ECON4124 / 4127 / ECON4129
Honours Seminar

Course Outline
Semester 1 and 2, 2015

Part A: Course-Specific Information

Students are also expected to have read and be familiar with Part B Supplement to All Course Outlines. This contains Policies on Student Responsibilities and Support, Including Special Consideration, Plagiarism and Key Dates. It also contains the BUSINESS SCHOOL PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS.
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1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Lecturer: Dr. Tess Stafford  
Office: Room 3129, Quad (Level 3)  
Phone No: 9385 4187  
Email: t.stafford@unsw.edu.au  
Consultation Times: See Moodle

1.1 Communications with staff

You should feel free to contact your lecturer about any academic matter. However, I strongly encourage, for efficiency, all enquiries about the subject material be made at lectures or during consultation time. Discussion of course subject material will not be entered into via lengthy emails.

Email is the recommended means of initial communication with the teaching staff for this course. Discussion of course subject material will not be entered into via lengthy emails.

The lecturer will reply to email within 48 hours, except on weekends, with the following provisions:

- The question should require a one (or two) sentence response (maximum). If it takes more, office hours (by appointment) are the more appropriate venue.
- I will never answer emails that request information that can be found on the course website.
- It is also (strongly) preferable that you use an UNSW email address: Our spam filter is set to maximum. Moreover, university policy stipulates a preference for these email addresses.
- Always identify yourself and course and in your email.

2 COURSE DETAILS

2.1 Teaching Times and Locations

Lectures start in Week 1 of each term and run to Week 12. However, the class will not necessarily meet every week, depending on the students' needs and the progress of their thesis work. The schedule will be updated on Moodle Calendar. The general Time and Location are:

Thursdays 10am to 1pm in BUSINESS SCHOOL 205.

2.2 Units of Credit

The course gives credit. It is designed to help the students with their thesis work. The thesis is worth 3/8th of the final mark for the Honours Program.

2.3 Summary of Course

The course is designed to help students in writing their thesis and presenting their result. The course focuses on writing and on communication skills. The first part of the
The course will be focused on writing. It will convey information on how to choose a topic, how to write a thesis, how to structure it, how to best motivate one’s work, how to write a literature review, how to place one’s work in the literature and how to report results. The course will also convey advice on writing style and on how to maximise the impact of one’s work, as well as on how to write and structure an economic paper, in order to prepare students to turn their thesis into a publishable paper, should they wish to do so.

The second part of the course will be focused on presentation skills, in order to best prepare students for their final presentation. Students will be given ample opportunities to present their work and get feedback from the class and from the lecturer.

The course will also give the opportunity to students to develop their critical thinking skills in teamwork. Each student will be assigned as a “referee” to another student and will have to write a report on the other student’s thesis and provide constructive feedback.

2.4 Aims and Relationship to Other Courses
This course is offered as part of the Honours Economics stream in the BCom and BEc degrees.

2.5 Student Learning Outcomes
The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to DO by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Learning Outcomes in this course also help you to achieve some of the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes for all students in the BUSINESS SCHOOL. Program Learning Goals are what we want you to BE or HAVE by the time you successfully complete your degree. You demonstrate this by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes - what you are able to DO by the end of your degree.

For more information on the Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see Part B of the course outline.

The following table shows how your Course Learning Outcomes relate to the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, and indicates where these are assessed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Assessment Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This course helps you to achieve the following learning goals</td>
<td>On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:</td>
<td>This learning outcome will be assessed in the following items:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>How to structure and economic thesis and paper.</td>
<td>• Learning activities in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing style in economics.</td>
<td>• Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 | Critical thinking and problem solving | Critically assess other students’ presentation and work and provide constructive feedback in teamwork. | • Participation and feedback to other students’ presentation  
• Referee report on other student’s thesis |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3a | Written communication | Structure a thesis and an economic paper  
Write a literature review and place one’s work in the literature  
Motive one’s work  
Report theoretical and empirical results  
Write in an elegant, concise and clear way  
Convey constructive feedback on others’ work | • Thesis  
• Referee report |
| 3b | Oral communication | Present and summarise one’s work  
Identify which results are the most important, which should be communicated  
Present one’s work in different formats (20 minutes, 30 minutes)  
Choose the most adequate communication tools and software. | • Presentation in class  
• First presentation in front of the faculty  
• Final thesis presentation in front of the faculty |
| 4 | Teamwork | Work collaboratively to critically assess other work. | • Referee report  
• Participation |
| 5a. | Ethical, environmental and sustainability responsibility | Not specifically addressed in this course. | |
| 5b. | Social and cultural awareness | Not specifically addressed in this course. | |

### 3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course

The philosophy underpinning this course and its Teaching and Learning Strategies are based on “Guidelines on Learning that Inform Teaching at UNSW. These guidelines may be viewed at: [www.guidelinesonlearning.unsw.edu.au](http://www.guidelinesonlearning.unsw.edu.au). Specifically, the lectures, learning activities and assessments have been designed to appropriately challenge students and support the achievement of the desired learning outcomes. A climate of inquiry and dialogue is encouraged between students and teachers and among students (in and out of class). The lecturers and tutors aim to provide meaningful and timely feedback to students to improve learning outcome.

