

Econ 428
Seminar in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics
Spring 2015

Professor: Michael O'Hara
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Meeting times: Mon 19:00 - 21:30
Persson 226
Occasional special meetings may be announced

Office Hours: M 18:00 - 19:00
TR 15:00 - 16:00
(generally open door)

Readings:

There is no textbook for the course. Required readings will be announced. In some cases, you will have to find the article yourself. In cases in which the library does not have access to the resource, I will post the reading on Moodle. Most of your reading will be papers related to your own project.

Moodle Site:

Course schedule, readings, assignments, and other items of interest will be posted on the Moodle system. When you login to Moodle, you should see Econ 428 listed as one of your courses. If not, please make sure you get this set up in the first week of class.

Course Objectives:

This course is your capstone course in the economics curriculum. The focus is on producing a research paper of publication quality. To accomplish this, you should be able to:

- state and motivate a cogent research question
- produce a credible literature review
- exhibit knowledge of basic economic theory as it relates to environmental and natural resource issues
- exhibit competence of statistical and econometric techniques if the work is of the empirical/statistical type
- produce clear, well reasoned arguments with a high standard of writing skill.
- Provide all documentation as required by the TIER protocol of Ball and Medeiros (2012)

Course Structure:

A seminar course is very different in tone and structure from other instructional courses in the curriculum. A seminar is a collaborative learning effort by all those involved. It is not the professor teaching the students, but rather the professor and students all learning together from each other. This means that there is far more responsibility on the part of the students to contribute to each other's learning. You and your fellow students (and I) are largely colleagues, though I will direct the course and have to assess your performance. Everyone is responsible for being prepared to contribute to class. Free riding is not tolerated.

I will be running this as a research seminar. There will be very little traditional instruction. Most of our time will be directed toward your own research.

Grading:

- 20% – Class participation (in general discussion to which you are not assigned)
- 20% – Presentations
- 20% – Assignments (research proposal, referee report, etc.)
- 40% – Final paper and presentation

In order to keep projects moving forward, I will be holding you to strict deadlines to reach certain stages of your projects. Missing these deadlines will result in grade penalties which will increase the longer the deadline is missed. Since in a seminar context, each person's performance has a significant impact on others, failure to be prepared for presentations or assignments will be penalized harshly.

Presentations/ Written Reports

There will be several opportunities to present during the semester. We will sort out the presentation schedule in class. Each may be more or less formal depending on circumstances. You will also likely lead discussion on readings, and I may have you present the work of another student.

Written assignments will include a referee report on a working paper, several drafts of your own paper, and referee reports on your classmates' papers.

Research project

- You are required to write an independent research paper examining an aspect of a topic in environmental, resource, or ecological economics. Specific details will be forthcoming, but you should begin examining topics immediately!
- The research project could be (1) applied, empirical and statistical; (2) theoretical. It must be of academic interest, and ideally should be of practical interest (at least to someone).
- I expect the paper to be professionally written and in an economics journal style. Details of this will be discussed.
- We will adhere to the criterion that the paper must be fully documented so that its results can be fully replicated by a reader. This means that all data, code, and metadata must be supplied following the TIER protocol described in Ball and Medeiros (2012) which we will discuss in class.
- In the last few weeks of class, each of you will present your findings to the class.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Any form of academic dishonesty will be dealt with ... harshly. No exceptions. No second chances. All students are expected to abide by the Colgate Honor Code, which can be found at http://offices.colgate.edu/academicadvising/honor_code/honor_code.asp

Important dates during the semester (Subject to Change):

- Wednesday, 29 Jan – End of Drop/Add period
- 15 March - 23 March – Spring Recess
- Thurs, 20 March – Vernal Equinox
- Wednesday, 26 March – Last Day to withdraw (grade of W)
- Friday, 2 May – Last Day of Classes: Final projects due