

EC303: METHODS II

Research Methods

Block 1 – Fall 2013
Colorado College

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Class location: Palmer 230

Class Hours: 9:00am-12:30 p.m. (Monday – Friday)

Afternoon sessions as per announcements in class.

Office Hours: Johnson: Mon-Thurs 1:30-2:30pm and by appt

Parco: Mon-Thurs 1:30-2:30pm and by appt

Course MOODLE site: <https://moodle25.coloradocollege.edu/course/view.php?id=8>

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION

We engage exceptional students
who think critically, analytically and creatively
with intellectual competence and confidence,
leveraging the advantages of the Block Plan,
drawing on the art and science of the discipline,
at home and abroad,
for now and for life.

Our students can:

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

-  Write effectively
-  Speak and present effectively
-  Use the language of economics and business accurately and persuasively

FRAME AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS

-  Apply relevant knowledge creatively
-  Appreciate the complexity of multiple perspectives
-  Engage ambiguous contexts

ANALYZE DATA

-  Interpret evidence in a reason-based approach
-  Generate insightful analysis in a theoretical context

WORK INDEPENDENTLY

-  Demonstrate initiative and perseverance
-  Manage projects effectively

NOTE: This course addresses each of the above the goals in some fashion.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The complementary purposes of this course are to enhance your ability to read, interpret, and evaluate research in economics and business and to increase skills for carrying out your own research projects. As such, the course will look at basic topics in research methods, examine the research of others, and introduce the tools of modern library research.

The course also aims to improve your skills in searching, identifying, managing and analyzing business and economic data. These skills include: (1) identifying and using appropriate statistical sources; (2) developing and manipulating data sets on the personal computer (including online searches, downloading and transferring files); (3) using basic statistics and regression analysis for interpreting data; (4) graphing, charting and tabulating data for both analysis and presentation; and (5) oral presentation of research results.

The over-arching goal of the course is to help you develop the skills and critical habits of mind necessary to access the validity of hypotheses through research.

Prerequisites: You must have successfully completed EC151, EC152, EC160 and MA117 (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Financial Accounting and Probability and Statistics, or their equivalents as approved by the instructors), to enroll in this class. Please speak to the instructors immediately if you are uncertain of your status.

Other considerations: The Department of Economics and Business provides a list of tutors available free of charge to you. If you find you are struggling, please talk to us and obtain a referral to a tutor. For drop-in help, the Quantitative Reasoning Center (QRC) maintains regular hours, which are listed on their website and in the MOODLE site for this course.

TEXT AND MATERIALS

1. Greenlaw, S.A. (2005). *Doing Economics: A Guide to Understanding and Carrying Out Economic Research*. South-Western Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-0618379835
2. Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications. Third Edition edition. ISBN-13: 978-1412995306
3. James, E. A., Slater, T. and Bucknam, A. (2011). *Action Research for Business, Nonprofit, and Public Administration: A Tool for Complex Times*. SAGE Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1412991643
4. Other required readings as provided during the course.

COURSE ADMINISTRATION

Class meeting time and location: All class meetings will be in the assigned classroom from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. daily throughout the course unless otherwise stated.

Performance evaluation: Grades will be assigned on the basis of your performance on the following assignments. Your grade in this course will consist of:

Class participation and homework (daily)	10%
Exam (Day 15)	20%
Individual Quantitative Project (Day 16)	20%
Group Qualitative Project (Day 17)	20%
Oral presentation (Day 16 <i>or</i> 17)	10%
<u>Lit review and bibliography (Day 18)</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

College policy states that grades of “A” are reserved for “excellent work that reflects superior understanding and insight, creativity, and skill;” grades of “B” are assigned to “good work that reflects a high level of understanding and insight, creativity, or skill;” grades of “C” are assigned to “adequate work that indicates readiness to continue study in the field;” and grades of “D” are assigned to “marginal work, only minimally adequate.” In general, letter grades will be based on a curve (not on a 90/80/70 contract). Although there is no desired target or “correct” distribution of grades, students that are well-prepared, engage each other in thoughtful dialogue during class meetings and demonstrate an intellectual curiosity about the material typically receive “A”s and “B”s. Late work or missed assignments will typically receive no credit.

