ECON 6901: RESEARCH METHODS FOR ECONOMISTS I  
Syllabus for Spring 2012  
6:30 p.m. – 9:15 p.m. Tuesdays  
Friday 381

Instructors
Benjamin Russo     Rob Roy McGregor  
217A Friday Building 227C Friday Building  
Phone 704-687-7617 Phone 704-687-7639  
Email brusso@uncc.edu Email rrmcgreg@uncc.edu

Office Hours
Dr. Russo  Dr. McGregor
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. TR 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. MW  
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. T

Course Description
ECON 6901. Research Methods for Economists I. (3) Prerequisites: ECON 6112, ECON 6202, and either ECON 6201 or ECON 6203. Research programs in economics; problem identification; interpretation of statistical results; bibliographic search; data sources and collection; selection of statistical technique; preparation of reports and proposals.

Course Objective
The objective of this course is to introduce students to critical evaluations of published and unpublished research and to support students in finding suitable research projects of their own.

Required Text
The Elements of Style, by Strunk and White, any recent edition, Allyn and Bacon

Recommended Text

Attendance and Class Participation
Students are expected to attend each class and to offer comments on topics under discussion. Student participation in class discussions—not just student class attendance—is essential (15 percent of grade).

Assignments
The remaining 85 percent of your grade will be based on your performance on the following six assignments. Due dates for these assignments are listed on the course calendar.

General Guidelines for Papers:
Each paper should be stapled with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner. Assignments #1 and #2 require each student to submit a paper. The first sheet of the student’s paper must include the student’s name, the title of the paper, the date, the course number, and the assignment
number. Assignments #3 and #6 require each research group to submit a co-authored paper. In these cases, the first sheet of each paper must include the name of each student in the research group, the title of the paper, the date, the course number, and the assignment number. **DO NOT** put your papers in folders or binders. For each paper assignment, submit a hard copy to Dr. McGregor and a hard copy to Dr. Russo.

Assignment #1 (15 percent of grade):  
This assignment requires the following journal article:


The data used by the authors are presented in Table 1 of their article. Use these data to attempt to reproduce the regression results reported in Table 2 of the article. Write a paper summarizing the authors’ purpose in undertaking their study and the theory behind their analysis. Describe the model specification and data used in the empirical analysis. Construct a table reporting your regression results (attach your computer program and computer output to your paper). The format of your table of results should be similar to that used by Durden and Perri. Discuss the results you obtained. Explain whether or not you agree with the conclusions that the authors reached. Your paper should be no more than 5 pages (double-spaced using 12-point font and one-inch margins). The table of results that you construct counts as one of these 5 pages, but your computer program and computer output do not.

Assignment #2 (15 percent of grade):  
Each group must choose a topic for study that could serve as the basis of its research and select an empirical article for review from the literature on this topic. Each individual in the group must write a paper of no more than 5 pages (double-spaced using 12-point font and one-inch margins) summarizing the purpose, theory, method, and main findings of the article the group chooses. Each group must give each instructor a hard copy of the article one week before the papers are submitted.

Assignment #3 (15 percent of grade):  
Each group must identify a research question. Write a paper of no more than 15 pages (double-spaced using 12-point font and one-inch margins) discussing the literature and defending the topic that the group is proposing to study. Also include a discussion of the data sources that the group expects to use. Each group must make a presentation to the class for comments.

Assignment #4 (10 percent of grade):  
Each group must make a presentation to the class discussing the data and empirical methods that the group will use for answering its research question. Get comments from the class. **Note:** The group does not have to submit a paper for this assignment, but it must submit an electronic copy of its PowerPoint slides.

Assignment #5 (10 percent of grade):  
Each group must a presentation to the class about its preliminary empirical results or state of progress. Get comments from the class. **Note:** The group does not have to submit a paper for this assignment, but it must submit an electronic copy of its PowerPoint slides.
Assignment #6 (20 percent of grade):
Each group must submit its semester research project report. This report must include
discussions of the research question and the relevant literature, the data and empirical methods,
the preliminary empirical results, and plans for completing the project in ECON 6902.

Tentative Course Calendar

1/10  Course Objectives and Plan
      Overview of Research Methods
      Discuss Group Formation
      Discuss Assignment #1 (Critique and Replication of Durden and Perri [1995])
      Critiquing an Empirical Research Paper: Discussion

1/17  Critiquing an Empirical Research Paper: Examples

1/24  Assignment #1 Due at Beginning of Class
      Discussion of Durden and Perri (1995)
      Group Memberships Due

1/31  Return and Review Assignment #1 in Individual Meetings with Instructors
      Assignment #2 Group Articles Due

2/7   Assignment #2 Papers Due at Beginning of Class
      Discuss Assignment #3

2/14  Return and Review Assignment #2 in Individual Meetings with Instructors

2/21  Group Meetings with Instructors to Discuss Group Research Questions

2/28  No Class – Groups Work on Assignment #3 Papers

3/6   Spring Break – No Class

3/13  Assignment #3 Papers Due at Beginning of Class
      Assignment #3 Presentations

3/20  Assignment #3 Presentations
      Discuss Assignment #4

3/27  Assignment #4 Presentations

4/3   Assignment #4 Presentations
      Discuss Assignment #5

4/10  No Class – Groups Work on Assignment #5

3
4/17  Group Meetings with Instructors to Discuss Student Data and Empirical Methods

4/24  Assignment #5 Presentations

5/1  Assignment #5 Presentations
      Discuss Assignment #6

5/8  Assignment #6 Due at 8:00 PM (Beginning of Final Exam Period)

**Academic Integrity**
All students are required to abide by the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at [http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html](http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html).

**Disability Accommodations**
Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

**Other Matters**
*The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructors. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class and by email notice.*

The last day to withdraw from a class with a grade of W (and retain other classes) is March 19, and the last day to withdraw from all classes with grades of W is April 9.

Between class meetings, any communication that we need to have with you will be accomplished via email. You should therefore check your University-assigned email account on a regular basis.

The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.