

**Economics 58H**  
**Researching the Tools for Success in College**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office: 200A Gardner Hall  
Email: [jane\\_fruehwirth@unc.edu](mailto:jane_fruehwirth@unc.edu)  
Office Hours: Thursday, 12:30-1:30pm in person  
or by appointment (zoom or in-person)  
Zoom office hour: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/91284538261>

Course website: [Trello](#)

- Canvas (for quizzes, turning in assignments/feedback, course reading reserves)

Class times: TR 11am-12:15pm, Gardner 308

**TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

Gabriela Goodman (Undergraduate Learning Assistant)

Tasks: Will assist in in-class work sessions and host weekly help sessions  
EconAid Center at 5-6pm on Wednesdays and by appointment  
Email: [gabby01@live.unc.edu](mailto:gabby01@live.unc.edu)

Johnathan Conzelman (Graduate Research Consultant)

Tasks: Will help with research questions/literature review, administer the survey,  
share cleaned data, assist with data analysis  
Weekly office hours TBD by zoom  
Email: [jconzelm@unc.edu](mailto:jconzelm@unc.edu)

*The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research. This is a research-intensive course, and you may be able to use it to meet a requirement of the [Carolina Research Scholar Program](#). Please visit the [OUR website](#) to learn about how you might engage in research while you are at Carolina.*

**COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

In this Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE), we will study the barriers and tools for success in college. Students will develop a measure of success and identify a focal barrier to success in collaboration with classmates and drawing on existing research. Students will synthesize existing evidence in the related literature, collect their own data and create their own evidence on the topic.

Students will learn the following skills:

- 1) How to define/develop a research question
- 2) Data-storytelling to effect change,
- 3) The rewards and challenges of doing research,
- 4) How to synthesize findings in the primary literature without becoming overwhelmed,

5) Common limitation/challenges in research

This course focuses on developing/applying research skills used by economists for data analysis that are also broadly used in research related to education and beyond (including the economics of education). The course does not focus on economic principles. The instructor approaches research from economic principles and will share these when relevant in the course to provide a taste of economics.

As part of the General Education curriculum, this course will enable students to:

- 1) Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
- 2) Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
- 3) Analyze and communicate issues associated with a specific, advanced topic, covering a wide range of knowledge.
- 4) Produce knowledge through self-directed inquiry and active learning

This course meets the **Research and Discovery** objective of the IDEAs in action curriculum. Students immerse themselves in a research project and experience the reflection and revision involved in producing and disseminating original scholarship or creative works.

#### **Questions for Students**

1. How do I establish my point of view, take intellectual risks, and begin producing original scholarship or creative works?
2. How do I narrow my topic, critique current scholarship, and gather evidence in systematic and responsible ways?
3. How do I evaluate my findings and communicate my conclusions?

#### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Frame a topic, develop an original research question or creative goal, and establish a point of view, creative approach, or hypothesis.
2. Obtain a procedural understanding of how conclusions can be reached in a field and gather appropriate evidence.
3. Evaluate the quality of the arguments and/or evidence in support of the emerging product.
4. Communicate findings in a clear and compelling ways.
5. Critique and identify the limits of the conclusions of the project and generate ideas for future work.

#### **Prerequisites**

This class is targeted to students in their first year of college, and as such has no prerequisites.

#### **READINGS**

All readings can be downloaded from the course website.

Wheelan, C. (2013). *Naked Statistics. Stripping the Dread from the Data*. W.W. Norton Company, Inc, New York, NY. (NS, useful reference but not required.)

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### Grading

Quizzes	10%
Intermediate lit. review assignments	10%
Literature review	20%
Intermediate blog assignments	10%
Group Blog post	25%
Group presentation	10%
Research assessment	5%
Participation	10%

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

**Quizzes:** Students will complete occasional online quizzes to better prepare for course discussions and activities. The quizzes will include 3 to 5 multiple choice or T/F questions.

**Literature review:** Students will write a literature review on their research question. Students will work in their groups to identify and divide themes, but each student will turn in their own literature review that addresses part of the group's research question. The literature review will help develop and assess skills for reading scholarly literature.

To develop these skills, there will be intermediate assignments and opportunities for feedback. These intermediate assignments include:

- An annotated bibliography (10 references with short summary; individual)
- A group assignment to identify key themes and to divide themes among group members
- A draft literature review (individual)

The intermediate assignments will be graded on a 3-point scale (check, check plus, check minus). The final literature review will be graded based on the rubric posted on the course website.

The literature review will be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font.

**Group blog:** Students will work in groups to write a blog on their research question related to student success. The work from the literature review will help place the findings in context and motivate the research. The blog will assess students' ability to use data to address a research question, motivate the question and explain the importance to general audience.

To develop these skills, there will be intermediate assignments and opportunities for feedback. These intermediate assignments include:

1. The group will turn in a proposal
2. Each group member will turn in a related figure and description
3. The group will turn in an outline
4. The group will turn in a complete draft for instructor and peer feedback

The intermediate assignments will be graded on a 3-point scale (check plus, check, check minus). The final blog will be graded based on the rubric posted on the course website.

The blog will be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font and include at least 4 figures for groups of 2 (6 for groups of 3). Blogs will be shared by posting online (at instructor's discretion).