Class participation: Participation will be assessed by three primary criteria:

1. active participation in each class’s discussion;
2. your insightful questions and responses to the presentations given by other students during the course; and,
3. assigned homework and MOODLE postings.

A note on Moodle: The college is currently in the process of evaluating candidate replacement systems for PROWL. One of the leading contenders is Moodle 2.5, which we will be using (as beta testers) for the duration of this course. Know that Moodle 2.5 is the next generation system of what you know as PROWL (based on Moodle 1.7). We’ll occasionally solicit your feedback on this new system.

It is our expectation that you will come to class each day having read the material assigned for that day in advance of the class meeting and completed all assigned homework. This will facilitate both your understanding and our class discussion of the material. There are assignments due on most days of the course, all of which will go into your participation grade. All assignments are typically due at 10pm of the listed due date (to be turned in via MOODLE). Late assignments will not be accepted except in cases of illness or prior arrangement with the instructor(s).

Thesis review and critique: As part of the Library Workshop class, you will turn in summaries of former student theses. Four are assigned on MOODLE, two will be of your own choosing. You should choose theses that relate to your own interests. Each summary must include:

- (1) Thesis title
- (2) Author
- (3) Completion date
- (4) Title
- (5) Methodology
- (6) Summary of key findings
- (7) Your critique (what you thought were the strong and weak points)

For one of your theses, you will also produce a 1-page summary, as provided in the guidance, in addition to two summaries of scholarly articles. This assignment will count toward the participation and homework grade.

Questionnaire exercise: On Day 5 (and over the weekend), you will be asked to design your own questionnaire, program it into Qualtrics (an online questionnaire program) and collect responses. Details on MOODLE.

Advisor meeting summary: You will be required to meet with your thesis advisor during the course. You can meet as early and as often as you wish with her/him. On Day 15 of the course, you will be required to turn in a 1-page summary of your advisor meeting to document the progress of your thesis development. Your summary must include:

- your name;
- your thesis advisor's name;
- the date of your meeting;
- general topic / research question;
- a summary of your discussion;
- new comments/suggestions from your advisor; and,
- your reflections.

Exam: The course exam is scheduled for Day 15. The exam will be comprehensive and principally based upon the course readings. There is no scheduled make-up exam, so set several alarm clocks if necessary.

Analysis Projects: Central to this course are two separate projects dealing with research methodology and analysis. You will be required to develop BOTH a QUANTITATIVE analysis project AND a QUALITATIVE analysis project.

For the quantitative project (individual):

- (1) Choose a form of regression analysis (OLS, probit, logit, etc.)
- (2) Identify a data source from an online database. More on this during the Day 12 Library Workshop.
- (3) Develop a model. Identify at least three independent variables and one dependent variable. Discuss any assumptions you make and note the limitations of your model.
- (4) Analyze the data set. Using your newfound STATA skills, run your model.
- (5) Summarize your project and present your analysis to the class. Upload any slides you wish to use for your presentation to MOODLE the night prior.
- (6) Write up your project and upload your final paper to MOODLE by 9am on Monday (Day 16).

For the qualitative project (group):

- (1) Preferably using a CC organization, initiate an action research project. Your group will be required to go through and document at least two AR cycles.
- (2) Conduct at least four interviews. Transcribe each of them.
- (3) Using Qualtrics, develop a survey with at least five textual response questions and collect at least 25 responses.
- (4) Using coding techniques, identify the themes, concepts and key events from your interviews.
- (5) Analyze and report your survey findings (descriptive statistics). Upload any slides you wish to use for your presentation to MOODLE the night prior.
- (6) Summarize your project and present your analysis to the class.
- (7) Write up your project and upload your group's final paper to MOODLE by 9am on Tuesday (Day 17).

