

Research Master in Economics Program.

Research seminar, fall semester 2016. Syllabus.

Research seminar is an important activity throughout the Research Master program. Its goals, and therefore its design, gradually evolve from the first to the fourth semester of the program.

In the first semester the seminar has two main objectives. The first is to acquaint the students with the samples of the best state-of-the-art research in different areas of economics. This will allow students to form high standards regarding their own future research projects, to expand their overview and let them choose areas of research that attract them most. The second is to guide them through the essential elements of the art of choosing relevant and innovative topics and questions for research and of the craft of the effective use of up-to-date tools and methods.

To reach these objectives the research seminar envisages two main formats. The first is lectures by seminar organizers and a series of invited lectures by established scholars. The lectures will both survey several important directions of research and cover some methodological issues, both domain-specific and general for the whole field. The second format is based on student presentations. Each student is to make at least one presentation during the semester. Student presentations will be based on recent research papers published in top-5 international journals.

Each student should select a paper he/she will present at the seminar. The paper should be one published in one of top-5 journals (Econometrica, American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics and Review of Economic Studies) over the last 5 years.

Each presentation should last approximately 15-20 minutes. The main goal is to communicate the main ideas of the paper with intuition (main research question(s); sketch of the model (for theory papers); basic description of data and methodology (for empirical papers); main results; discussion). The presentation must also contain constructive critique of the paper; possibly – some extension or, at least, ideas for future research.

Grading. The grading is based on attendance, participation in seminars, quality of the presentation and of the written report. Students who fail on any of these dimensions may be assigned an additional written task by the instructor in order to achieve the “pass” grade.