



COURSE

Seminar Conveners

Term

Seminar Day

Seminar Time

Seminar Locations

ECONOMICS CAPSTONE

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Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Tuesday (approximately every other week) 5:30pm – 8:00pm

TBC

SEMINAR INFORMATION

Seminar Description

The seminar provides guidance for students to conduct economic research, and a forum to discuss Capstone progress and provide each other with feedback. We will discuss a number of topics that will help in writing a Capstone thesis, including formulating a research question and hypothesis, searching for related literature, preparing a literature review, citing literature, structure of a document, and presenting your work. At the end of the Fall, students submit a detailed project proposal and present their progress at a division wide “work-in-progress” seminar. In the Spring, students will give a formal presentation of their work in the Capstone seminar to gain practice communicating their ideas and answering questions about their work. At the end of the Spring semester, students submit a final thesis. The focus of the seminar is on interactions, discourse and an exchange of ideas.

Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes are anticipated upon completion of this course. Students will be able to:

- Choose and refine research topics
- Formulate research questions and hypothesis
- Analyze a research topic using economic methods
- Communicate about independent research with non-specialists and specialists, expressing ideas clearly
- Prepare a formal academic document to present research findings
- Give a well-structured, clear presentation of research findings, including simple and effective discussion of complex ideas.

COURSE POLICIES

Class Attendance

Students must attend all seminar meetings. Permission to miss a seminar can be granted only by the seminar convener and must be obtained in advance.

Student who do not attend each seminar, are late, or do not actively participate in the discussion will be referred to the Dean of Social Sciences for further action.

Classroom Citizenship

Students are expected to attend all seminars, prepare for the seminar in advance, participate in discussions, and will be asked on a regular basis to discuss their own progress with the Capstone project. Students should at all times be courteous of others in the class, provide constructive feedback and follow instructions given by the Capstone convener. Students should arrive for the seminar on time, and be prepared that seminars may go beyond the scheduled time.

Grading Policies

Regular attendance and active participation at the Seminar, and meeting of deadlines is a pre-requisite for a passing grade in both the Fall and the Spring.

You will receive a final letter grade in Fall 2017 and a final letter grade in Spring 2018.

In Fall 2017: (1) 20% of the grade is for participation in the Capstone seminar. This grade is assigned by your Capstone seminar convener. Participation means more than attendance: you should discuss your own ideas and work, and be actively involved in the discussion of other people's work. (2) 30% of the grade is for a presentation at the end of the semester "work-in-progress" seminar (date to be confirmed, sometime early December). The grade is assigned by your Capstone convener, in consultation with your advisor. (3) 50% of the grade is for a detailed Capstone proposal, due 4th December 2017 (see additional details below). The grade is assigned by your advisor, in consultation with your Capstone convener.

In Spring 2018: (1) 40% of the grade is for a presentation in the Capstone seminar. All presentations will be on March 31st, 2018 in the "Presentation Festival". This grade is assigned by your Capstone seminar convener, in consultation with your Capstone advisor. Your attendance and participation during other student's presentations will be a factor in the grade.

(2) 60% of the grade is for the final thesis (see additional details below). Thesis will be submitted on **April 25th, 2018**. The Capstone thesis is graded by your advisor and an anonymous second-reader. If there is little discrepancy between their grades, you will receive the average of their two grades. Where there is large discrepancy, there will be a formal meeting of the whole economics faculty to finalize a grade for the thesis.

You can get detailed feedback on your presentation on 3rd April, 2018 from the Capstone seminar conveners. The objective is to help you learn from the experience and incorporate changes in your write-up of thesis.

Project Proposal

At the end of the Fall semester (deadline: 4th December, 2017), you should submit (via NYU classes) a detailed Capstone proposal. The Capstone

proposal is graded by your Capstone advisor, in consultation with the seminar convener.

Each Capstone project is unique. You should have a detailed discussion with your advisor about what they expect in a project proposal, because this may differ greatly across projects. However, we have some general guidelines which you should try to satisfy (unless your advisor suggests a deviation):

- (1) Introduction. The project proposal should start with a polished and detailed introduction. The introduction should provide the context for your project (broad topic), should give a clear statement of your research question and motivate why the research question is of interest, formalize your research hypothesis, briefly explain the methodology you plan to use to answer your research question, and discuss why the research methodology is appropriate for you to address your research question and hypothesis.
- (2) Relate literature. The project proposal should provide a discussion of existing literature related to your research topic. Focus on the most relevant papers. Summarize the papers very briefly, and focus on how your project extends on existing work.
- (3) Methodology. The project proposal should have a separate section where you discuss in greater detail the research methodology you plan to use, and why it is appropriate to address your research question.
- (4) Preliminary analysis. The preliminary analysis will differ greatly across projects. As a rough guide: (i) if you are working on an empirical project, you should discuss in detail your data sources, and indicate that you have obtained the required data by giving some summary statistics (at this stage you are not required to have formal regression analysis, but if you do you can include the results and discuss them); (ii) if you are working on a theoretical project you should provide some examples of your model (at this stage, they may be very simple examples to illustrate the more general model that you plan to work on over the winter break and in Spring); (iii) if you are working on an experimental project you should explain in detail your experimental design (at this stage you are not required to have run the experiment, but if you are planning to run the experiment in Winter or Spring you should indicate that you have IRB approval and show that you are making progress towards the programming of the experiment); (iv) if you are collecting your own data (e.g., field work or surveys) you should present the design for your data collection (e.g., survey questions, target population, etc.) and indicate that you have IRB approval (at this stage you are not required to have collected the data, but if you have you may want to include some summary of the data).
- (5) Next steps. The project proposal should conclude with a detailed

discussion of your next steps, and your plan and timeline for completing the project.