To prepare you for your thesis experience, both papers must be formatted in accordance with APA standards. The topic and content of each project is up to your group. Each paper should be 6-8 pages in length, but in no case should it be less than 5 pages, nor longer than 10 pages. Your grade will be determined on the basis of your creativity in topic selection, quality and depth of analysis using concepts from the course, and adherence to the above stated criteria. For the group paper (qualitative project), not all members of your group will necessarily receive the same grade. Both the written and oral portions of the project will be graded.

Class presentations: On Days 16 & 17 of the course, all students will be presenting the results of your (individual) quantitative and (group) qualitative projects to the class. Presentations should be approximately 8-10 minutes long (absolutely maximum of 10 minutes). An oral presentation rubric will be provided on MOODLE ahead of time so that you can see how your presentations will be assessed. Each student will be required to make one presentation. (Student presenting the qualitative project results on behalf of their group will not be required to orally present their individual quantitative analysis project).

Literature Review and Bibliography: On the final day of class, you will turn in a literature review around a potential research question you are considering for a potential thesis proposal. At a minimum, it must include a summary of your key sources (formatted in APA format) with an accompanying abstract of key concepts for each article used (Note: you must have **at least a dozen** scholarly sources). Additionally, you need to “tell the story” in a way to show that:

- (1) your proposed research topic is relevant (show it is connected to previous research in some manner);
- (2) your topic is important to someone other than you (prove it to us!);
- (3) when completed, your research could contribute to the existing body of knowledge in a profound way.

Remember, a literature review is NOT a summary of articles you read concatenated together. It is YOUR STORY to compel readers of why they should care about your proposed research topic. You are writing a NARRATIVE and using the LITERATURE as EVIDENCE to support your CLAIMS. Thus, you must provide the analysis and linkages between your sources to convince the reader your research is interesting and important. You will include a bibliography of your literature review using RefWorks. Our department librarian, McKinley Sielaff, will be glad to help you during our Day 12 Library Workshop.

DAILY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Class	Day/Time	Topic	Textbook Readings	Notes
1	Mon, Sep 2 10:30am-noon 1:30-2:30pm	Opening Convocation and Course Overview	Greenlaw, Ch 1-2 STATA instructions MOODLE readings	POST: Research topic
2	Tues, Sep 3 9:00am-12:00pm	Doing Economic Research Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design	Greenlaw, Ch 10 Eastman, Ch 5 Eastman, Ch 6 Creswell, Ch 1 & 3 MOODLE readings	Excel workshop in EconLab at 1:30pm
3	Wed, Sep 4 9:00am-12:30pm	Simple Regression I Narrative, Ethnographic and Observational Methods	Greenlaw Ch 11 Creswell, 69-76, 90-96. MOODLE readings	TURN-IN: Summary stats

4	Thurs, Sep 5 9:00am-12:30pm	Simple Regression II Action Research	Greenlaw Ch 9 James et al., pgs. 1-19, 67-77, 116-132, 201-212 (review the rest of Chs. 1, 3, 4 and 5)	STATA workshop in EconLab at 1:30pm POST: Updated questions
5	Fri, Sep 6 9:00am-12:30pm	Multiple Regression I Surveys and Questionnaires	MOODLE readings	TURN-IN: Simple regression POST: Survey (take others')
6	Mon, Sep 9 9:00am-12:30pm	Multiple Regression II Institutional Research Board	MOODLE readings	Guest: Amanda Udis-Kessler
7	Tues, Sep 10 9:00am-12:30pm	Model Performance I Interviewing Techniques	MOODLE readings	TURN-IN: Multiple regression POST: Updated questions
8	Wed, Sep 11 9:00am-12:30pm	Model Performance II Coding Analysis	Creswell, 179-202 MOODLE readings	
9	Thurs, Sep 12 9:00am-12:30pm	Common Regression Problems I	MOODLE readings	TURN-IN: Regression Performance
10	Fri, Sep 13 9:00am-12:30pm	Common Regression Problems II Grounded Theory	Greenlaw, Ch 7 Creswell, 83-90	TURN-IN: Regression Problems
11	Mon, Sep 16 9:00am-12:30pm	Research Writing & the Lit Review	Greenlaw, Ch 12	
12	Tues, Sep 17 9:00am-12:30pm (TLC Rm 1)	Library Workshop		Guest: McKinley Sielaff
13	Wed, Sep 18 NO CLASS MTG	Group Meetings w/ Instructors		
14	Thurs, Sep 19 9:00am-12:30pm	Thesis Discussion and Exam Review		
15	Fri, Sep 20 9:00am-12:30pm	Exam		TURN-IN: Thesis Advisor Summary
16	Mon, Sep 23 9:00am-done	Quantitative Analysis Presentation		Upload slides and quant paper by 9am
17	Tues, Sep 24 9:00am-done	Qualitative Analysis Presentation		Upload slides and qual paper by 9am
18	Wed, Sep 25 9:00am-done	Feedback, Course Summary and Critique		Turn in Lit Review and Bib to MOODLE by 9am

