Instructor: Vitor Trindade
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Telephone: (573) 882-9925
Email: trindadev@missouri.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 2-3:30pm, or by appointment
Class meeting time and place: Monday, 1-3:30pm, Strickland Hall 306
Schedule: Note that this class does not meet every week, only as needed. See the schedule below.

Class description
Economics 8413 is designed to help you write a research paper that is acceptable at the Master’s level. For the most part, in this paper you will simply attempt to reproduce, and perhaps extend, a published empirical economics paper. Therefore your first task is to identify a suitable paper. Some important characteristics of such a paper are: 1) Its dataset must be publicly available; and 2) it must have a good data section, that allows you to understand what the author(s) approaches were. If you are unable to identify a suitable paper, I will help you with that. But note that being able to find a paper yourself is part of the skills graded in this class, therefore I prefer you to go through the exercise of finding a suitable paper yourself. I will discuss some approaches on how to do so in class.

Your Master’s Committee
Your master’s committee will typically consist of three members: myself, as the instructor of Econ 8413, as your main advisor; the Director of Graduate Studies (currently, Prof. Xinghe Wang); and a third member appointed in consultation with Prof. Wang and myself.

Exceptionally qualified and ambitious students who elect to write an original research paper will have a different committee, whose chair will be their main advisor. Those students should approach me very early in the semester to discuss this possibility. They may also take two semesters to do so, in which case I will assign a grade of Incomplete in the first semester. If you are in a dual degree (e.g. with Statistics) you will need to follow this route. Your typical committee would then have two professors from Economics and one from, say, Statistics.

Grading
NOTE: grades will be awarded with + / -. Grades will be based on your demonstrated skills in the following:
i. Ability to do research. For those replicating a paper, I will assess: your ability to find good economic research; the quality of your STATA work, including whether your program can be run; the quality of the documentation; the extensiveness and care of the work. If you are doing original research, I will assess: how interesting the economic question is; how the relevant data set and modeling tools are; and whether the statistical analysis answers the question that you posed.

ii. Ability to write your research as an academic paper (see below).

iii. Ability to present your work in front of an audience.

**STATA do files and data files**

Part of your grade depends on your STATA work. To check your work, I will attempt to run your files in my computer. Therefore please follow this procedure:

- Send me all STATA files and all data, the latest by **Monday, April 11**.
- Ensure that your files that can be run once placed in the folder:
  
  `C:\CLASSES\MastersPaper\LastName_FirstName`.
  
  Here, “LastName_FirstName” are your last name and first name. For example, if your name is Joe Smith, you would create a folder in your computer named: `C:\CLASSES\MastersPaper\Smith_Joe`. You should do all of your statistical analysis in this folder.
- After you send me your do files and original data I will copy them into a folder with the name above, and attempt to run them in my computer.
- If this fails, we will need to meet and iron out any problems, or in order for you to show me your files running in your computer.

**How to write your paper**

An ideal economics paper would have anywhere between 4 and 6 sections. For an empirical paper, the sections are described below. **However, you will probably want to streamline your paper, and the following is just a general suggestion.**

i. Introduction. This is where you tell your reader what your idea is, and why it is interesting. You should put your idea in the context of existing literature and real-world economic questions.

ii. Literature review. This “section” can just be part of the introduction, as described above, or it can be a stand-alone section. No matter where you place it, please bear in mind that a BAD literature review is, at an extreme, just a collection of abstracts of other papers. A GOOD literature review is one that relates your work to the work of others. Explain how you extend others’ work, or how you modify it, or how you support it or contradict it. The ultimate goal is to place YOUR research in context, to illuminate your research by referring to other research.

iii. Data. An ideal data section is one that would allow your reader to reproduce your data set, after just reading your paper. You must explain your sources, and any further data manipulations that you performed. Ask yourself if someone can, based on your description, reproduce your data set. If not, your data section is probably incomplete.

iv. Methodology. This is where you explain the empirical model that you propose to estimate. You should have an economic rationale for it. This should be either a formal or an informal
model. It is also here that you address any empirical issues (such as endogeneity in your data, omitted variables, etc.), and how you solve them.

v. Analysis and results. In this section you present the results of your statistical analysis. This should be accompanied by a discussion (for example, how do the results conform or oppose your initial expectation).

vi. Conclusion. In this section, you remind the reader what your question and methodology were, and what results you obtained.

Paper due date
Your FINAL paper will be due on **Monday, April 18**. Your grade will be based on this version of the paper. Having an early deadline helps in three ways: it allows plenty of time for me to read your final paper; it ensures fairness in that everyone’s paper is due on the first possible date for final presentations; and it allows enough time to meet the deadline for form M-3 (see the next paragraph).

Deadline to submit for M-3 to graduate
The deadline to submit your form M-3 this semester is **Friday, May 1**. (Probably! This deadline is not available at the time of writing. Check it at: [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-commencement/timeline-deadlines/master-timeline.php](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-commencement/timeline-deadlines/master-timeline.php)). All members of your Master’s committee must sign it before you submit it.

Policy on emailing your files
You should send me your files by email before each deadline. This includes your presentations.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

Accommodation of Disabilities
Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.
If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services (http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Intellectual Pluralism
The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the Departmental Chair or Divisional Director; the Director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities (http://osrr.missouri.edu/); or the MU Equity Office (http://equity.missouri.edu/), or by email at equity@missouri.edu. All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion and Privacy
University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under Section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.
**Schedule of Meetings**

The meeting times are all on the assigned class time and place and are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>TIME FOR EACH STUDENT</th>
<th>TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the class.</strong> How to find a paper to base your research on. How to write a good economics paper.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to STATA.</strong> This may not be needed, if all students are familiar with STATA.</td>
<td>Bring your laptop, with STATA installed.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td><strong>Idea presentation.</strong> This is where you will tell me and your colleagues what you will be working on. For most students this means: what paper will you work on. Describe the main questions of the paper, and its data.</td>
<td>You do <em>not</em> have to have an overhead presentation.</td>
<td>5 minutes 1 hour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td><strong>Progress report.</strong> This is a somewhat informal presentation, in which you will discuss how much progress you’ve made. Attempt to have a literature review and a full presentation of the data. But you may also already have some preliminary results. If you are having problems with your data or estimation, this is also an opportunity to discuss it.</td>
<td>You do <em>not</em> have to have an overhead presentation. But you are <em>encouraged to do so</em>.</td>
<td>10 minutes 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18, 25</td>
<td><strong>Final presentation.</strong> This is where you present your final paper. <strong>Regardless of when you PRESENT, the final paper is due on April 18.</strong></td>
<td>Overhead presentation and final paper.</td>
<td>10-15 minutes 3-4 hours</td>
<td></td>
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