

# University of Missouri – Columbia

Spring 2020

*Economics 8413 and Economics 8413 online:  
Research Workshop I  
Syllabus*

**Instructor:** Vitor Trindade

**Email:** [trindadev@missouri.edu](mailto:trindadev@missouri.edu)

**Virtual Office Hours (via Skype name: vitor-trindade):**

Tuesday, 4-5 pm,

Wednesday, 7-8 am,

or by appointment (send me an email to arrange a different time).

Note: any changes will be communicated through Canvas announcements.

**Time Zone:** all times (including test times) are in the time zones:

Central Standard Time, before March 8, 2020

Central Daylight-Saving Time, on or after March 8, 2020

## 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 or the data that composes the dataset must be available through public sources; and 2) it must have a good data section, explaining what the author(s) approaches were, how they managed the data, and so on. 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.

## YOUR MASTER'S COMMITTEE

Your master's committee will typically consist of three members: myself, as the instructor of Econ 8413; the Director of Masters and International Programs (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, and change it after all work is completed. If you are in a dual degree (e.g. with Statistics) you will need to follow this route. Your typical committee would then have one or two professors from Economics and one or two 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 readability of your program, and whether it can be run; the quality of the documentation in your program files; 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. This is tentative: I will try to organize presentations of your work, either by Skype (if you are not in Columbia Missouri) or in person (if you are in Columbia Missouri).

## STATA DO FILES, LOG FILES, AND DATA FILES

Most students will be doing their work using the STATA statistical package. You are highly encouraged to use this particular statistical package, because this is the package that I am most knowledgeable about, and that I can provide help with. I will provide an "Introduction to

STATA” hand-out and a video class through Canvas. I will also help you if you have specific questions.

Part of your grade depends on your STATA work. So that I am able to check it, send me three files at the end of the semester:

- A STATA Do-file, that is, your STATA program.
- A STATA log file.
- At least one STATA data file.

See my hand-out on this. At my discretion, I may attempt to run your files in my computer.

## HOW TO WRITE YOUR PAPER

An ideal economics paper will probably have anywhere between 4 and 6 sections, sometimes more. For an empirical paper, a possible structure is described below. However, you will probably want to streamline your paper, and you can certainly deviate from this structure, which 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 something like a map. Just like a map locates cities and roads one in relation to another, a good literature review helps in locating each paper reviewed in relation to the other papers that you are discussing, and with your own work. It will probably explain things such as “Paper X extended paper Y [in some way]”; or “Paper X disputed paper Y’s results”; or “Paper X used the empirical methodology prosed in papers Y and Z”; that is, anything that allows the reader to create a mental map of the research done in one particular area. 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.

## FINAL PAPER DEADLINE

Your **FINAL** paper will be due on **Monday, April 20**. Your grade will be based on this version of the paper. An early deadline is needed to allow enough time to submit form M-3. This is also the deadline to email me your STATA files, as described above.

## DEADLINE TO SUBMIT FORM M-3 TO GRADUATE

The deadline to submit your form M-3 this semester is **Friday, May 1**. You can check it here: <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/graduation-commencement/timeline-deadlines/>. All members of your Master's committee must sign form M-3 before you submit it.

## POLICY ON EMAILING YOUR FILES

You should send me your files by email before each deadline.

## 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 establish an accommodation plan with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons 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](#); the [MU Equity Office](#), or [equity@missouri.edu](mailto: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 make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited 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.

## TITLE IX

University of Missouri policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, genetic information, disability and protected veteran status. Discrimination includes any form of unequal treatment such as denial of opportunities, harassment, and violence. Sex-based violence includes rape, sexual assault, unwanted touching, stalking, dating/interpersonal violence, and sexual exploitation.

If you experience discrimination, you are encouraged (but not required) to report the incident to the MU Office for Civil Rights & Title IX. Learn more about your rights and options at [civilrights.missouri.edu](http://civilrights.missouri.edu) or call 573-882-3880. You also may make an anonymous report online.

Students may also contact the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center, a confidential resource, for advocacy and other support related to rape or power-based personal violence at [rsvp@missouri.edu](mailto:rsvp@missouri.edu) or 573-882-6638, or go to [rsvp.missouri.edu](http://rsvp.missouri.edu).

Both the [Office for Civil Rights & Title IX](#) and the [RSVP Center](#) can provide assistance to students who need help with academics, housing, or other issues.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Week / Day	PURPOSE	REQUIREMENT
Week 1	<b>Introduction to the class.</b> How to find a paper to base your research on. How to write a good economics paper.	None.
Week 1	<b>Introduction to STATA.</b> A hand-out will be provided with an introduction to STATA, along with an example dataset.	None, but you should practice STATA with the provided dataset, if you're not familiar with it.
Monday, February 17	<b>Idea presentation.</b> 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.	Post one paragraph on the relevant discussion board thread by this date.
Monday, March 16	<b>Progress report.</b> 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.	You have the choice: do an actual presentation, to me, via skype, at an arranged time. Or post in the relevant discussion board thread. You must do either by this date.
Monday, April 20	<b>Final paper due.</b>	As explained above, I may try to organize formal presentations around this time. But your paper itself is due on this date.