#### 3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies

The examinable content of the course is defined by the references given in the Lecture Schedule and the content of Lectures.

*Lectures*
The purpose of Lectures is to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve the main outcome of their Honours year: a written thesis and an oral presentation in front of the faculty. While the lecturer will provide the students with the foundations of: how to chose a topic, how to write in economics, how to structure a thesis, how to write a literature review, how to report results, and how to present results; the class is essentially structured in order to give students the opportunity to practice their presentation and writing skills and get constructive feedback from other students and from the lecturer.

**Out-of-Class Work**
The bulk of the work will be performed out of the class, when students write their thesis and prepare their presentations, and incorporate all the feedback received in and out of the class.
4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Formal Requirements

*General Requirements:*

An electronic version (pdf file) must be uploaded to the Moodle no later than 5:00pm of the due date, **Monday, 3rd of November**.

*Two bounded copies* of the thesis must be submitted to the Honours Coordinator, Pauline Grosjean, (mailbox) at most one day after, i.e., by 5:00pm, **Tuesday, the 4th of November**.

**PDF file naming**: please, name your file “Short title_Intitials.pdf”

**PDF file special characters**: please, make sure that any unusual characters and formulae are correctly translated into pdf file. You should try it beforehand.

**Paper Binding**: Either hard binding or spiral binding are acceptable.

**Warning**: binding may take several days and it is your responsibility to make sure that binding is done on time.

Failure to meet the submission deadline will result in a penalty of **3 percentage points per working day** on the marks awarded for the thesis. In addition, very late submission normally means that a grade of Honours will not be announced until at least February of the following year which may, in turn, delay graduation. A student may apply for special consideration in cases of illness and misadventure with the BUSINESS SCHOOL student centre and inform the Honours coordinator of this submission. The usual BUSINESS SCHOOL procedures governing the application and granting of special considerations are followed for late submissions.

**Style Guide**

Every thesis should include the following in the order shown:

(a) Title page, showing title, author's name, degree (including specialisation), and date of submission

(b) Statement regarding contents

(c) Table of Contents, including chapter headings

(d) A List of Tables and Figures with the page number

(e) An Abstract of 200 to 300 words

(f) The main text of approximately 15,000-20,000 words

(g) Appendices

(h) Bibliography
Pages are to be numbered consecutively from the title page through to the end of the bibliography. Footnotes are to be typed at the foot of the page which contains the text to which they refer or alternatively at the end of each chapter. Footnotes should be consecutively numbered within chapters.

The line spacing should be double or one and a half times normal spacing. 12” point fonts should be used for text. The document should be one-sided typescript on A4 with at least 35 mm margin on the left-hand side of the paper (or more depending on binding requirements) and 25 mm on all other sides.

**Electronic publishing of thesis**


Please, discuss this with your supervisor and let the lecturer know at the time of the submission if you do not want the thesis to be published online.

**School Library**

One bounded hard-copy of the thesis will be retained at the School library and available to public upon request. The other hard-copy will be returned to you after the examination period.

**Award of honours**

In computing the final mark for the Honours program, a weighted average is taken of the five subject courses taken in the Honours year (1/8 each course) and the thesis (3/8).

After completion of all formal requirements, Honours class is awarded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1 (&amp; University Medal*)</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2, Division 1</td>
<td>75-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2, Division 2</td>
<td>65-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>50-64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Honours thesis mark of 90 is necessary, but not sufficient condition for the university medal. Typically, students with an overall Honours year WAM above 90 and positive recommendations from their supervisor(s) are recommended by the School for the University Medal. The final decision is made by the University Medal Committee. According the university guidelines all nominations shall remain confidential. Students must not be advised of their nomination. The University Medal Committee takes into account the whole academic record of the student in the program. As the award of a Medal indicates outstanding academic performance - as in the case of a degree awarded with Honours significantly above the minimum requirements for Honours Class 1 - it is expected that only in exceptional circumstances will there be more than one Medal for a particular specialisation.
Peer Review Process and Referee Report
In Semester 1), the lecturer will organise a roster with a partner for each student. Each student will have to send his/her draft to his/her ‘partner’ for feedback. This will be organised by topic. The partner will have to read the thesis, and write a referee report: summarising the thesis, creatively critiquing it, checking typos, style, etc. Each partner will have to do this twice: 10 days before the first draft is due, and then 2 weeks days before the final draft is due.
The quality of the feedback in this referee report will be taken into account at the final grade meeting at the end of the year in order to determine whether you get above the bar in borderline grade cases.

