

Course Syllabus

AGEC 5650: Research Methods

Spring 2012

Donald McLeod
Office: Agricultural Building 212
Phone: 766-3116; email: dmcleod@uwyo.edu

CLASS TIME/PLACE: Wednesday 4:10 to 5 pm. AG Room 223.

OFFICE HOURS: *Formally*: Monday 3-4pm; Tues 1-2pm; Wed 2-3 or by appointment. PLEASE!!
Informally: when my office door is open.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: Intermediate Macro/Microeconomics (ECON 3010/3020). A Statistics Course (STAT 2010, 2050, or 2070). A Graduate level Quantitative Methods Course (STAT; ECON; AGECE). Graduate Standing or Consent of Instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Examines scientific methods and policy implications as they specifically relate to a masters level research project in applied economics. This includes formulating the research question, developing hypotheses, determining a theoretical framework from which the data gathering and analysis will proceed and lead to reporting research outcomes.

DISABILITY STATEMENT: If you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. You must register with, and provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330 Knight Hall.

INSTRUCTOR'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: Learning has active and passive components. Passive forms include reading and listening to lectures. Active forms include in-class discussion, research activities and paper writing. I intend to incorporate both types into this class, though more of the active. I will make every effort to assist students in this largely seminar and individual project course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop an understanding of the political, cultural, and social context in which applied economic research is conducted and policy is evolving.
2. To compose a problem statement based on problem context and background.
3. To devise preliminary drafts of thesis chapters, in the context of topical literature reviews, conceptual foundations, and empirical modeling strategies.
4. To communicate a research prospectus both in written and verbal form. This objective also is comprised of formal critiques of fellow students' prospectuses.

TEXTBOOK (required): Research Methodology in Applied Economics 2nd edition
by Don Ethridge.

OTHER READINGS: The course is based upon the principal text with additional reading material assigned as the semester progresses. Materials will be made available by class handouts.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

The University of Wyoming is built upon a strong foundation of integrity, respect and trust. All members of the university community have a responsibility to be honest and the right to expect honesty from others. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable to our community and will not be tolerated [from the UW General Bulletin]. Teachers and students should report suspected violations of standards of academic honesty to the instructor, department head, or dean. Other University regulations can be found at: <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/legal/universityregulations.htm>

WORK ASSIGNMENTS	% OF GRADE
(1.) Weekly Discussion of Assigned Readings	10%
(2.) Choose a Thesis Committee (not necessarily permanent); Organize MS Program of Coursework	5%
(3.) Problem Statement and Topic Background	10%
(4.) Annotated Bibliography	15%
(5.) Conceptual Foundation	15%
(6.) Empirical Modeling Strategies	15%
(7.) Presentation of Research Prospectus (Oral/Written work)	20%
(8.) Constructive Critique of Student Research Prospectus	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

It is clear from this work format that skill building in the first half of the class (January – February) in the form of readings and discussion is essential to analytical and written work in the second part (March – April). The work load falls primarily after March 1st. ***My job is to help you move (rapidly) forward to produce a high quality MS thesis as well as a portfolio of analytical, conceptual and communication skills.***

POLICY ON WORK COMPLETION DEADLINES: All work is to be the student's own. Request and justification to hand in late work must be made at least three days prior to the scheduled date. If an emergency arises, I must be contacted within two days following the due date. Otherwise late work will be given half of the earned grade.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Topic One Introduction, orientation.

Topic Two The mentor-student relationship, thesis topic choice and a plan of work

Topic Three Conceptualizing inquiry and research

Topic Four The scientific method (and alternatives) and conceptual models

Topic Five Developing background knowledge/problem solving context and a review of the (relevant) literature

Topic Six Research as based in economic theory

Topic Seven Forming, testing and drawing conclusions about hypotheses: an overview of model building and quantitative methods

Topic Eight A research prospectus and peer review. Who is your audience and how are research results disseminated??

Note that topics will be covered in 1-2 week blocks with previous materials integrated into current items. The instructor will accelerate or pause according to the difficulty of the material and the challenge it poses to the class. The ***SYLLABUS is subject to change.***

Modifications will be provided in class in advance of work or coverage of topic(s).