COMMUNICATIONS FROM PROFESSORS ABOUT THE COURSE WILL TAKE PLACE THROUGH CANVAS. STUDENTS SHOULD MAKE SURE THEY REGULARLY CHECK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MESSAGING NOTIFICATIONS.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to enable Ph.D. students to generate, test, and promote impactful ideas in the field of accounting research and neighboring disciplines. The course focuses on the application of core concepts and tools needed in students’ current and future research to questions in the field of accounting. The course complements existing method courses (e.g., Financial Econometrics: Panel Data) by providing a transfer of abstract concepts to specific applications and best practices in the field of accounting. It also provides a more holistic picture (covering more methods and approaches at higher levels). The course complements existing courses on empirical accounting research by focusing on other topics, emerging methods (e.g., structural and Bayesian estimation), and distinct (junior faculty) perspectives.

The course consists of mini-lectures, in-class discussions of assigned readings, and presentations of students’ research ideas and progress.

● **Topics**: Idea generation, testing (causal inference methods, structural estimation, Bayesian statistics, clustering), promotion (writing, presenting, illustrating), and critiquing (commenting, reviewing, discussing) strategies

● **Learning Objectives**: Effective and practical ways to producing meaningful and credible empirical research

● **Student Profiles**: Ph.D., M.S., and M.B.A. students interested in contributing to the advancement of knowledge on central topics at the intersection of accounting, finance, and economics through empirical research

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All materials will be made available on Canvas or can be found on www.ssrn.com.

CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating. Students are explicitly encouraged to actively participate by asking critical questions, providing constructive feedback, and preparing assigned readings and assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Assignments

Each topic has a set of readings. General readings will introduce you to the topic and provide an overview and a background for the class discussion. Assigned readings are **required readings** and will be discussed in more detail. Each student should be prepared to discuss the following questions for each assigned paper:

1. What is the research question and key point of the paper?
2. What is the paper’s stated motivation and contribution?
3. Why do you think the paper got published? (Be prepared to name something positive)
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the paper’s empirical strategy?

Write-ups
Each student is required to submit a short write-up of each assigned paper (but not for the general readings). The write-up (type B2) should be shorter than a page and can be bullet points. It should briefly state your view of contribution, design, and major issues. It should not be an abstract. The write-ups are not graded but should be submitted to us by email before the class starts. As long as you make a good-faith effort and submit them, you receive full credit.

Replication Exercise
This assignment (type B2) requires you to replicate the empirical analysis of a paper assigned by us. We expect a clean and well-commented code and a professional presentation of the replicated tables. You can use your preferred statistical software package (e.g., R, Stata, SAS, Matlab).

Referee Report
This assignment (type B2) requires you to prepare one review of a current working paper to be assigned by us. Your reviews should be as authentic as possible, including a cover letter to us (the fictitious editors) containing a brief summary and a recommendation as well as a referee report that is shared with the authors. Please consider the following aspects and the questions above are a good starting point:

- Research question
- Motivation and potential contribution
- Theory and hypothesis development
- Sample and research design choices
- Empirical execution and evaluation of author’s interpretation of evidence

There is no set page limit, although a referee report that goes beyond four or five pages is probably too long. Try to be constructive and specific. Make sure you have a clear recommendation to the editor.

Research Project
This assignment (type B2) involves the preparation and presentation of a research proposal with the objective of “jump starting” your own research as well as learning how to evaluate potential research ideas. Your research proposal should cover the following areas:

1. Research question
2. Related literature
3. Why is this project important and what is its incremental contribution to the literature?
4. Research approach (field study, analytical, experimental, logical argument, large sample empirical archival) and why it is appropriate
5. Research design
6. Source of data and sampling algorithm (if applicable)
7. Identify strengths and weaknesses of your proposed research strategy vis-à-vis alternatives
8. Identify potential limitations of the proposed study

Please keep the write-up of the research project to no more than ten double-spaced pages of text (12-point font). A clear and concise writing style is important and will be assessed along with the substantive content of your work. As we want you to come up with new ideas and questions, you are not allowed to use projects that you have prepared for other classes.
The deadline for the research project is May 5, 2020. Please provide us with a PDF version of write-up.

