
RESEARCH BOOT CAMP

Period: a.y. 2021/22 – II sem.

Class times: 8:30-11:50

Room: 1-C4-SR01

Instructors:

Prof. Nell Dutt

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Course Goals

The seminar is a crash course in conducting research. We start by developing research ideas, then communicating them—both in writing and through presentations. We will work iteratively on theory development (this applies broadly to both management theories and the logic underlying your hypotheses). We will also engage in the basics of data construction and analysis.

Students will use their own datasets from ongoing or anticipated projects. This is a great class to kickstart your second-year project. If you are designing an experiment for your second-year paper, you can use this class to get feedback on the experiment and the broader research question. If you do not have your own data, you can use existing datasets or simulate data. Replications of existing papers are also appropriate.

Each week, we focus on a critical step of developing a paper. We start by developing a research question, expanding it to the paper's introduction, and developing a hypothesis. We then proceed to identify and construct a dataset that allows us to test our theory. We then proceed to analyzing the data and presenting results. In the final session, all students will present their completed papers.

By the end of the course, you must submit a short paper. The paper must include: 1) a research question and its motivation and theoretical background; 2) main hypothesis, or propositions or proposed mechanisms; 3) a detailed empirical section that must include a description of the dataset you have built and an overview of the analysis and findings. The goal of the course is to provide you with a roadmap for writing the first draft of any research paper.

Faculty Bio

Nel Dutt (nilanjana.dutt@unibocconi.it) – Associate Professor of Management and Technology at Bocconi University. Nel received her PhD in Strategy from the Business School at Duke University, USA and has been teaching at Bocconi since. Nel researches strategies and actions by which organizations improve their environmental performance, and the interaction between gender and entrepreneurship.

Thorsten Grohsjean (thorsten.grohsjean@unibocconi.it) – Assistant Professor of Management and Technology at Bocconi University. Thorsten received his PhD in Management from LMU Munich. He explores in his research how individuals and groups overcome the challenges associated with the development of new knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Course Information

- Attendance is required.
- Most of the class time will be composed of student presentations and a discussion of the homework. At the end of class, we will summarize what we have learned and prepare for the next week's homework.
- Office hours are by appointment.

Course Reading & Statistical Software

- For large-scale empirical analysis, it is essential to have access to Stata 16 (recent older versions such as Stata 12-17 are also fine). If you prefer R, SPSS or Python, that would work as well but we will be unable to provide you any code.
- There is no required textbook for this course. All required readings are online. Students should do all readings themselves *before coming to class*.

Optional Books

The following texts are helpful for doing research.

For data analysis:

- Joshua Angrist & Jörn-Steffen Pischke: "Mostly Harmless Econometrics"
- Joshua Angrist & Jörn-Steffen Pischke: "Mastering Metrics"
- Kennedy: "A Guide to Econometrics"

For writing:

- George Gopen: "The Sense of Structure: Writing from the Reader's Perspective"
- Hal Varian: "How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time"
- Steven Pinker: "The Sense of Style"

Course Grading

- 50% of the grade will come from in-class participation. Virtually showing up to class will not guarantee your participation grade but missing a virtual class will guarantee that you miss out on your participation grade. So, attend our session online, do the readings, and be engaged. If you have trouble with your microphone, you can use the chat box instead but do your best to speak up.
- 50% of the grade will come from the final 20-page paper. We primarily assess the degree to which you are able to show improvement in your paper relative to your in-class presentations. While we understand that it is difficult to write an excellent paper in 6 weeks, we want you to feel comfortable with all aspects of paper construction.
- The final paper will be due roughly two weeks after the last class. Tentative submission date is May 28th.

Course Readings and Homework

Class 1

1. Readings:

- a. Davis, Murray S. "That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology." *Philosophy of the social sciences* 1.2 (1971): 309-344.
- b. Thomas, Kenneth W., and Walter G. Tymon. "Necessary properties of relevant research: Lessons from recent criticisms of the organizational sciences." *Academy of Management Review* 7.3 (1982): 345-352.
- c. DeNisi, Angelo S. "Is relevant research irrelevant? On evaluating the contribution of research to management practice." *Journal of Managerial Issues* (1994): 145-159.
- d. <https://www.economist.com/news/business/21711909-what-martin-luther-did-catholic-church-needs-be-done-business-gurus-management>

2. Reading questions:

- a. As you read the assigned papers, compare and contrast the criteria for interesting versus relevant research. Do you agree or disagree with the authors? Which ones?
- b. How do the ideas in the readings apply to your chosen research question?

3. Come to class prepared to discuss a research question; keep in mind the criteria mentioned in the readings of the week and be prepared to discuss your question and give feedback to others in class

4. Choose a dataset and be prepared to answer some questions about the dataset. You can use your own data or download a dataset from <http://five.dartmouth.edu/> or any other source (here is a source of psychology datasets: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ejOJTNTL5ApCuGTUciV0REEEAqvhI2Rd2FCoj7afops/edit#gid=0>). Students can also conduct their own studies or ask faculty members for data to replicate existing paper. Think about what programs you will use for statistical analysis.

