class will be required to read some recent published papers *before the lectures* and to discuss them in class. The intent will be to begin to understand the nature of a research project and paper, including the basic elements of research: Approximately August 29th