MISCELLANEOUS COURSE POLICIES

Honor Code: It should go without saying that the Honor Code firmly applies to all activities within this course. The only way in which we can all grow as scholars is to rely on each other's integrity and responsible behavior. Please help each other to preserve the strength of the Honor Code. If you are uncertain about whether your behavior conforms, ask. The general rule is simple: always cite your sources. On the written exam, no outside sources are permitted. For homework and other projects that involve research beforehand, all sources are permitted with appropriate attribution.

The Honor System encompasses the student body, the Honor Council, and the Honor Code to form an essential part of the academic program at Colorado College. Its purpose is to help recognize each student's maturity and individual ability. Accordingly, the Honor System provides an atmosphere of mutual trust that contributes to students' personal growth and academic development. The spirit of this constitution and the principles it embodies are intended to provide a foundation for a personal ethical code that will continue long after graduation from Colorado College.

Every Colorado College student is responsible for obtaining a working knowledge of all rules and regulations of the Honor System and for understanding this constitution and other materials describing the Honor System. Also, the student is obliged to know how the principles apply in each class. Ignorance of the principles embodied in this constitution and of the way in which they apply in a particular class will be no excuse for a violation of the Honor System.

General Guidelines

THESE GENERAL GUIDELINES ARE ONLY A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HONOR SYSTEM. EVERY STUDENT IS EXPECTED TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH FOLLOWS THESE GENERAL GUIDELINES.

1. The Honor System applies to all work done for credit — exams, papers, laboratory reports, daily assignments, and any other assigned work. Unless the professor specifically states otherwise, work done on all tests and assignments shall be entirely the student's own.
2. In papers, direct quotations must be acknowledged by quotes and footnotes. Ideas or paraphrasing taken from outside sources (including course textbooks) must be properly acknowledged, unless the professor specifically states otherwise. In oral reports, verbal acknowledgment of sources is usually sufficient.
3. Exams must be taken at the place and within the time limits designated by the professor. Except as otherwise stated in this constitution, each professor has the right to set such exam and term paper guidelines as the professor deems appropriate.
4. A student's work may not be submitted for simultaneous credit in two different classes without the explicit permission of both professors. Replications of one's own earlier work may be submitted for subsequent credit only with the explicit permission of the professor to whom the work is now being submitted.
5. An attempt to violate the Honor System, which is not completed because the student is observed in the attempt, will be considered a full violation.
6. A student or professor reporting a suspected violation will remain anonymous to everyone except the Honor Council. If the case is appealed, the identity of the accuser will also be revealed to an appeal board consisting of five (5) randomly selected students pledged to confidentiality.

By posting any assignment to MOODLE for this course, you are acknowledging that, on your honor, you have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on the respective graded assignment.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and require accommodations for this course, please speak with the professor privately as soon as possible so that your needs may be appropriately met. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with Disability Services in the Learning Commons at Tutt Library (Rm 152, 227-8285). This is the CC office responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

Final Note: This class is scheduled to meet regularly (read: daily) through the fourth Wednesday at noon. Please don't ask permission to miss class or leave early. Life is about choices, and choices have consequences. Since both the choices and consequences are exclusively yours, it is only a decision you can make. Generally speaking, missing a single class can reduce your final grade by a full letter grade.