

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**  
**Independent Honors Study (econ 396)**

Syllabus Fall 2015

Course website: via [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)

**Director:** [Nuno Limão](#)

**Class location:** TYD 4118C

**Off. hrs:** 4118K Tydings, by appointment

**Time:** Tu Th 9:30-10:45

**Econometrics Resource:** [Dr. Nick Montgomery](#)

**Lab location:** TBA Lefrak Hall

**Off. hrs:** 4118M Tydings, by appointment

**Time:** Tu Th 9:30-10:45

**Teaching Assistant:** [David Moreno](#)

**Lab location:** TBA Lefrak Hall

**Off. hrs:** 4118L Tydings, by appointment

**Time:** Tu Th 9:30-10:45

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## Objective

In the first semester of the Honors Thesis sequence (econ 396) we will develop and apply basic skills required to write an original research piece. This is an 'Independent Study' course, which means that you will acquire most of those skills as you develop your proposal, learn the relevant literature and tools and use them to write a Thesis. 'Independent Study' does not mean alone however! You will meet regularly with your main advisor, me and your colleagues to obtain and provide feedback and ensure steady progress towards the Honors Thesis. As part of this process you will learn norms of responsible research as well as how to find reliable sources of information, present and disseminate your research through conferences and journals.

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## Requirements

- The **final grade** will be a weighted average of the following:
  - Written draft of Thesis (55%)
  - Class presentation of initial version of Thesis (15%)
  - Class presentation of Thesis proposal (10%)
  - Literature review of the proposed topic (10%)
  - Feedback on a colleague's presentations, both in class and written (6%)
  - Other (4%)
    - Submit proposal outline (summer assignment)
    - Complete [Certificate of Responsible Conduct in Research](#).
    - Attend a [UMD Economics seminar](#) of your choice and submit a 2-page summary (including question, methodology, findings, audience questions and your own).
    - Submit abstract for presentation at an undergraduate conference (see [conferences.pdf](#) for a list).
- **All requirements are mandatory.** They must be completed by the [deadlines in the schedule](#) except under one of the three exceptions stipulated by the university: illness supported by a doctor's letter, religious holidays or participation in University activities at the request of university authorities. You must contact me prior to the assignment date to reschedule.
- **Plagiarism and responsible conduct in research**
  - The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized [Code of Academic Integrity](#). As a student you are responsible for upholding the standards in this code for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism.
  - The [Certificate of Responsible Conduct in Research](#) will teach you "core norms, principles, and rules governing the practice of responsible research [...and] is now part of funding requirements of both the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation" so you will also be certified to work as a research assistance under grants from those institutions. You will get specific instructions on how to complete it.

## Pre-requisites

- The main ones are (i) Econ 422 (Econometrics); (ii) GPA of at least 3.25; (iii) a field course in economics; (iv) an approved proposal.
- The full list is [here](#)

## Resources

- The most important resource (other than yourself) is the **human capital at UMD**:
  - Faculty Advisor: Meets with you regularly during the semester to guide you in developing your proposal and turn into an Honors Thesis
  - Director (me): Introduces you to research principles and resources; ensures your steady progress through class presentations, individual meetings and contact with the faculty advisor
  - Econometrics Resource: Introduces you to the computer lab and statistical software; provides individual assistance with econometric issues that you may encounter during the Thesis
  - Teaching Assistant: Assists with any class logistics (trouble with uploading assignments, presentations, etc; completing the certificate of RCR, accessing materials online, obtaining data, etc). Provides individual assistance in the Lab
- Other human and online resources at UMD
  - [UMD Center for UG Research](#): Information and resources for undergraduate research
  - Library Economics Specialists: [Zaida Diaz](#), [Lily Griner](#) (will provide a tutorial for the class at the start of the semester)
  - [Writing Center](#): Free consultations to make your writing sing!
- Online resources
  - AEA information for undergraduates
    - [Applying for graduate school](#)
    - [Current issues in Economics](#)
    - [Finding facts](#)
    - [Summer study, research and presentation opportunities](#)
  - Ethics in research
    - [www.onlineethics.org](http://www.onlineethics.org)
    - [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)
  - [Undergraduate Research Journals](#) (see also [ugjournals.pdf](#))
  - So you want to get a Ph.D... read this first
    - [Information for graduate students](#) (surviving the 1<sup>st</sup> year, finding a topic, getting funding, a job and a Nobel prize!)
    - [6-step "program" to writing a dissertation!](#)

