

**AEM 7150-7151**  
**Second Year Project of Dyson PhD Students**

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All second-year PhD students in the Dyson School must complete an applied project and are required to sign up for AEM 7150-7151. An ideal outcome of this project is one academic paper of publishable quality that could reasonably appear in a top field journal (e.g., AJAE, JAERE, or JDE). This is a mentored project. Students must select a mentor for this project and work with this mentor to finish the project. This could be a joint paper with your mentor or others or a single-authored paper. This course will not meet on a regular basis but you are expected to attend the Dyson School seminar series. If you need to talk with me, please schedule an appointment through email.

You need to meet the following deadlines:

**Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>** – Notify Professor Shanjun Li of your selected mentor

**Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>** – Two-four page bullet points of tips you learn from the references below on research and writing

**Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>** – Two page proposal due outlining the research question, motivation, contribution, the proposed method, and expected outcomes.

**Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>** – First draft of the project is due. It should include the essential component of the final draft (see below for the length requirement). You may not have all the results yet but you need to include your detailed plans for next steps.

**Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> and/or Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>** – Students will make 30 minute presentations of their work (Warren 401). Twenty minutes will be allotted for presentation of the work, with 10 minutes for questions and comments. All PhD students and faculty will be encouraged to attend.

**Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>** – Final project is due. The final paper should follow standard academic economics journal publication format (if you don't already know, read a recent issue of AER).

For the first draft and the final draft, they should not exceed 45<sup>th</sup> pages (12 point font, double spaced) including everything except the appendix. You can include additional important materials in an appendix up to 10 pages (double spaced).

At least one referee will be chosen from the faculty to review each proposal, and rough draft. Students will be graded each semester based partly on whether they have met the deadlines and partly on their performance in written work (as evaluated by the referees). Students are encouraged to begin work as early as possible. This is a substantial and time consuming requirement. Moreover, this project should form the pattern for future work on your dissertation (and in many cases, may be included in the dissertation).

Three questions you need to ask yourself before deciding on the topic:

1. Why is it interesting/important (why should we care)? You can approach this by thinking about these questions: how does it inform the broad economic literature? What is the real-world examples (or the magnitude of the issue)? What are the policy implications?
2. What is my contribution?
3. What are the (empirical) challenges and how should I address them?

### **Important references:**

Check out Greg Mankiw's resources for economics research here (read each of the articles)

<http://gregmankiw.blogspot.com/2006/05/advice-for-grad-students.html>

Greg Mankiw's advices and his experiences on economic research:

[http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mankiw/files/my\\_rules\\_of\\_thumb.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mankiw/files/my_rules_of_thumb.pdf)

Donald Davis's article on thesis research:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~drd28/Thesis%20Research.pdf>

Steven Pischke's advice on economic research:

<http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/spischke/phds/How%20to%20start.pdf>

Hal Varian's article on building economic model:

<http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/how.pdf>

John Cochrane's Writings Tips for PhD Students:

[http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/john.cochrane/research/papers/phd\\_paper\\_writing.pdf](http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/john.cochrane/research/papers/phd_paper_writing.pdf)

Plamen Nikolov's article on writing tips that combine multiple sources including Cochrane's:

<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~pnikolov/resources/writingtips.pdf>