**Group Presentation:** Students will work in their groups to prepare a presentation based on their blog/literature review. These presentations will provide an opportunity to share findings with classmates and for feedback prior to turning in the final blog. The presentations will be graded based on rubrics posted on the course website, using a combination of instructor and peer feedback.

**Research Assessment:** Students will be asked to critique their research and research process at the end of the semester. This will provide an opportunity to share the limitations of the findings, synthesizing learning about research methods taught in class. This will also be an opportunity to reflect on group process.

**Class Participation:** Attendance and participation are critical for your success in this class. This course is built around developing a research community where students can feel free to express ideas and learn from each other. Students will be asked to do some informal mini-presentations and to provide feedback to classmates. Participation in class discussions, and actively contributing to group work in the class will also be important. These components will all contribute to your class participation grade.

#### **COURSE SOFTWARE**

**Canvas:** Used for uploading assignments and grading assignments and for sharing some readings through course reserves.

**Trello:** Will be used to manage group work, assignment deadlines, and class readings. Trello can be downloaded for free: <https://trello.com>.

**Excel:** Will be used for statistical analysis and graphs. Please make sure you have access to Excel. Resources for using Excel will be posted on the course website.

**PollEverywhere:** Will be used occasionally in class. Please register for a student account at <https://edtech.unc.edu/service/poll-everywhere/#instructor>

## **POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Submitting Assignments**

Assignments should be submitted through Canvas and will be due by the beginning of class on the due date unless otherwise stated.

### **Late Work Policy**

Late work that is submitted within a week of the assignment due date will be given half credit. I generally do not accept late assignments after that date. Sometimes students face *unforeseen circumstances* or *emergencies*, and extensions may sometimes be granted in these cases. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible and prior to the due date when these situations arise. You are bound by the honor code in any requests for extensions due to such circumstances.

### **Computers and Cell Phones**

Students are expected to bring laptops to class. They should only be used for instructor-designated activities. Please turn off all email and social media notifications and silence iPhones during class to minimize distractions.

### **Syllabus Changes**

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of course conduct, course assignments, and course exams. Adherence to the honor code is required

(<http://www.catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/>)

### **UNC's Attendance Policy**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

I realize that there are valid reasons for absences that do not qualify as University Approved Absences. Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for an approved absence and accommodations.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

If you feel you have been awarded an incorrect grade, please discuss with me. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our departmental director of undergraduate studies or appeal the grade through a formal university process based on arithmetic/clerical error, arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment, or personal malice. To learn more, go to the [Academic Advising Program website](#).

### **UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

#### **Library Resources**

Our Entrepreneurship and Business librarian, Nancy Lovas, [nancy64@email.unc.edu](mailto:nancy64@email.unc.edu), will guide us through library resources that will be useful for your research.

Lorin Bruckner ([lorin.bruckner@unc.edu](mailto:lorin.bruckner@unc.edu)) the Data Visualization Services librarian will also be visiting class to discuss data visualization.

#### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up an appointment on their website (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>).

#### **University Testing Center**

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit <http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/>.

#### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

#### **Accessibility Resources**

UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can

impair student success. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>

### **Title IX Resources**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1/10	Introduction to course	
1/12	Barriers/supports for success	Interview 2 friends Stats brief Cataldi (2018)
1/17	Role of background	NCES, chp 4
1/19	Role of institutions/policy	NCES, chp 6
1/24	What barrier do you care most about and why? Role of behaviors	NCES, chp 5
1/26	Defining success	NCES, chp 7
1/31	Gaps in success	Reading TBD
2/2	Defining a research question/data sources	Reading TBD
2/7	Surveying literature and annotated bibliographies (Nancy Lovas)	
2/9	Share ideas for research questions	1-min presentation on RQ
2/14	Well-being day	
2/16	Refining research question Working in groups	<b>Research question/group proposal</b>
2/21	Writing an effective literature review  Discuss key themes	<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>
2/23	Research ethics  Discuss proposed measures and categorize	<b>Key themes/literature review outline</b>  Ethics reading <a href="https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/ethical-issues-for-online-surveys/">https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/ethical-issues-for-online-surveys/</a>
2/28	Excel/Statistics	Proposed measures for survey NS chp 2
3/2	Finalize survey and invitation	Read/take draft survey Read draft survey invitations
3/7	Data Visualization (Lorin Bruckner)	
3/9	Excel/ Statistics	<b>Draft literature review</b> NS chp 4
3/14-16	Spring break	
3/21	Excel/statistics Importance of population	<b>Figure with description</b> Reading TBD

<b>3/23</b>	What makes a good blog post (Mel Kramer)	Reading, TBD
<b>3/28</b>	Excel Group work	<b>Outline blog post</b>
<b>3/30</b>	Randomized control trials and causation	Reading TBD
<b>4/4</b>	Data for policy change (case study: My future NC)	Reading TBD
<b>4/6</b>	Well-being day	
<b>4/11</b>	Discuss limitations Group work	
<b>4/13</b>	Peer review	<b>Draft blog post</b>
<b>4/18</b>	Presentations	
<b>4/20</b>	Presentations	
<b>4/25</b>	Presentations	
<b>4/27</b>	Class wrap-up	<b>Research assessment due</b>
<b>5/5</b>	No class	<b>Final blog post due</b> <b>Final literature review due</b>