

Course Description

Now that you've finished some or all of your coursework, your only goal is to become a proficient researcher. Here's the bad news: we don't exactly know how to make this happen. The good news: one ingredient that seems important is exposure to the research process. Reading published papers is useful, but published papers are the final outcome of a research process; and reading them typically yields few clues about the actual process of producing papers. Seminars, by contrast, get you closer to the research process.

You have plenty of direct personal incentives to attend seminars. In that sense, offering course credit for this activity is redundant. That said, you are students, and this is a place where you've come to learn. Consequently, it makes sense to offer a "carrot" in the form of course credit, for your participation in this activity.

Course Requirements

- 1) Attend the Wharton Applied Economics (WAE) seminar when it meets. Students must prepare for, and attend, all* of these seminars. The seminar website is <http://bpp.wharton.upenn.edu/Seminars/AEW.html>.
- 2) Prepare two written referee reports on WAE papers per semester, due before the seminar is presented. I prefer to have it handed in to my mailbox, in suite 1400 Sh-Dh. You can generally hand it in to me at the seminar, although I no longer organize the seminar and will occasionally be traveling on Wednesdays.
- 3) After attending the seminar - and the ensuing discussion of the paper - prepare brief (no more than one page) follow-up evaluations of your referee report reports, due one week after the seminar. Hand this in to my mailbox.
- 4) The course is graded based on quality of the referee reports, in conjunction with the apparent learning inferred from the self-evaluations, along with quality of student comments when the course meets for discussion.

Students will receive one semester course credit for a year of participation in the course.

PLEASE NOTE: although your participation begins during Fall 2004, you may register for this course either in Fall 2004 or Spring 2003. Participation in this course is best suited for students who have already finished the first year of their respective doctoral programs.

* I understand that conflicts sometimes arise. Students may miss seminars if they have a valid reason.

Note further – this is not a heavily interactive course. The goals of the course are a) to give you an explicit incentive to thinking critically about applied economic research, and b) to help you advance toward Penn’s 20 CU requirement while encouraging you to do something you should be doing anyway.