5 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the School and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process is one of the ways in which student evaluative feedback is gathered. You are strongly encouraged to take part in the feedback process.

6 COURSE RESOURCES

The website for this course is on UNSW Moodle.

There is no textbook covering the entire material for this course. A very useful resource is:


Also, students should refer to very well written papers in Economics as examples to follow for their thesis. Students should ask their advisor for the best example for their specific topic, but general references are indicated below:

General/empirics/growth and development:

Theory:

Empirical micro:

Macro/time series/business cycle:
Students should also refer to previous high quality thesis. Examples of thesis will be posted on Moodle.

7 COURSE SCHEDULE

FIRST SEMESTER

Week 1: March 3:
- Orientation, Choosing a topic

⇒ Voluntary: Submission of topics by Monday, March 7 at 9AM for discussion and feedback in class

Week 2: March 7:
- Proposal Feedback
- Presentations expectations.
  • Purpose
  • Guidelines (available time, use of slides, no of slides, etc)
  • General tips (examples of good and bad presentations)

Week 3, 4, 5:
- No meeting. Work with your supervisor, find a research topic, prepare slides.

Week 6: April 7:
- Presentations in class. 5 min presentation, 3 min feedback per student.
- All students have to attend all presentations and are expected to give feedback
- Submit your slides by April 7, 9 AM so that I can upload all presentations to ease transitions between presentations

Week 6: Friday, April 11:
- Presentations in front of faculty
  • Well developed research proposal: 15 min for presentation (max 10 slides), 5 min for discussion, or
  • Final presentation for final semester students: 20 min for presentation, 5 min for discussion

Week 7: April 14:
- No meeting. Incorporate feedback from presentations, refine topic, assemble literature

April 21: Break

Week 8: April 28:
- Road map to write the thesis. What should a thesis look like? How to structure your thesis.
- How to write a literature review?
- How to write a thesis / a paper in economics
Reading: McCloskey, Economical Writing: 
http://www.deirdremccloskey.com/docs/pdf/Article_86.pdf
- Examples of well-written or well-structured papers:
  - **Empirical:**
      http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.101.7.3221
  - **Theory:**
  - **Macro**

Week 9, 10: No meeting. Writing of Literature review

**Week 11: May 19:** Faculty Panel, organised by topics: How to write and structure a thesis?
Micro/Theory: Gabriele Gratton
Macro: Geni Dechter and Mariano Kulish
Empirical Micro: Geni Dechter and Pauline Grosjean

Week 12: no meeting

**SECOND SEMESTER**
Second semester will be mainly devoted to practice presentations and to giving one another feedback on drafts.
There will be a roster of presentations, based on a semi voluntary basis.

**Peer review process:**
I will also (in Semester 1) organise a roster with a partner for each student. Each one of you will have to send his/her draft to your ‘partner’ for feedback. This will be organised by topic. Your partner will have to read the thesis, and write a referee report: summarising the thesis, creatively critiquing it, checking typos, style, etc. Each partner will have to do this twice: 10 days before the first draft is due, and then 2 weeks days before the final draft is due.
The quality of your feedback in this referee report will be taken into account at the final grade meeting at the end of the year in order to determine whether you get above the bar in borderline grade cases.

**Important Dates:**
**Monday, 11 August:** Referee report due
**Friday, 22 August:** First draft due
A first draft of paper is due. In this draft, you should have complete literature review and methodological section. The emphasis should be on what you consider to be the primary contribution of your research project. You do not need to submit all parts of a complete thesis at this point but you should be sure to include the central sections of your essay.
This draft should be sent to your supervisor also. September will be mostly devoted to presentations.

**Friday, 10 October: Second (complete) draft due**
A second draft of paper is due. This should be a near final draft. It should incorporate all changes suggested by your advisor for the first draft. You should make sure that you submit a draft of all parts of the thesis so that you can benefit fully from the advice of your advisor. We will also run a preliminary check for plagiarism through Turnitin. Note: drafts will be made available to academics attending your final presentations.

**Friday, 17 October: Honours final presentation (09:00-16:30)**
- 20 min for presentation (max 14 slides), 5 min for discussion

**Monday, 20 October, 2 pm: Final referee report due**

**Monday, 3 November, 10:00 am: Final thesis is due via Turnitin**
- The final electronic version of the thesis is due. No late submission is allowed. Penalty of 3% per day of the awarded mark is imposed for late submissions.
- Two bounded copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Honours administrator, Joanna Woo, by 14:00 am, Tuesday, 4 November.