## Schedule

Date/ Location	Instructor	Class	Outside class
1-Sep Class	Nuno	Course overview and expectations.	Update main advisor and set up regular meeting times Prepare to briefly discuss initial proposal next class
3-Sep Class	Nuno	Brief discussion of student proposals Elements of a research proposal	<b>DUE: Summer assignment</b> Read articles on research process (1,2,3 in elms). Put their initial suggestions in practice.
8-Sep Class/library		(I)	Prepare proposal presentation
10-Sep	David	Library research resources session	Prepare proposal presentation
15-Sep class	All	<b>Proposal presentation (A)</b>	<b>DUE: Proposal draft and slides before class (A)</b>
17-Sep Class	All	<b>Proposal presentation (B)</b>	<b>DUE: Proposal draft and slides before class (B)</b> <b>DUE: Written feedback to colleague's proposal</b> (w/in 2 days)
22-Sep Lab	Nick	Stata introduction 1	Meet advisor to discuss feedback, refine proposal and plan Acquire data and/or tools (if not yet done)
24-Sep Lab	Nick	Stata introduction 2	<b>DUE: Responsible Conduct in Research certificate</b> Focus literature research on final topic agreed
29-Sep Lab	Nick	Panel data lecture	Literature review
1-Oct Lab	Nick	Panel estimation w/ Stata: learn to replicate!	
6-Oct Lab	Nick /David	Learn about your data, replicate a key paper	
8-Oct Lab	Nick /David	Learn about your data, replicate a key paper	<b>DUE: Literature review</b> Start applying knowledge from literature review, e.g. new hypothesis, data,

			methodology.
13-Oct Lab	Nick /David	(I)	Continue...
15-Oct	Nick /David	(I)	...still going!
20-Oct class	Nuno	Individual meetings (A)	Meet main advisor to discuss preliminary results and questions
22-Oct class	Nuno	Individual meetings (B)	Draft of literature and your marginal contribution, empirical/theoretical strategy, data, any preliminary results and detailed timeline for future work
27-Oct class	All	<b>Progress Presentations (A)</b>	<b>DUE: Presentation slides (A)</b>
29-Oct	All	<b>Progress Presentations (B)</b>	<b>DUE: Presentation slides (B)</b> <b>DUE: Written feedback to colleague's presentation</b> (w/in 2 days)
3-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	Meet main advisor to discuss presentation and feedback
5-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	
10-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	<b>DUE: Conference abstract submission</b>
12-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	
17-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	Start to write up methodology and any results!
19-Nov Lab	Nick /David	(I)	Read Economical Writing article by McCloskey Visit Writing center for help!
24-Nov Class	Nuno	Individual meetings (A)	<b>DUE: Summary of Econ seminar</b> Continue to work on data/estimation/model AND write

1-dec Class	Nuno	Individual meetings (B)	Meet main advisor
3-dec Lab	Nick /David	(I)	Wrap up first draft and prepare presentation
8-Dec Class	All	<b>Final presentations (A)</b>	DUE: First draft (A and B) DUE: Slides (A)
10-dec Class	All	<b>Final presentations (B)</b>	DUE: Slides (B)
12-Dec Class	n/a	n/a	DUE : Revised 1 <sup>st</sup> draft incorporating comments

Notes: (I) Independent work in lab and/or sign up for individual meetings with me