

BOSTON COLLEGE
Department of Economics

EC 497 Senior Thesis Research
Fall 2009
Class: T & Th 9:00
<http://www2.bc.edu/~murphyro>

Professor Bob Murphy
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Office Hours: T & Th 2:00-3:00
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Honors Thesis Seminar

Purpose of Course: This seminar serves as the organizational framework for students writing senior honors theses. The course serves three purposes. First, the seminar provides background information on how to write a thesis. Second, it provides structure to the thesis-writing process, affording students the opportunity to make presentations of their work and receive feedback. Finally, the seminar gives thesis writers the opportunity to meet together as a group and benefit from each other's insights.

Meetings: We will meet today and Thursday to discuss the structure of a thesis, hear from each of you about your proposed research project, and set up the schedule for presentations in November. You should by now have received a commitment from a faculty member to serve as your adviser. You also should have a relatively specific idea for your topic. Part of the process of writing a thesis involves narrowing and focusing your topic, so don't be too concerned if your proposed research is still a bit vague.

Office Hours: I will have office hours from 2:00 to 3:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and at other times by appointment. Each of you should plan to stop by and fill me in on your progress during October. I'll also be checking with your advisers to make sure all is going well.

Presentations: The presentations in November will be about 20 minutes in length. A suggested format is described in the attached handout on developing a thesis proposal. Attendance at all presentations is required unless you have a conflict that has been approved by me in advance. Part of process of doing research involves interacting with colleagues. The thesis presentations will provide you with an opportunity to receive and give comments to each other on your work and to participate in our own "research community."

Deadlines: Students must provide their advisers and me with a draft of their thesis proposal at the latest by the Friday before Thanksgiving, November 20. You should, of course, be handing in material and receiving feedback from your advisers throughout the semester. Advisers will then return comments to students, and students are to revise their draft and turn in a final version to their advisers and me by the last day of classes, Friday.

December 11. Note that your progress during the fall semester will determine whether you are allowed to continue the thesis during the spring semester.

Texts: No texts are required for the course, but I urge you to read a copy of *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk and E.B. White, which is available in most book stores. This little book is a very useful (and famous) guide to writing clearly and concisely. Another helpful guide is *The Writing of Economics*, by D. McCloskey, Waveland Press, 1999.