USP 190
Senior Honors Seminar
Spring 2013

Professor Michelle White
Office: Econ 320
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Class meets Wed at 5p in the USP seminar room, SSB 102
Course website: www.econ.ucsd.edu/~miwhite/usp190

COURSE OVERVIEW

The goal of this course is to write honors thesis of approximately 20-25 pages (it can be longer or shorter as needed to present your project, but there’s no need for padding!). As a prerequisite to this class, you should have already identified a research project and a faculty adviser. This course will provide a structured environment to guide you in strengthening your argument, analysis, and writing. You will be expected to actively and consistently engage in intellectual conversations by presenting your own work and also providing feedback to your colleagues. The course will function as an interactive research/writing workshop.

Your project should be organized as a testable hypothesis (theory) that you state and then present supporting evidence for. The supporting evidence can take the form of data that you collect and analyze, data that someone else has collected but you analyze, or interviews that you perform and analyze. (Note: the evidence you provide may fail to support your hypothesis. That’s ok—the best researchers sometimes have to change their minds based on what the data show. But then you may want to reconsider the theory behind your hypothesis.)

SUGGESTED READINGS (hopefully these are on reserve at Geisel Library)

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1  Introductions

• Introduce research projects.
• Discuss choosing a hypothesis, as opposed to a topic.
• Pick an assignment in the suggested readings on the previous page, to be presented in week 2.

• This week: (1) Find a thesis advisor if you don’t already have one.  (2) Create timeline that maps out what tasks you must accomplish in order to write a good research paper by the end of the quarter.  Be as detailed as possible in setting aside what needs to be done and when.  Keep in mind the basic elements of a research paper: identification of research problem, literature review, data collection, analysis of data, write-up of findings.

Week 2  Timeline due/Progress reports

• Discuss advisors, timelines, data collection, and how to stay on track.
• Also, discussion of data sources/resources for research (U.S. Census, San Diego data including GIS, Lexis-Nexis Academic, New York Times archive, NBER.org, JSTOR.org, use of statistical data analysis programs, etc.).

Week 3  Progress reports

• Write a first paragraph stating your hypothesis and send it to me and other class members.  We will discuss these in class.
• Also, discussion of writing a literature review and bibliography.

Week 4  Progress reports

Week 5  Progress reports

Week 6  Draft of introduction and literature review due

• Review and revise drafts.
• This week: Begin your analysis and write up of findings.

Week 7  Progress reports

Week 8  Rough drafts due/Progress reports.

• This week: finish a rough draft of your thesis.
• Present a short version of your thesis.
• Each student will discuss another student’s project.  Discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of the paper/project.  Provide a written copy of your review or your slides to the author and me.
Week 9  Progress reports.

Week 10  Final presentations

• Oral presentations with slides (15-20 minutes). Focus on the hypothesis, evidence, and the major contributions of the paper. Indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Provide a written copy of your review or your slides to the author/researcher and me.

• We will invite faculty advisers to the final presentations. We’ll have some drinks and snacks.

Final Draft due:  Monday, June 10

Deliver a printout of your final paper to my office (Econ 320) or mailbox (in Econ 210). Also send an e-copy to me at miwhite@ucsd.edu.

Grading:

Requirements for this course are (1) that you come to each class and actively participate, including doing all the assignments, and (2) that you produce a high-quality research paper. In addition, you should find and work with a faculty mentor.

You will receive two types of grades for this course: a course grade and an honors designation. Honors designations are available for this class following university policy: those students earning an A will earn “Highest Honors,” A- “High Honors,” and A-/B+ “Honors”. Grades below B+ will not earn honors.

Everyone is expected to come to all the classes.
Assignments for week 2:

Turabian: Chapter 2 “From a topic to a hypothesis”

Turabian: Chapter 3 Finding sources

Turabian: Chapter 7 and 8 Using footnotes and quotations and presenting evidence using graphs and tables

Turabian: Chapter 9-10 Writing and revising

Note: the Booth book covers similar material and is available online. So could use the relevant chapters in Booth instead of Turabian.