

**Economics 691H - Honors Seminar in Economics**  
**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
**Fall 2015**

Instructor: Dr. Klara Peter  
Office: 306C Gardner Hall  
Office Hours: after class on Mondays or by appointment  
Office Phone: 966-3669  
Email Address: kpeter@unc.edu  
Class Schedule: 2:00-3:15 pm MW Gardner, room 209

**Objective:**

Conduct original research under the guidance of a faculty member and write a thesis and orally defend the research findings.

The Honors Thesis program is a two-semester program that gives the student an opportunity to work closely with UNC faculty. Many students find this to be one of the most intense but very rewarding academic experiences of college.

**Highly recommended reading for data analysis methods:** Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion by Joshua D. Angrist & Jörn-Steffen Pischke  
<http://www.mostlyharmlesseconometrics.com/>

**Format of the class:**

The class format will be that of a “seminar” and will vary as we progress in the semester. The first few weeks will focus on getting you prepared to do research. We will bring faculty members who will share their research experience with you. The second part of the semester will focus on sharing your research with your peers and providing constructive feedback.

My role is to help you identify a general topic research area, and to help you find a faculty member whose research area is close to your interest. The faculty member will be your primary advisor. Please go to the Economics Department research page to identify professors whose research interests closely match yours. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/econ/research.htm> is the webpage that lists faculty and their research areas.

**Grading weight:**

Department Seminar attendance:	10 points
Proposal Preliminary Draft:	20 points
Presentations:	25 points
Final Proposal:	30 points
Class participation:	15 points

**Grading scale:**

At least 93%	A
At least 90% but less than 93%:	A-

At least 87% but less than 90%:	B+
At least 83% but less than 87%	B
At least 80% but less than 83%:	B-
At least 77% but less than 80%:	C+
At least 73% but less than 77%:	C
At least 70% but less than 73%:	C-
At least 67% but less than 70%:	D+
At least 63% but less than 67%:	D
At least 60% but less than 63%:	D-
Less than 60%:	F

**Attendance policy:** Your attendance will be counted towards your course participation. It is important that you attend class and provide constructive feedback to your peers.

**Department seminar attendance:** Please find and attend a seminar that is relevant to your research through the department website and write a one-page summary of the research presented. Please submit this in the dropbox in Sakai and bring a hard copy to class by December 2.

**Academic integrity:** UNC Honor Code will be strictly enforced for all course work. Please refer to honor.unc.edu if you have any questions about the honor code. Given the nature of this course, please be careful with plagiarism issues by paying attention to proper citation of works that you have used for your research.

**Preliminary draft of your proposal: This will be due on October 19 in class.**

I expect you to have done some preliminary research by the middle of the semester. Please submit a five page preliminary proposal in which you will include the following:

- Introduction
- Motivation for your research and why you think that your research is a contribution.
- A brief review of peer-reviewed relevant papers
- The preliminary theoretical model.
- The preliminary empirical model for your thesis (Most of you will likely be doing an empirical analysis in your thesis)
- Identify the data source that you will use.
- Provide the summary statistics for your key variables.
- Describe an empirical model you will estimate.
- Define the econometric procedure that you will follow.
- Include a detailed bibliography

Use “dropbox” in Sakai to submit this proposal and bring a hard copy to class.

**Research proposal for peer review: This will be due on November 16.**

This proposal should be about 15 - 20 pages long and it should include:

- Introduction
- Motivation for your research and why you think that your research is a contribution.
- An extensive literature review.

- The theoretical model in your thesis
- The empirical model for your thesis
- Describe the data set that you will use.
- Provide and analyze the summary statistics.
- Define the econometric procedure that you will follow.
- Provide preliminary estimate of your model.
- Include a detailed bibliography.

The proposal will be reviewed by one of your classmates and by your advisor.

Each of you will submit detailed written comments to another student's proposal, and the review will be due **on November 23**.