**Presentations**
Students are expected to present their initial ideas and progress on the research project continually (at least three times during the course) in class. The presentations should be brief and to the point. The students in the audience are expected to provide constructive feedback.

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (presentations and comments in class)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly write-ups</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replication exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee report</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COURSE ROADMAP/SCHEDULE**

**Module 1: Generating Ideas**

*General readings:*
Harry V. Roberts and Roman L. Weil, Starting Research Early [Note]

*Assigned papers:* [focus on ideas and introduction]


**Module 2: Critiquing Ideas**

**Topic 2.1: Refereeing**

*General readings:*

**Topic 2.2: Discussing & Commenting**

*General readings:*

ESP, Tips on Being a Good Discussant [Notes]
Module 3: Testing Ideas

Topic 3.1: OLS & Endogeneity

General readings:

Topic 3.2: Controls & Matching

General readings:

Assigned papers:

Topic 3.3: Instrumental Variable

General readings:

Assigned papers:
Topic 3.4: Fixed Effects & Difference-in-Differences Designs

*General readings:*


Mary E. Barth, Doron Israeli, Disentangling mandatory IFRS reporting and changes in enforcement, Journal of Accounting and Economics, Volume 56, Issues 2–3, Supplement 1, 2013, Pages 178-188

*Assigned papers:*


Topic 3.5: Regression Discontinuity

*General readings:*


*Assigned papers:*


Topic 3.6: Field Experiments

*General readings:*


Assigned papers:

Topic 3.7: Structural Estimation

General readings:

Assigned papers:

Topic 3.8: Bayesian Statistics

General readings:

Assigned papers:
Topic 3.9: Standard Errors

General readings:

Assigned papers:

Module 4: Promoting Ideas
Topic 4.1: Illustrating

General readings:

Assigned papers: [focus on graphs]

Topic 4.2: Writing

General readings:
Chochrane, J. H., Writing Tips for Ph.D. Students, Working paper, 2005

Assigned papers:
Topic 4.3: Presenting

General readings:
Fanham, M., How To Present Well (in Economics) [Slides]
Shapiro, J. M., How To Give an Applied Micro Talk: An Unauthoritative Guide [Slides]
Bellemare, M. F., 22 Tips for Conference and Seminar Presentations [Blog post]
Jackson, M. O., Notes on Presenting a Paper [Notes]

Topic 4.4: Publishing

General readings:


Assigned papers:


ASSIGNMENT TYPES

All of your assignment submissions are subject to the [CBS Honor Code](#). Violations of the CBS Honor Code may lead to failing the assignment, failing the course, suspension, and/or dismissal. In order to avoid ambiguity that may lead to unintentional violations of the Honor Code, assignment description types have been standardized and specified below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Preparation of submission</th>
<th>Discussion of Submission</th>
<th>Discussion of Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>Same grade for all group members</td>
<td>By the group</td>
<td>Permitted to discuss (within group)</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Individual w/ Discussions of Concepts and Submission</td>
<td>Individual grade</td>
<td>Individual preparation</td>
<td>Permitted to discuss; sharing solutions or submission files is not allowed</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Individual w/ Discussions of Concepts Only</td>
<td>Individual grade</td>
<td>Individual preparation</td>
<td>Not permitted to share/discuss solutions or submission</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Individual grade</td>
<td>Individual preparation</td>
<td>Not permitted to share/discuss solutions or submission</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are required to attend each class. Students should reach out to the instructors regarding excused absences (for religious observances; personal, medical, and family emergencies; military service; court appearances such as jury duty). Unexcused absences will affect your course grade.

INCLUSION, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Columbia Business School will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services for information about registration. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services online at [www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html](http://www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html) or by contacting (212) 854-2388.

Columbia Business School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students, staff and faculty. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to a Title IX Coordinator. They will treat this information as private, but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of the University Chaplain, and the Ombuds Office for Gender-Based Misconduct are confidential resources available for students, staff and faculty. “Gender-based misconduct” includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see [http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students](http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students).