

**ECO 4935 Empirical Research in Economics Seminar**  
**Section 5574**  
**Fall 2019, Michelle A. Phillips**

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Lecture: Mondays and Wednesday 9:35-11:30am in MAT 51.

Office: Matherly Hall 334 (3<sup>rd</sup> floor)

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 2:00pm-4:00pm in MAT 334

Wednesdays 11:30-12:30pm in TBA with Daniel Wagner

*Or by appointment (I occasionally have extra office hours which I announce via email)*

*Course Description*

This course introduces students to the development and testing of economic models. We will learn about empirical methodologies/statistics (including the use of statistical software) and examine empirical papers. Students will then apply the material learned to test their own economic model. Each student will present his/her work to the class throughout the semester. *Prerequisites:* ECO 2013 and ECO 2023

*Readings and Supporting Material*

1. "Doing Economics" (Greenlaw). Note: spiral version or paperback version
2. Readings will be available on Canvas. A brief tutorial on how to use Canvas is available here <https://resources.instructure.com/courses/32>

*Statistical Program*

The empirical analysis required for this course can be done using MS Excel, Stata, R, or other software. I will go over how to do this (no prior knowledge is required).

*Grading*

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

- A. Class participation 13%
- B. Proposal (written and presentation) 16%
- C. Description and Analysis of Empirical Work (written and presentation) 16%
- D. Final Paper (written) 55%

Class participation:

You will be graded on class participation. I will send an email each week detailing what you are expected to read before class. This will include assigned empirical papers and the papers your classmates will be presenting. You must come to class and be ready to provide comments or answer questions about the papers to get full credit for class participation. Constructive comments are an important part of research.

Proposal:

Each student will submit a proposal which develops the hypothesis to be tested and describes the manner in which you will test your hypothesis. Important: You need to make sure that your project is feasible. Please discuss your topic with me at least a week before you start writing your proposal. You can do this either by coming to office hours, talking to me after class, or emailing me. A good/feasible proposal requires: (1) Making sure you can answer your question using the tools we learn in class and (2) Having the data required to test your hypothesis (enough variables and observations). You need a minimum of 50 observations for your paper. Your proposal should include: (a) an introduction that motivates the project,

(b) a description of your sample, (c) a description of each variable, (d) information on sources you will use for data, (e) for each independent variable you must provide the economic analysis that underlies your prediction about the effect of the independent variable on your dependent variable.

You will present your proposal in class. Your proposal will be distributed to your classmates who will read it before you present it in class in order to be able to provide you with constructive criticism. Note: The bulk of your grade is based on the written portion of your proposal, not on how you present it. The main purpose of presenting your work is to engage in a discussion with your classmates during which they can provide you with feedback to help improve your paper. However, if you do not show up to the presentation, you will get 0 points for the entire proposal (written part included).

**A sample proposal and rubric will be available on Canvas.** These should give you an idea of what is expected. Due date: See “schedule” section. **There is a penalty for being late** that is described in the “penalties” section of this syllabus.

#### Description and Analysis of Empirical Work

Each student will present a complete description and analysis of their empirical results. Important: Doing empirical research and describing your results takes time. The earlier you get started on this, the better. You will not be able to get this done the day before it is due. I highly suggest that you give yourself as much time as you can to test your research question. This paper has the following requirements: (a) introduction, (b) description of your sample, (c) for each variable, indicate how it was constructed and report summary statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum), (d) for each independent variable, develop the prediction and discuss whether your results support or refute your hypothesis and whether the variable has a big impact on the dependent variable. Important: Your grade is not affected by whether your hypotheses have been confirmed. As with the proposal, the bulk of your grade will be based on the written portion but you will get 0 points for the entire section if you don't show up to your presentation. The main purpose of the presentation is to gather feedback from your classmates. **A sample and rubric will be available on Canvas.** Due date: See “schedule” section. **There is a penalty for being late** that is described in the “penalties” section.

#### Final Paper

You must submit your double-spaced paper to me (electronically, via Canvas) on the date listed in the “schedule” section. Your font should be a standard font (Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri, etc) of size 12. Your final paper will develop the model and discuss how the data were gathered, how the model was tested, and how revised results relate to the model.

**A sample final paper and rubric will be available on Canvas.** Due date: See “schedule” section.

**There is a penalty for being late** that is described in the “penalties” section. You are welcome to submit the final paper earlier than the deadline, as long as you have already presented the “description and analysis of empirical work” to your classmates and incorporated relevant feedback from that.

Exams: This class does not have exams.

