

ECON 191A: SENIOR ESSAY SEMINAR

FALL 2021

Professor Emanuel Vespa
Email: evespa@ucsd.edu
Office hours: By appointment

Class Meetings

Lecture Section: Tue/Thu 5:00-6:20pm
Location: MCGIL 2315

Course Overview

This is the first quarter of a two-quarter course sequence. Grades are assigned for the full two-quarter sequence. By the end of the Winter quarter, you will have completed an economics academic research paper. 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 goal of the Fall quarter is to pose a viable research question, understand how it fits into the existing literature, obtain the data you will use, process the data so that you know which variables are available to you, and lay out a concrete plan to use the data to answer your question.

The written deliverable for the Fall is a rough draft that: i) poses your question, ii) explains how it relates to the existing literature, iii) describes the data and variables you will use, iv) details the estimation strategy you will use to answer your question, and v) presents any preliminary results.

This draft does not have to be complete but should be structured like a standard economics research paper and have fully developed data and strategy sections. The draft should be a minimum of 4 single-spaced pages of text, with additional figures and tables.

Each of you will also prepare a 10-minute presentation of your research project. All of us will watch your presentation and provide structured peer feedback. During the last two weeks, we will meet as a group to discuss your presentations/projects.

Attendance

Attendance at all scheduled class meetings is required (unless you have been excused in advance). This quarter, our reserved class meeting slot is Tu/Thu 5:00-6:20pm. All

meetings will be held in person. But meetings will be recorded as well, with the link to the podcast available on the canvas course website.

If you are feeling sick, let me know as soon as possible, I will excuse you from coming to class and I will ask that you watch the recording as soon as it becomes available.

Some weeks we will use this time to meet as a group to cover shared material or discuss your research projects. 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.

Active participation in class is important for developing the ability to think critically.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Class type	Topic	Assignment
09/23	Group Meeting	Introduction	Email me a brief write-up of your project
09/28	Group Meeting via Zoom Link on Canvas	Research Resources	Overview of UCSD library resources led by Lisa Martin.
09/30	Group Meeting	Method for identifying causal inference	Read Duflo, Glennester and Kramer (2006) (pp 4-17).
10/05	Group Meeting	Method for identifying causal inference	Watch Muralidharan "Moving up a Gear."
10/07	One-on-one meetings		
10/12	One-on-one meetings		
10/14	One-on-one meetings		
10/19	One-on-one meetings		
10/21	One-on-one meetings		
10/26	One-on-one meetings		
10/28	One-on-one meetings		
11/02	Group Meeting	The writing hub seminar	via zoom
11/04	One-on-one meetings		
11/09	Group Meeting	First round of presentations	
11/11	No class (Veteran's day)		
11/16	Group Meeting	First round of presentations	
11/18	Group Meeting	First round of presentations	
11/23	One-on-one meetings		
11/30	Group Meeting	Second round of presentations	
12/02	Group Meeting	Second round of presentations	
12/10	No meeting	Draft Due	