

Seminar Info: Tu 4:00-6:45, selected weeks | 113 Education Center
Professor: Dr. Doug Walker | 427 Beatty | WalkerD@cofc.edu | walkerd.people.cofc.edu
Office Hours: Tu, Th, 10:45-12:15; and by appointment Tu 12:15-4:00 and W 10:00-4:00

Course Description: The senior seminar is designed to be a research methods course for economics students. During the semester we will discuss academics, the economics profession, and the research process. The course is designed for economics students who wish to apply what they have learned in their other economics coursework to develop an independent research project. This means that much of the work for the course will be done on your own, and you need to be able to motivate yourself to do good work.

The format of this course is a seminar, which means there will be a mix of lectures and discussion. Seminar participants are expected to actively participate. This will require that you be prepared for each seminar meeting. We will not necessarily be meeting each week, but you should be available to meet during the officially scheduled time for this seminar. The meeting schedule will be updated with reasonable notice on the seminar webpage (address above).

Prerequisites: Senior standing; ECON 200, 201, 317, 318; MATH 120, 250; MATH 350 or DSCI 232; or instructor permission. ECON 419, Introduction to Econometrics, is strongly recommended. Note that if you matriculated prior to 2013, this course may be a degree requirement for you, and the prerequisites may be different.

Required Books: *Doing economics: A guide to understanding and carrying out economic research*, by Steven Greenlaw. © 2009, Cengage Learning, ISBN 978-0618379835

Economical writing, by Deirdre McCloskey. © 2000, Waveland Press, ISBN 978-1577660637

Optional: *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations*, 8th edition, by Kate Turabian. © 2013, University of Chicago Press, ISBN 978-0226816388

Chicago Manual of Style Guidelines, by MaryAnne Gobble. © 2012, BarCharts, Inc., ISBN 978-1423218609

30-second economics, Donald Marron, ed. © 2010, Metro Books, ISBN 978-1435123106

All of the resources above can be helpful during the research process. You will be expected to read the required books, and you may wish to have a copy of one of first two optional resources. You can borrow a copy of *30-second economics* from me, if you like.

Other required readings, such as newspaper articles and journal articles, will also be posted on the seminar webpage. You are expected to have the capacity to either read the materials online or to print them.

Grading: Course letter grades are based on your performance relative to a standard 90 (A) – 80 (B) – 70 (C) – 60 (D) scale. For final seminar grades, +/- grades may be assigned.

Assignments: You must complete each of the assignments listed below. Point values are indicated. There are 100 points available. The minimum passing score for the course is 60 points.

Seminar Attendance & Participation (10 pts.) – You are required to attend all seminar sessions, and you are expected to be an active participant in the seminar discussion. Each day attendance will be taken and participation will be monitored. At the end of the semester you will be assigned a grade for attendance and participation, relative to other seminar participants. Absences can be penalized at the rate of 1 point per day.

Public Lectures (20 pts. total; 4 pts. each) – During the semester attend at least 5 economics-related lectures, seminars, or other academic events, as approved by the professor. These can vary from academic seminar paper presentations, guest lectures, or political speeches. For each event write a 3 page report that summarizes the content or main points and how it relates to economics. You can also explain your opinion/reaction, highlight potential flaws in the presenter’s argument, review issues raised after the talk, or discuss how the talk relates to something you have learned in your economics coursework.

Be sure your report provides complete information about the event (person, place, date, time). Reports are due within one week of the lecture date. I will try to announce pre-approved events during the seminar and on the webpage. Such events will usually include:

** Economics Department Seminar Series*

Faculty members from the department (or sometimes visitors to CofC) will present their research in a seminar format. This is highly recommended to see real research being presented. Seminars are on occasional Friday afternoons at 3 pm. Dates, speakers and topics will be announced in advance, but are tentatively scheduled for 2/3, 2/17, 3/17, 3/31, and 4/14. You will receive extra credit if you can attend at least 2 of the department seminars this semester.

** Lectures sponsored by the Center for Public Choice and Market Process*

The CPCMP is an organization within the department, directed by Dr. Calcagno. Most guest lecturers to the Center will focus on economics- or liberty-related topics. Among the lectures will be a series during “Adam Smith Week”, scheduled for March 20-24.

** Speakers at the Bastiat Society of Charleston*

The Bastiat Society is an organization that stresses the importance of free markets. The audience is composed mostly of local business owners who have an interest in politics, economics, and liberty. Events are held near the beginning of each month, usually on Wednesdays. Tentative dates this semester are 2/1, 3/15, and 3/22. Some events are co-sponsored with the CPCMP, and are scheduled in the evenings. Events on 2/1 and 3/15 will take place at the Harbour Club, 35 Prioleau St.

** Other guest lectures at the College of Charleston*

Each semester there are a variety of guest speakers to the college. Feel free to ask whether any particular event would satisfy this requirement. I will usually approve guest talks if they are economics or policy related.

ETS Major Field Test (10 pts.) – Sometime during the semester (most likely in March or April) seniors will take the Economics ETS Field Test. Prof. Snyder is administering the exam, and you will receive an email from her about exam scheduling. Scores from the exam will be used to assign points for this class. You are encouraged (through the grade weight for this class) to do as well as possible on the exam. Grades will be directly based on the ETS scores, using a formula based on ETS scoring. For example, your score could be your ETS score minus 80. Then if your score is 150, you would receive 70% of the 10 possible total points (or 7 points toward your final grade).

