

Professor Julie Cullen
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Office hours: Mondays 9-10am

Economics 191A: Senior Essay Seminar, Fall 2017

Course goals

This course will help you apply the tools you have learned in your core and elective coursework to do your own research (to move from being a *consumer* of research to a *producer* of research) and critically assess others' research. You will learn how to:

- present your ideas in writing and orally
- ask, research and answer a question
- listen to other people's ideas, ask insightful questions and provide useful comments/suggestions

Structure of the course

This is the first quarter of a two-quarter course sequence. Grades are assigned for the full two-quarter sequence. The grade recorded at the end of the Fall quarter is IP ("in progress"). Dropping the course by the end of the ninth week in the Fall results in a grade of W. Dropping the course in the Winter quarter may result in an F (at least for the Fall).

The formal requirement of the sequence is to complete a research paper (typically 25-35 pages) by the end of the Winter quarter. The goal of the Fall quarter is to pose a viable research question, obtain the data you will use, process the data so that you know which variables are available to you, and lay out a plan to use the data to answer your question. The deliverable for the Fall is a detailed **research proposal** that: i) poses your question, ii) explains how it relates to the existing literature, iii) describes the data and variables you will use, and iv) details your plan for using the data to answer your question. This proposal should be a minimum of 4 single spaced pages of text, with additional figures and tables. The proposal is due by 5pm on Friday, December 8.

Each of you will also present your proposal to the class during the last two weeks. Plan for 15 minutes for your **presentation**, with an additional 10 minutes for questions and discussion. This is an opportunity to get feedback from the entire class on your research.

Attendance at all scheduled class meetings is required. Active **participation** in class is also important for developing the ability to think critically.

Once you have chosen and made some progress on your topic, you should **meet with faculty members** with interests related to the topic you choose. Faculty can provide useful guidance in your research, and may also serve as future references.

Schedule

This quarter, our reserved class meeting slot is Monday 5:00-7:50pm in SEQUO 244. Some weeks we will use this time to meet as a group to cover shared material or for presentations of your research. Other weeks we will use this time for one-on-one meetings. I will also be available for one-on-one meetings during my office hours or by appointment throughout the quarter.

Dates	Activity
10/2	Introductory meeting Assignment: Submit brief write-up of project to abarsh@ucsd.edu
10/9	Introduction to UCSD library resources led by Adele Barsh Assignment: Bring laptop or web-accessible device to class
10/16	Methods for identifying causal effects; Crash course in Stata Assignment: Read Duflo et al. (2006) pp.4-17 Watch Muralidharan “Moving Up A Gear”
10/23	One-on-one meetings
10/30	One-on-one meetings
11/6	No class – independent research
11/13	No class – independent research
11/20	No class – independent research
11/27	Student presentations (25 minutes each)
12/4	Student presentations (25 minutes each)
12/8	Proposal due by 5pm (submitted electronically and by paper to Cullen’s mailbox in Econ 207)

Course website

Required readings/videos and other materials will be posted at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ec191cullen/home>

This website is also accessible through Cullen’s departmental home page, via the teaching tab.