Project proposals are graded by your advisor, and you should discuss with them in advance whether they plan to use any specific criteria for grading the proposal. Your Capstone advisor will also provide you feedback on the project proposal.

Work-in-progress presentation

At the end of the Fall semester you will present your project at a “work-in-progress” seminar. The seminar will be in December, 2017 (final date to be confirmed by the social science department) and is attended by faculty and students across the Social Science division. You will have approximately 7-8 minutes for presentation, and 7 minutes for Q&A. You should use the presentation to introduce people to your Capstone project: (i) start by providing some context (broad topic); (ii) clearly articulate your specific research question, and motivate why the research question is interesting; (iii) discuss how your project is related to existing literature; (iv) briefly discuss hypothesis; (v) briefly discuss your research methodology and why it is appropriate to address your research question and test your hypothesis; (vi) summarize the progress you have made so far in working on your project (e.g., summary statistics, data collection, experimental design, examples of a model); (vii) conclude by indicating your plans for completing the Capstone project.

In the Capstone seminar we will discuss how to structure short presentation, and practice how to present your work to a general audience.

Presentations will be graded based on (i) organization and time management, (ii) presentation style and clarity, (iii) content, and (iv) interaction with the audience. Capstone conveners will schedule office hours after the presentation where you can get one-on-one feedback on your presentation.

Seminar presentation

In spring you will give a longer presentation in the Capstone seminar (approximately 22 minutes plus 8 minutes for Q&A). Presentations are scheduled by the seminar convener on **March 31st, 2018**. Final schedule of presentation will be announced in March.

By this stage, you should have made substantial progress with your project. You should very briefly review the topic and research question, but then focus on your findings. For an empirical project, discuss where you obtained the data, what data limitations you face, how you are analyzing the data, and what your findings are so far. For an experimental project, discuss your experimental design in detail, how you are implementing the design, and what you have found so far. For a theory project, discuss the model, clearly state the model assumptions and provide motivation, state your results (or conjectures) and explain the intuition behind your findings. If you are collecting your own data in the field, discuss your research design, how you have implemented it, what difficulties you faced, and

what data you have collected so far.

In the Capstone seminar we will discuss how to structure longer presentations, and practice how to present your work to a more specialized audience.

Presentations will be graded based on (i) organization and time management, (ii) presentation style and clarity, (iii) content, and (iv) interaction with the audience. Capstone conveners will schedule office hours after the presentation where you can get one-on-one feedback on your presentation.

Capstone Thesis

Your Capstone thesis is the culmination of your Capstone project and a major factor in determining your grade for the Spring semester. The deadline for final project is **April 25th, 2018**. There is a separate document entitled "*Style guidelines for Economics Capstone Thesis*" (available on NYU classes) with detailed information about the structure and style of a thesis. This document will be discussed in the seminar, and you should make sure to follow the instructions.

In addition, there are three key principles of the thesis that you must adhere to:

- (1) The thesis should be your own work. You must indicate clearly wherever you are using any external sources of information. Along with the thesis you will submit an academic integrity declaration where you confirm that you are submitting your own work and have cited any external sources used.
- (2) The thesis must be self-contained. It should be possible for any trained economist (in any field) to follow your thesis and, if they so wished, to replicate all of your findings. That means you must give sufficient details on your methodology, data, survey design, experimental implementation etc., so that a trained economist could use the information given in your thesis, follow the same procedures that you followed, and arrive at the same conclusions.
- (3) The thesis should be written for a broad economic audience. Do not use jargon or acronyms without defining them. In addition to your advisor, your thesis will be graded by an anonymous second-reader who may or may not be in the same field as your advisor. As a result, anyone on the NYUAD economics faculty should be able to follow your reasoning, arguments, methods and conclusions without having to read other literature.

Non-adherence to any one of these principles will impact your grade substantially.

Your Capstone advisor will give you feedback on your final thesis. You should also provide them with an earlier draft to get feedback before you submit the final version. Please be mindful that faculty have many responsibilities, and so you

should give your advisor enough time to read and comment on a first draft, and for you to incorporate their comments, before the final submission.

There are no word count or page count requirements for the thesis. In general, a thesis will be approximately 20-30 pages, perhaps with additional material in an appendix. Depending on your topic, more or less pages may be more appropriate. You can discuss the length and organization of your thesis with your advisor or the seminar conveners.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Grade (grader)</i>
FALL SEMESTER		
20th May 2017	Deadline Capstone Registration. Submit <i>Economics Capstone Questionnaire</i> and register for <i>Economics Capstone seminar</i> .	Grade (grader) NA
20th August 2017	Brief Capstone proposal (submit to your Capstone advisor) (2-3 pages)	NA
4th December 2017 (TBC)	Detailed Capstone project proposal (approximately 8-15 pages)	50% for Fall semester (advisor)
December 2017 (TBC)	Work-in-progress seminar presentation (7-8 minutes with 7-8 minutes of Q&A)	30% for Fall semester (seminar convener)
12th December 2017	Plan and timeline for completing Capstone project (to be discussed with Capstone advisor and seminar convener)	NA
SPRING SEMESTER		
31st March 2018	Deadline Capstone presentation (approximately 22 minutes with 8 minutes for Q&A) NOTE: THIS IS A FULL DAY EVENT AND YOU SHOULD BE PRESENT FOR THE ENTIRE EVENT. FACULTY & OTHER STUDENTS WILL BE INVITED.	Grade(grader) 40% for Spring semester (seminar convener)
25th April 2018	Final thesis (approximately 20-30 pages)	60% for Spring semester (advisor and second reader)
	Remaining 20% of Fall grade is participation in the seminar	20% for Fall (convener)

Additional Meetings**20th February, 2018**

Capstone Study

3rd April, 2018Presentation Feedback Meetings

The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Capstone seminar conveners.