

2024 Fall Senior Research Workshop (ECON 0701A)

Professor Erin Wolcott
Warner Hall 109
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(response withing 24 weekday hours)

Class Meeting Time (WNS 010): Tuesdays 1:30PM—4:15PM

Course Description

The goal of Econ 701 is to use and further develop the research-related skills introduced in previous economics classes to begin research and analysis for your thesis. We will meet collectively for discussion/lecture on common issues (including carrying out a comprehensive literature review, research design, data preparation analysis, and effective communication of results) and to allow students to present and discuss their research, developing a “community of scholars.” Principally, however, students will work independently on their research project throughout the term and meet with me weekly to review progress.

Required Text and Reading

- McCloskey, Deirdre. 1999. *Economical Writing*. Waveland Press. (I have copies you can borrow.)
- Bellemare, Marc F. 2022. *Doing Economics: What You Should Have Learned Earned in Grad School--But Didn't*. The MIT Press. Chapters 2—3. (I have copies you can barrow)
- We will read selected research articles throughout the term, and these, as well as any data used in class, will be made available on Canvas or go/wolcott700/

Statistical Software

For empirical analysis, I have a strong preference for STATA. For calibrating a structural model, MATLAB is a good choice. For typing up your thesis (and presentations), I have a strong preference for LaTeX.

Office Hours (Warner 109)

We will meet for 30-minutes once a week (usually Monday or Tuesday). I will circulate meeting times each week. If you have a pressing concern later in the week, you are welcome to stop by my regularly scheduled office hours on Friday.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

The senior research workshop spans two terms (Econ 701 & 702). At the end of Fall semester your progress will be evaluated. If it is satisfactory, you will receive a “placeholder” grade of Satisfactory and enroll in Econ 702 for J-term. At the end of J-term you will receive a letter grade that will be applied to both terms. That is, your “placeholder” grade from the previous term will be converted to the same letter grade that you earned for the second term. Your overall Middlebury GPA will be based on the two (identical) letter grades. Your Economics major GPA will use the letter grade for your thesis only once.

Your final letter grade is based on class participation (40%), final research paper (50%), and poster (10%).

Class Participation and Research Progress (40%)

Class participation consists of attendance, preparation for and involvement in class as well as in individual meetings, your presentations, and work assigned as a referee or discussant. Preparation and organization for our individual one-on-one meetings is essential. Please come to meetings with a list of questions/problems to address, take notes during the meeting, and maintain a list of goals and accomplishments in a weekly research log you will share with Prof. Wolcott. Other small ad hoc assignments (such as reviewing a classmate's paper) may be factored into this category. Research progress consists of on-time and fully developed assignments for intermediate products per the syllabus.

Final Research Paper (50%)

Your final paper is due Sunday, January 26 at 8pm

Poster (10%)

You are required to prepare a poster summarizing your project and present it at the annual poster session and public reception for senior research in the economics department. Further details will be provided in J-term and specialized training as needed at the Media center.

Course Grade

You will receive a letter grade for the above categories. When averaging letter grades to establish an overall average, the grading scale for conversion back to a final letter grade is:

Overall average	Letter Grade
$\geq 94.0\%$	A
≥ 90.0 and $< 94.0\%$	A-
≥ 87.0 and $< 90.0\%$	B+
≥ 83.0 and $< 87.0\%$	B
≥ 80.0 and $< 83.0\%$	B-
≥ 77.0 and $< 80.0\%$	C+
≥ 73.0 and $< 77.0\%$	C
≥ 70.0 and $< 73.0\%$	C-
≥ 60.0 and $< 70.0\%$	D
$< 60.0\%$	F

Honors

The senior research workshop is the path to departmental honors. To graduate with Honors, a student must earn at least an A- in Econ 702 and have an Economics major GPA ≥ 3.5 . High Honors requires an A in Econ 702 and GPA ≥ 3.75 , and Highest Honors requires an A in Econ 702 and GPA ≥ 3.90 . Note that the calculation of the Economics major GPA uses the letter grade for your thesis only once.

Honor Code

Intellectual honesty and respect for other's words and ideas are core values of your professors, the college, and the broader academic community. You can and should base your research on the existing literature, as well as talk to others about it (e.g., professors, fellow students, friends, family, or others). Indeed, this is a critical component of the research process. Be vigilant, however, in recognizing the difference between your thoughts, results, and writing (i.e., your contribution to knowledge) and the contributions of others. Directly copying someone else's work, ideas or results without attribution is an Honor Code violation. Please sign the Honor Code on all assignments and your final paper.

Generative AI

You may AI tools like (e.g. ChatGPT, Bard) to help assist in the literature review and to help with coding. Be aware that outputs generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. I will hold you accountable for the accuracy of your work. AI itself cannot be a source for your literature you will still need to look up the original articles and review them. AI tools may NOT be used in the writing of your thesis. This will be considered plagiarism and treated as a violation of Middlebury's honor code.

Spring Symposium

You are encouraged to submit and present your work in the 2025 Spring Symposium.

Funding

Some projects may require funding to purchase data or administer lab or field experiments. If you anticipate that you will require funding, please discuss with me as early as possible. The undergraduate research office administers the senior research project supplement fund. Rolling applications for amounts up to \$350 are reviewed weekly and applications for up to \$1200 due on October 1, 2024. See [go/URO/](#). The economics department may be able to offer limited additional funding if necessary.

IRB approval

If your research project will involve original work with human subjects such as implementing lab or field experiments or using restricted access data, you likely will need to get IRB approval. See [go/IRB/](#).

Letters of Accommodation

Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact ADA Coordinators Jodi Litchfield, Peter Ploegman, and Deirdre Kelly of the DRC at ada@middlebury.edu for more information. All discussions will remain confidential.

Course Outline (Some Important Dates):

Fall Term

Tuesday, Sep 10	First class: intros, syllabus, finding literature lecture
Sunday, Sep 22	Annotated bibliography due (~20 articles)
Tuesday, Oct 1	Second class: STATA Lab & McCloskey due
Tuesday, Oct 15	Third class: prospectus presentations
Sunday, Nov 3	Data section, empirical strategy, and preliminary results due
Tuesday, Nov 19 & Dec 3	Fourth & fifth class: presentation of results
Sunday Dec 15	Draft 1 due

Campus Events

Sep 19-21	Clifford Symposium: Housing and Belonging
Sep 13, WNS 101, 2-3pm	Tamri Matiashvili `18 Does Diversity Matter? Evidence from the First Female Physicians
TBD	IP&E Symposium

Winter Term

Sunday, Jan 12*	Draft 2 due (returned by Jan 17)
Monday, Jan 13 & Tuesday, 14*	Class presentations
Sunday, Jan 26	Thesis due
Monday, Jan 27*	Poster draft
Wednesday, Jan 29*	Poster Session

*Tentative