

Course Outline

2013–14 EC5000 Research Methods Dissertation Course Outline

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AIMS

This is a compulsory course for MSc students which aims to equip them with the necessary skills required for research and assist in the conception of a dissertation at the end of the academic year. Conducting research at post-graduate level is sometimes fraught with certain difficulties; this course aims to assist in avoiding these traps so that the student can conduct an efficient piece of research at the end of the taught semesters. Therefore, it equips students with generic research skills such as how to organise a project and also economics specific skills.

The course is divided into two separate stages. The first stage of the dissertation process includes a compulsory component made up of a set of preparatory classes which aims to equip students with the necessary skills required for research. The course consists of a series of lectures on dissertation writing, major sources of data and Stata training. In particular, it lays emphasis on gaining proficiency in using Stata, by teaching basic tasks such as transferring of data, to the production of graphs and tables that can be directly included in a word document (however this is not an econometric course).

The second stage is the writing up of the dissertation. A dissertation is expected to be either empirical, using econometric or statistical techniques, or theoretical. Students are expected to apply their knowledge and skills from the quantitative methods and theory courses. It presents masters students with an opportunity to undertake a piece of individual research work and examine an aspect of the subject that is being closely studied. Most dissertations involve the spectrum of activities common to research: conceptualization and planning, literature review, theoretical modeling, data collection, statistical and econometric analysis, and writing. Each student works under supervision of a member of the Department's staff.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course students should:

- Have mastered generic skills in how to organise a project in Economics and Finance
- Be proficient in using Stata as a statistical package and handling raw data
- Be able to pick a research topic and write a brief proposal

- Confidently present research work to peers
- Produce an original 10,000 word-dissertation on a specific topic in Economics or Finance

COURSE DELIVERY

Five 2-hour workshops on Stata during the first week of term.

Five 1-hour lectures during the second half of the first term.

It is mandatory for MSc students to attend the workshops and classes otherwise they cannot proceed to dissertation. Students will also present their proposal in the spring term get feedback on its feasibility as well as their presentation skills.

Course outline, lecture notes, problem sets, and readings will appear on Moodle.

ASSESSMENT

The grades for this course are broken down as follows:

- One 1-hour unseen practical exam in Stata taken early in the first term, contributing 16.5% towards the final marks.
- A presentation during the second term contributing 16.5% of the final marks.
- A 10,000 word dissertation submitted in the last week of the academic year in summer, contributing 67% of the final marks.

Deadlines and dates of tests will be confirmed in the Departmental Student Handbook and on the Economics Department Website.

READING

The main textbooks for the course is:

Hausman, D. M. (1989). "Economic Methodology in a Nutshell." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3(2): 115-27.

McCloskey, D. N. (1983). "The Rhetoric of Economics." *Journal of Economic Literature* 21(2): 481-517.

Baum, C., "An introduction to modern econometrics using Stata", Stata Press, 2006.

"*Stata Base Reference Manual*" Stata Press, 2011

"*Stata Graphics Reference Manual*" Stata Press, 2011

"Stata User's Guide", Stata Press, 2011.

. Further reading materials such as journal articles will be posted in Moodle.

TOPICS to be covered:

The Research Process (research design, strategy and management) academic writing, presentation and disseminating of research)

Dissertation topic and supervision

Data Sources (Data Archives, Internet Sources)

Getting your data into Stata

Applied Econometrics with Stata