Class 2

1. Readings:



- a. Mensh, Brett, and Konrad Kording. "Ten simple rules for structuring papers." *PLoS computational biology* 13.9 (2017): e1005619.
 - b. Booth, Wayne, et al. - *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. (ch. 3, 4) recommended
2. Homework: The homework should comprise 2 Slides.
 - The first paragraph of your paper in the following format:
 1. This is an important issue: Why do we care?
 2. Here is what the existing literature says: What do we know?
 3. Here is an interesting and relevant gap / something missing/ new part of the issue that is not considered: What don't we know?
 4. Here is what we are saying/ finding: What do you do?
 - Concepts Table (refer to the slides from Class 1)

Class 3

1. Readings: We recommend that you read the entire series of papers written by AMJ editorial staff on publishing in the AMJ. For this assignment, though, the following is most relevant.
 - a. Sparrowe, Raymond T., and Kyle J. Mayer. "Publishing in AMJ—part 4: Grounding hypotheses." *Academy of Management Journal* 54.6 (2011): 1098-1102.
 - b. Booth, Wayne, et al. - *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. (chs. 7-11) recommended
2. Homework
 - The revised first paragraph of your paper in the following format:
 1. This is an important issue
 2. Here is what the existing literature says
 3. Here is an interesting and relevant gap / something missing/ new part of the issue that is not considered
 4. Here is what we are saying/ finding
 - Revised concepts table
 - 1 main hypothesis
 - Explanation of the mechanisms for the hypothesis

Class 4

Homework

- Slide 1 should reflect a clear main hypothesis along with an indication of the Independent Variable, Dependent Variable, and Mechanism.
- Slide 2 should include an updated Concepts Table with the Independent Variable, Dependent Variable, and Mechanism Variables (if applicable), the operationalization of these variables measures, i.e. how you will measure your variables, and Data Sources.
- Slide 3 should include a summary statistics table of your dataset.

Class 5

Homework

- Slide 1 should state the hypothesis.
- Slide 2 should show a cross tab or visual of the main pattern of interest.
- Slide 3 should show a simple regression model.
- Be prepared to talk about which methods you used and why. Share if you got similar results using a different model. Did you cluster standard errors? Share any other pertinent information.

Class 6

1. Homework: Please prepare a 10 minutes presentation of your research question and findings.

Course Schedule: Classes will run from 9-12 am

Session	Date	Theme	Class Plan
1	April 7 th	<i>What is a research question?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of research questions • Discussion of possible datasets
2	April 14 th	<i>Formalizing the research question</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the first paragraph of your paper answering the research questions you have prepared.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the concepts table you have created.
3	April 28 th	<i>Constructing an argument</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the focal hypothesis that will be the focus of your paper.
4	May 5 th	<i>Data construction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a dataset that will answer your chosen research question. • Prepare a presentation for the class that explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RQ ○ Why you believe the chosen dataset can answer this question. ○ How you constructed the dataset. ○ Main variables ○ Problems with the dataset
5	May 19 th	<i>Data Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the dataset and present basic findings • Prepare a presentation for the class that explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which methods you used and why? ○ What do the results mean? Address the empirical findings and economic impact. ○ Do you believe the results? Why or Why not? ○ What will you do next?
6	May 26 th	<i>Final Presentation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student will prepare 10-minute presentations of the final paper for the class. • The presentation must cover the introduction (story) and empirical findings.

Class Miscellaneous:

1. Being a researcher requires being a producer as well as a consumer of research (reviewing, attending seminars, and workshops). This class will help you do both.
2. You will get out of this class, what you put into it. If you take the class's feedback to improve your paper every week, you will have a much-improved final paper. If you attend class passively, you will not see much improvement.
3. One idea one paper. While you may start broader project for your dissertation, keep your individual papers simple and focused.
4. Along the same lines, one paper one theory (usually).
5. The goal at the end of the class: you should be able to explain your paper in one sentence. Only once you understand what you are doing, can you decide whether it is interesting or not.

All the final papers must comprise a research question and dataset. Beyond that, we are quite flexible. Several journals have short papers; such a paper is the goal for this class.

You should complete the readings prior to each class. These readings are designed to help you do research. We will not discuss their content in class. Feel free to use any other resources you find useful and share.

For every class, we require a student to volunteer to be a timekeeper. This student will time all the student presentations. We will have about 12 minutes for each student.

To save time, we will run a flipped classroom. We will share slides the day before. Please ask questions at the start of class. We will save the last 10 minutes to go over the HW.

Be proximate with colleagues, advisors, present regularly, come to the seminars, have your own seminars and workshops.