#### *Penalties*

**Important: If you miss the deadline (due date) for submitting your work, you will be penalized by 50%. If you miss a presentation you will get a grade of 0 for that entire section (whether it is the proposal or description/analysis). No exceptions. If you are late on submitting your final paper, your grade will fall by 10% each day it is late. An assignment (proposal, description/analysis of empirical work, final paper) is considered late if it is turned in after 1 pm on Canvas the day it is due. No exceptions.**

### **Submitting your work:**

Your work must be submitted online (via Canvas) for me to read and via Canvas message for your classmates to read. I will show you how to message all your classmates the first day of class. You must email your paper to your classmates at least 1 week before your presentations. There's a 5 point penalty for each day you are late emailing your classmates.

### **Changing your presentation dates:**

Students are generally not allowed to change their presentation and due dates. It is very important that you plan your time well so you can meet the deadlines. I do, however, keep 4 slots during the last possible presentation date for students who can't meet their deadline. These spots are given out on a first come first serve basis and if you choose to do this there is a 10 point penalty.

The following scale will be used to determine your final grade:

A 93 and above	A- 90 to 92.99	B+ 87.5 to 89.99	B 84 to 87.49
B- 80 to 83.99	C+ 77.5 to 79.99	C 72.5 to 77.49	C- 70 to 72.49
D 65 to 69.99	E 0 to 64.99		

### *Office Hours*

If the office hours listed above are not convenient due to class or work conflicts, I will work with you to find a better solution. The easiest way to schedule office hours by appointment is to email me. I usually require at least 24-48 hours advance notice to schedule appointments.

### *Contacting Me*

The best way to contact me is via e-mail. If you haven't received a response within 72 hours, please assume I didn't receive your email and re-send it. If you want to discuss your research ideas or papers, you can either come to my office, email me or call my office phone number. I expect to be able to answer most emails within 1 business day, but I may not be able to answer emails sent a few hours before an assignment is due on time.

### *Course Website*

We will be using Canvas. The address is: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>. You log-in using your Gatorlink ID and password and the course should automatically appear as one of your e-learning options. If it does not, check to make sure you are properly registered for the course. If that is not the issue, contact the UF Computing Helpdesk at: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. Do not contact me about access issues. I cannot help you and the help you do need will only be delayed if you do. If you need an extra copy of any materials made available during class, this is the place to check. Your grades will be made available via this website.

*Academic Honesty* You are expected to abide by the University's rules for academic honesty. These are available for your review at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr>. Cheating, plagiarism and any other action that violates these rules will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. I use turnitin. Submitting a research paper that you copied/pasted from a previous research paper you wrote for another class will result in a grade of 0. You can, however, transform the paper from this class into your honors thesis. You can also expand on ideas you have explored in papers for other classes.

### *Students with Special Needs*

If you are a student with special needs and you require additional resources to participate in this course, please contact me immediately. The Dean of Students makes special accommodations for students as needed. After approval by the Dean of Students, the appropriate paperwork will be forwarded to me and accommodations can be made.

### *Course Evaluation*

Students are expected to provide feedback regarding this course by completing online evaluations at <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

### **Schedule**

W Aug 21	Lecture 1
M Aug 26	Lecture 2
W Aug 28	Lecture 3
W Sept 4	Lecture 4 / Sign up for presentation dates Select your 3 most preferred times. This is done during the lecture. If you do not sign up, I will assign dates to you.
M Sept 9	Lecture 5
W Sept 11	Lecture 6
M Sept 16	Lecture 7
W Sept 18	Lecture 8 / Deadline to discuss topic with me (during office hours, in person/after class or via email)
M Sept 23	Lecture 9
W Sept 25	Lecture 10
M Sept 30	Lecture 11 / Deadline to submit Proposal is 1pm (there's a penalty for being late)
W Oct 2	Proposal Day 1 (D&A due Oct 21, present on Oct 28)
M Oct 7	Proposal Day 2 (D&A due Oct 23, present on Oct 30)
W Oct 9	Proposal Day 3 (D&A due Oct 28, present on Nov 4)
M Oct 14	Proposal Day 4 (D&A due Oct 30, present on Nov 6)
W Oct 16	Proposal Day 5 (D&A due Oct 30, present on Nov 13)
M Oct 21	Proposal Day 6 (D&A due Nov 4, present on Nov 18)
W Oct 23	Proposal Day Extension with 10 point penalty* (D&A due Nov 4, present on Nov 20)
M Oct 28	D&A Day 1
W Oct 30	D&A Day 2
M Nov 4	D&A Day 3
W Nov 6	D&A Day 4
W Nov 13	D&A Day 5
M Nov 18	D&A Day 6
W Nov 20	D&A Day 7
M Nov 25	No class (SEA conference)
M Dec 2	D&A Extension with 10 point penalty*
W Dec 4	Final Paper Due.

