

**Economics 191AB: Senior Essay Seminar  
Winter and Spring 2003**

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Economics 191A is Part I of the Department's Senior Essay Seminar. Economics 191B, Part II, will be given in Spring Quarter. These courses are required for Economics or Management Science majors who wish to graduate with the "highest distinction" honors designation on their diploma. Both 191A and 191B must be taken to receive departmental honors. Economics 191AB is limited to students with a GPA of 3.5 or better in upper division Economics and Management Science courses. The only formal requirement of the two-course sequence is to complete a well-researched 25-30 page paper on an economics topic approved by the instructor. However, to satisfactorily complete the first half of the sequence, a first draft of the paper must be turned in by the end of the quarter. Typically, the first draft contains the paper's theoretical analysis and a preliminary description of its empirical content.

Economics 191A is divided into three parts:

- (1) selecting your topic, finding sufficient reference and source material, and writing a short description of your topic, including at least three references
- (2) formulating an outline
- (3) writing a first draft of your essay

At the end of each of these parts, you will turn in your work product to date.

Class meetings: Economics 191A will meet periodically TTh 9:30-10:50am in McGill 2330.

Tentative schedule (other dates may be arranged in the first meeting, depending on class size):

January 7: Class meeting (choosing a paper topic and references)

January 21: Turn in two-page description of paper topic and a list of at least three references

January 28, 30: Class meetings (short presentations and discussions of paper topics)

February 4: Turn in outline of paper.

February 11, 13: Class meetings (discuss outlines/problems)

March 4, 6: Class meetings (presentations of first drafts)

March 14 (last day of classes): Turn in first draft of paper

Office hours: In Economics 319, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00, or by appointment

### **How to Find a Topic**

At the start the main problem is deciding on your topic: something original, not too small or irrelevant, but not too big and complicated. Even more important is that the topic should be something that genuinely interests you, because otherwise you will be very tired of it by the time you write your final draft! A good project might have two sections, the first theory and the second empirical. Areas of research can be found in the leading general economics journals and specialty journals, and in publications of the regional Federal Reserve Banks, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Brookings Institution, environmental organizations such as Resources for the Future, and so on. A simple, possible strategy is to take a good paper published six to ten years ago in a good journal and ask how well the results hold up now; or to find a good paper based on one country or data set, and extend it to another country or data set.

## Readings

The following books (on reserve in Geisel Library unless noted) may be helpful in suggesting topics:

- Jacqueline Brux and Janna Cowen, *Economic Issues and Policy, 2nd edition*, Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Pub., 2002
- Economics* (periodical: in Geisel stacks at HC 101 A635), Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1999-2000.
- Edwin Dolan and John Goodman, *Economics of Public Policy: The Micro View*, St. Paul, MN: West Pub. Co., 1982
- Thomas Swartz and Frank Bonello, editors, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Economic Issues*, Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 2000
- Steven E. Landsburg, *The Armchair Economist: Economics & Everyday Life*, New York: Free Press, 1993
- Paul Krugman, *The Age of Diminished Expectations*, 3rd edition, Cambridge: MA, MIT Press, 1997

Joseph Stiglitz's and George Akerlof's Nobel lectures (both published in the June 2002 *American Economic Review*, and linked (in manuscript form) on the course website) are helpful (and inspirational) on the general subject of how to turn observations about the world into economics.

## Computing and information sources

To facilitate communication and gain access to many useful resources, you must get a personal computer account from the Academic Computing Center. Devaney Kerr in the Undergrad Economics Office can help you do this if you don't already have an account. Among other things, this will give you access to the Social Science Database for an enormous amount of data and many useful internet sites, including those listed through a link at this point on the course web site, which you can reach through a link near the top of my home page, [weber.ucsd.edu/~vcrawfor](http://weber.ucsd.edu/~vcrawfor) .

Harold Colson, the Economics Librarian at Geisel Library, has compiled a very useful collection of links at <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~hcolson/econbib.html> .