Research Project (60 pts. total) – Develop an original research project, and complete these components: review the relevant literature, collect data, perform empirical analysis, interpret the results, write a final paper, and present your paper. You are required to perform some type of empirical analysis in the paper, such as a simple econometric analysis (OLS regression). If you have not taken ECON 419, you may present anecdotal data as evidence. Alternatively, you may write a detailed literature review and proposal for future research.

Each component of the project is graded. Your final paper should be organized and formatted according to the “Style Guide” (handed out in class and available on the course website) or Turabian’s *Manual*. Poor writing, typographical errors, and poor organization will be heavily penalized. The *text* should be about 10 double-spaced pages of your own written material. The total length should be longer (15-20 pages) as it will include figures, tables and the bibliography.

You are expected to develop your own topic, but are required to get approval of your paper topic before you start. Come talk to me if you have problems coming up with ideas. Try to choose a *very narrow* topic. General paper topics, e.g., “Cause of the Recent Recession,” “Economic History of the World,” or “The Economics of...” generally are not acceptable. Most importantly, choose a topic that *interests you!*

If you developed a research project for another class previously, and would like to expand it, that is an option. (However, I generally will not approve an extension of a Senior/Honors Thesis or Independent Study paper.) Since this type of project will have already been used for course credit, and since you will already have a head-start for this project, there is a much higher standard for grading if you choose this option. For example, a regression analysis will be required. The paper must be of journal-submission quality (i.e., be very refined) by the final paper deadline.

The tentative deadlines for different components of your research project, along with point values, are listed below. I will announce and deadline changes during the seminar.

Due Date	Point Value	Assignment
Jan. 31	5 pts.	Topic Approval. Submit a one-paragraph paper proposal, signed upon approval by Dr. Walker. Keep the approved proposal, as it must be turned in with the final paper.
Feb. 14	5 pts.	Working Bibliography. List of 5-10 articles you will use in your literature review, with a brief summary of each article and how it relates to your paper topic. Your list should be properly formatted, consistent with the Style Guide. These must be <i>academic</i> journal articles in economics. Your bibliography must be consistent with the Style Guide.
Mar. 21	5 pts.	Data Summary. Summarize the data you have collected, with descriptions, sources, a table showing descriptive statistics, and an outline of the empirical model you plan to run (e.g., type of model, different specifications, etc.), and how you will interpret the results.
Apr. 4	10 pts.	First Draft. Submit <u>two copies</u> of your draft paper, properly formatted consistent with the Style Guide. Brief (not detailed) feedback will be provided by the professor, and the draft will be graded based generally on progress made thus far toward a complete paper.
Apr. 11	5 pts.	Referee Report. You are required to read and review a paper by one of your peers. Your anonymous report should briefly summarize the paper, highlight limitations, and provide constructive criticism for how the paper can be improved.
Apr. 18	10 pts.	Presentation. Present your project to the seminar. Your time will be limited to 15 minutes.
Apr. 25	20 pts.	Final Draft. Submit a hard-copy of your final paper draft, properly formatted, for final grading.

General Policies:

Written work: All written work is to be typed, double-spaced, printed single-sided, and stapled as needed. Use standard 1" margins and a Times New Roman (or similar) 12 pt. font. Emailed work is not accepted; you must turn in a hard copy of each written assignments. Nevertheless, you should always keep an e-copy (and a back-up) of your work, in case you need to re-print it.

Late and Make-up Work: No late work accepted; no make-up work given, except in cases of documented emergencies. This policy is strictly enforced. You may turn-in your assignments before the due dates.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Academic dishonesty is a particularly critical issue for this class. You should familiarize yourself with what constitutes plagiarism. Make sure that you are properly giving credit to others' ideas in your writing. If I find evidence that you plagiarize your work or otherwise cheat, you will be assigned the grade of XF, which indicates failure due to academic dishonesty. I will also forward any cases of cheating to the Dean of Students for additional penalties.

You should keep an e-copy of your work, as I may require each student to submit their first draft and final draft to turnitin.com as a check for evidence of plagiarism.

Academic Freedom: Students and the professor are entitled to academic freedom. For this seminar this means that you are free to research topics, make comments, etc., that may be politically or socially unpopular, question the status quo, or may otherwise be seen as controversial, either inside or outside this seminar. One of the obligations attached to the academic freedom right is your obligation to treat others' opinions with due respect. You are free to disagree with others, but each person has a right to his/her own opinion.

Students with Learning Disabilities: Since there are no in-class exams, the typical accommodations do not apply to this class. However, if you believe you require special accommodations, please submit a copy of a current Professor Notification Letter from the Center for Disability Services (Lightsey Center 104) to me no later than Thursday, January 26.

Dropping the Course: The last day to withdraw from the course (with a W grade) is Thursday, March 23.

Other Administrative Information:

Catalog Description: A seminar on particular problems or questions in economic policy. Topics will vary. The tools of economic analysis developed in the prerequisite courses will be used to analyze particular economic problems.

School of Business Learning Goals: This course will contribute to the SB goal of "synthesis." The student is expected to integrate knowledge and skills from their economics training in the completion of an academic research paper.

Student Learning Outcomes: The Department of Economics evaluates this course and its contribution to student learning related to "synthesis" and "communication skills." Synthesis refers to students demonstrating the ability to access existing knowledge by retrieving, assembling, and organizing information on particular topics and issues in economics. This will be assessed by two measures on your research paper (demonstration of knowledge of economics and technical skills). Communication skills refer to students' ability to clearly communicate the analysis of an economic issue. This outcome is assessed through your research paper and oral presentation.