**Econ-799 -- Doctoral dissertation seminar**

**Fall 2011**
**Mondays, 8:10-10:40pm**

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Office hours: Mondays 5-8pm; Wednesdays 3:00-5pm

![Newly minted doctors of philosophy in economics, Spring 2010.](image)

**Description**

The purpose of the seminar is to give PhD students the information and support they need to move into and through their doctoral research projects in a timely, successful way. You only do one dissertation in your life; you’ve never done anything quite like it before, and will never do anything quite like it again. So the seminar aims to point you expeditiously to the resources and work habits shown by the experience of others to be important for proceeding through the dissertation, without having to re-discover all the ropes yourself.

The seminar will meet biweekly, except that in September there will be two sessions in a row (see below). It is advantageous to attend all sessions, especially for pre-proposal students. Students intending to finish their dissertations in 2011/12 must attend sessions on the job market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics to be discussed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Getting acquainted; dissertation basics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 12</td>
<td>The ‘job market’ for economists – required for people planning to finish in 2011/12, highly advisable for others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 19</td>
<td>Getting the dissertation project in gear: Ideas, data, resources, advisors, proposals, etc. [required for pre-proposal students] Visits from faculty members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>What good dissertations look like: Structures, examples, objectives, and skills</td>
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<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>Sustaining progress: Work habits, skill building, rapport with committee members</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>Dissertation roadblocks -- and how to overcome them Updates on job-market issues and progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Practice proposal sessions &amp;/or break-outs [required for pre-proposal students]</td>
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<td>Nov. 21</td>
<td>Job market preparation: Peer review of job market papers, practice interview sessions</td>
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Readings & resources

General


Dissertation basics (Aug. 29)

File in Blackboard


Job market (Sept. 12)

Links & files in Blackboard

John Cawley, "A guide (and advice) for economists on the U.S. junior academic job market"

Getting the dissertation project in gear (Sept. 19)

Reprise: Davis & Parker, “The contribution of a dissertation”

Sternberg on: picking a topic (pp. 47-55); finding an advisor (pp. 86-90); putting the proposal together (pp. 72-83; 91-103)


What good dissertations look like (Oct. 3)

Links & files in Blackboard

Sustaining progress (Oct. 17)

Sternberg on: Work habits (pp. 40-47); working successfully with advisor and committee (pp. 138-156) dissertation psychology (pp. 157-192)


Miller, Chap. 4, "Devising timelines"; Chap. 7, “Working with your dissertation chairperson and committee”

Dissertation roadblocks (Oct. 31)

Sternberg: Work habits (pp. 36-47)

Alison Miller, *Finish your dissertation once and for all! How to overcome psychological barriers, get results, and move on with your life* (American Psychological Association, 2009).

Chap. 2, “Traps of negative thinking, feeling and behaving”

Chap. 3, “Freeing yourself from thinking, feeling and behaving traps”