

PhD Students Preparation and Presentation Workshop, Autumn term 2012

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The goal of this course is to teach 2nd year PhD students the basic knowledge and skills required for conducting top level research in Economics, writing a PhD thesis, communicating PhD research to others, and interacting with the academic community. We also give an introduction to some of the basic tasks, responsibilities and duties of being an academic. Finally, the course is intended to support students in the first stages of their written PhD work, which leads to the second year forum, by providing structured advice and discussion, and by stimulating discussion among students about their work.

Workshop 1:

- Introduction: What is this course about?
- Brief Introduction of everybody
- What does it mean to be an Economist? Professional Etiquette.
- What do senior economists think about “professional etiquette”.

Assignment: Read the different papers on “being an economist” or “doing research”, summarise what you believe are the key messages, contrast the views different economists/academics have on this. You may want to structure along the following lines: i) How to develop a good research idea ii) How to write and publish a paper, iii) How to make other people read your work and comment on it, iv) How to interact with other researchers etc. make a list (with comments) of what you think are the best advises you obtained from these papers.

Readings:

- Richard Hamming, “You and Your Research”
<http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~robins/YouAndYourResearch.pdf>
- Dan Hamermesh’s website:
<http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Hamermesh/AdviceforEconomists.htm>
- Dan Hamermesh , A Young Economist's Guide to Professional Etiquette (*Journ. Econ Persps.*, Winter 1992)
- ---, Professional Etiquette for the Mature Economist, AER papers and proceedings, May 1993, 34-38

- Hal Varian: “What I’ve learned about Writing Economics”,
<http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/writing-economics.html>
- Hal Varian: “How to Build an Economic Model in your Spare Time”,
<http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/how.pdf>
- Matthew Jackson, “Notes on presenting a paper”,
<http://www.stanford.edu/~jacksonm/present.pdf>

Workshop 2:

- Discussion of previous Workshop’s assignment
- Brief description of everybody’s PhD topic.
- Writing and Presenting work in English
- How to structure a research paper and a PhD thesis

Assignment: Formulate on 5 pages the key ideas you have about your first thesis paper. Suggested structure: Carefully point out i) to what area do you contribute, and what is the overall area into which your research is embedded, ii) what is the state of this literature, and where are avenues and challenges for further research, iii) what are the key elements of your research idea, iv) why and in which way is this a contribution to the existing literature, i.e. goes beyond what people have done so far, v) why is your contribution important, and in which sense, vi) is your contribution one which has implications for policy or wider society, or provides some fundamental base other research can build on, and if yes, then explain. You can of course add additional points. The aim of this exercise is to convince the course instructors and your fellow students that what you are doing is in fact important, relevant, and worthwhile spending several years of your life on.

You will present these ideas to your fellow students, supervisor and co-supervisor, and other members of staff.

Workshop 3:

- Discussion of your written descriptions of your PhD work.
- How to present your work
- Seminars: Platforms for academic exchange.

Listen (and comment on) other people's work. Attend workshops during term time and at least one seminar, which is not in your subject area.

- How to learn from others: Seminar attendance and critical evaluation of seminars (style, content, etc).

Assignment: Attendance of *two* seminars : one from your own field and one from another one. Written evaluation of these two seminars, 2 pages for *each* seminar. Each assessment should start with a brief overview of what the particular paper presented is about. It should then assess content, presentation style, whether the contribution is innovative, whether the presenter succeeded in explaining the paper to a wider audience, possible language problems, choice and readability of slides, ppt presentation etc, as applicable, whether speaker induced interest in her/his work, and suggestions for improvements.

Workshop 4:

- Discussion of previous Workshop's assignment: Seminar evaluation. What can you learn from this for your own work? How should a good presentation look like?
- The peer evaluation process: Assessment of the quality of other people's work, constructive discussion of the work of others.

The peer evaluation process: Refereeing of research for peer reviewed journals.

- What is a referee report? How should a referee report be structured? What should you tell the editor? How do you make sure that you can not be identified?

Assignments:

Writing a referee report on an unpublished paper.

Workshop 5:

- Discussion of assignment: Referee reports
- Empirical Work in Economics: Re-estimate empirical papers in Economics, using data and programmes made available by Journals
- Applied Work assessing the robustness of published research.