\* If students can't present on their original date, they can present on Oct 3 (Proposal) or Nov 25 (D&A) with a 10 point penalty.

**\*\*\*\* I highly recommend that you browse the Files section on Canvas to fully understand what this class is about and what is required of you before Add/Drop ends.\*\*\*\***

## **HONORS**

### **Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS)**

Those who take this course and who have a 3.3 average in all economics work and a 3.5 upper division GPA will be considered for magna cum laude or summa cum laude. If your paper is approved by the economics department's undergraduate committee, you will receive summa if your economics GPA is above 3.5 and your upper division GPA is above 3.7 and magna otherwise.

By the fourth week in the semester you graduate, you must schedule a 20-minute presentation to the Undergraduate Committee of what you propose to do in your honors thesis. This committee will determine whether your thesis is acceptable, so take the committee's suggestions seriously!

### **Business Administration (WCBA)**

Students can satisfy the thesis requirement for high or highest honors by taking this course instead of ECO 4970. To receive magna cum laude, a 3.7 GPA is required in all UF coursework, the Business Core courses, and all Economics courses. To receive summa cum laude, a 3.9 GPA is required in all three categories. Candidates for magna or summa must give me one copy of their papers. Also leave me 2 copies of the honors thesis submission form, which can be downloaded from [www.honors.ufl.edu](http://www.honors.ufl.edu). "Type" your answers onto the form as you complete the form.

### **Turning the Paper into a Thesis.**

I will be on maternity leave in Spring 2020. If you are graduating in Spring 2020, you can use your class paper as your thesis. I will inform you who the thesis coordinator will be in Spring 2020 as soon as I know. You will set up your committee meeting with him/her in early Spring 2020. Below are the steps required for the term in which you are graduating:

1. Make sure the honors thesis coordinator knows you are graduating this term (email the person during the first week of class) and that you meet the requirements. The requirements are:

College GPA requirement: 3.50 or higher GPA on all courses taken at UF beginning the semester after accumulating 60 credits.

College GPA requirement for Magna and Summa: Eligible students must have a 3.50 or higher GPA on all courses taken at UF beginning the semester after accumulating 60 credits and completion of, and faculty evaluation of, a thesis, research project or other creative work. Distinction of magna or summa cum laude may be granted based on faculty evaluation of the thesis, and the department will make the determination whether and what level of distinction will be awarded.

PLUS: Economics department requirements:

Magna: Student must earn a 3.30 GPA for all UF economics courses, complete ECO 4935 or ECO 4905 and submit an acceptable thesis

Summa: Student must earn a 3.70 GPA on all courses taken at UF the semester after accumulating 60 credits and a 3.50 GPA for all UF economics courses. Must also complete ECO 4935 or ECO 4905 and submit an acceptable thesis.

PLUS: A completed paper draft to present to the committee (this can be the paper you completed for this class)

2. Sign up for an honors thesis committee meeting (this is set up by the honors thesis coordinator)

3. Get ready for your thesis committee meeting. During this meeting you will give a 10 minute presentation of your thesis idea. You won't be using a powerpoint presentation because it is in a more conversational setting. You can bring a paper with notes and must bring at least 3 copies of your thesis draft (you will give one copy of your paper to each committee member). After your 10 minute presentation the committee members will give you advice on how to improve your thesis. The deadline to submit your final thesis draft is 4 weeks before the last day of final exams. You are always welcome to submit earlier than that. You submit your final draft by sending an email to the honors thesis coordinator with a PDF file of your final thesis.

4. The committee will read your thesis and give you a pass or fail. You will receive an email from me letting you know you passed or failed. Important: You must have received final approval from your department before you submit your Honors thesis or project to the Libraries. Please do not proceed to step 5 until you get an email from the honors thesis committee letting you know that you've passed.

5. If you received a "pass": At this point you have met all of the Departmental requirements that are needed to upload your thesis to the library (assuming you also meet the College and Department GPA requirements). You will upload your thesis to the library (this can be done as soon as it is ready and approved by the committee). The submission deadline to submit your paper to the library is listed on the link below which also includes information on what steps to follow to upload your thesis to the library: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/etd/honors>

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLICATION

It is difficult (but not impossible) to publish in economics journals. There are some outlets specifically for undergraduate papers in economics:

Econ.Sources.com Best Undergraduate Paper Competition sponsored by International Atlantic Economic Sources (July 1 deadline) and FIU Undergraduate Journal of Global Business and Community. See Canvas for more information.

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