**Final version of research proposal is due on December 2, 2015.**

The final version should take into account comments you received from your advisor, from me, from your peers, and during the end-semester presentations. A hard and an electronic copy of your final proposal should be presented to me and to your advisor on December 2, 2015.

**Proposal presentations:**

You will be doing two presentations for 8 – 10 minutes of your preliminary and final proposal followed by a five minute Q&A session. All students in the class are required to be present for all presentations and to actively participate in class.

**What will be the final thesis format?** Please see the sample theses that I have shared with you.

Your theses will typically include the following sections:

- (1) Title Page with Advisor's signature
- (2) Acknowledgement
- (3) Abstract (150-200 word summary)
- (4) Introduction
- (5) Literature Review
- (6) Theoretical Model
- (7) Empirical Model
- (8) Data
- (9) Results and findings
- (10) Conclusion

**Late submissions**

Assignments handed in after the due date but before the week of final examination will be marked down by 50%. Assignments handed in during or after the week of final examination will receive no credit.

**Conference participation opportunities and Undergraduate Journal publication opportunities:**

- (1) <http://carrollround.georgetown.edu/> in April if your topic is in International Economics. If your paper is accepted, the conference will fund most of the expenses associated with

attending the event. UNC also has funds available. Please consider this seriously if your thesis is in a topic related to International Economics.

- (2) Symposia: Celebration of Undergraduate Research at UNC held in mid-April. [http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/symposia/symposia\\_cur.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/symposia/symposia_cur.html). I strongly encourage you to present your research in this event. There is an award for the best poster.
- (3) <http://www.aeaweb.org/students/Opportunities.php> lists other conferences where undergraduates can present their research.

### **Funding for travel to present your research:**

[https://cfx.research.unc.edu/funding/fund\\_detail.cfm?id=271](https://cfx.research.unc.edu/funding/fund_detail.cfm?id=271) The Office for Undergraduate Research has awards for UNC-CH undergraduate students to defray the cost of travel to present results of their research or creative performance at a professional conference in their field.

### **Tentative schedule**

Due to the nature of this course, there will likely be some changes during the semester. Changes will be announced via email. You are expected to be available during class time either for class meetings or meetings in my office throughout the semester.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>
8/19/2015	Introduction and course review
8/24/2015	Regular class
8/26/2015	Visit by Dr. Jonathan Hill (Econometric Theory)
8/31/2015	Regular class
9/2/2015	Regular class
9/7/2015	No classes - Holiday
9/9/2015	Visit of UNC library research support
9/14/2015	Visit by Dr. Donna Gilleskie (Health Economics)
9/16/2015	Visit by Dr. Andy Yates (Environmental Economics)
9/21/2015	Regular class
9/23/2015	Visit of Dr. Brian McManus and Dr. Tiago Pires (Empirical Industrial Organization)
9/28/2015	No class meeting – Individual meetings in my office
9/30/2015	No class meeting – Individual meetings in my office
10/5/2015	Mid-semester presentations – 1-4
10/6/2015	Mid-semester presentations – 5-8
10/12/2015	Mid-semester presentations – 9-12
10/14/2015	Mid-semester presentations – 13-16
10/19/2015	<b>Preliminary proposal is due</b>
10/21/2015	Visit by Dr. Sergio Parreiras (Applied Micro Theory)
10/26/2015	Regular class
10/28/2015	Regular class
11/2/2015	Regular class
11/4/2015	No class meeting – Individual meetings in my office
11/9/2015	No class meeting – Individual meetings in my office

11/11/2015	No class meeting – Individual meetings in my office
11/16/2015	<b>Research proposal is due for peer-review and an advisor's feedback</b> End of semester presentations (1-4)
11/18/2015	End of semester presentations (5-8)
11/23/2015	<b>Peer-reviews of proposals are due</b> End of semester presentations (9-12)
11/25/2015	No classes – Thanksgiving break
11/30/2015	End of semester presentations (13-16)
12/2/2015	<b>Final revised proposal is due</b>