

## COURSE SYLLABUS

AGEC 291

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH HOURS - DUDENSING

Fall 2015, online/AGLS 321, Time TBA/flexible

**Course description and prerequisites.** Students will conduct original research and will present that research via paper, oral presentation with PowerPoint slides, and poster. Each student will select a topic related to economics and draft a research paper and a related presentation and presentation materials. Students will meet with the instructor for one hour weekly to discuss research and writing methods and to review the student's progress on his/her research paper. No prerequisites are required.

**Learning outcomes.** Students will implement a systematic research process and write an academic research paper on a research question of their choice (related to economics). As part of these endeavors, they will learn to

- identify data and data analysis methods appropriate to their research question
- apply basic to intermediate data analysis practices, particularly quantitative analysis
- think critically about what their results may mean for society
- write in a clear, concise, academic style
- differentiate between their original work and source material, citing sources appropriately
- offer a clear presentation of data via oral presentation with PowerPoint slides and poster
- accept, evaluate, and respond to feedback on written work.

### Instructor information

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Office hours by appointment.

**Course resource materials.** There is no text for this course. Students will refer to information from POWER Writing Support Services at Texas A&M University (<http://power.tamu.edu/>) and the OWL Lab at Purdue University (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/01/>). The instructor will provide electronic copies and links to supplemental material on research practices and writing tips throughout the course. These documents and links will be emailed or posted on the course website:

<http://agrillife.org/agecoext/programs/community-programs/rural-communities/agec-291691-research-resources/>, also accessible from the <http://ruralcommunities.tamu.edu> website.

Each student will also select and read materials related to his/her specific research project.

**Grading policies.** Course grades will be based on effort in the class and quality of the student’s research paper. Assignments, available points, and expectations are described below.

Assignment	Due week of :*	Points	Percent of total grade:
Summary statistics and explanatory description.	September 14		
Draft 1 of methods.	September 21		
Draft 1 of results.	September 28		
Draft of full paper.	October 12		
Final paper due!	October 19	200	40%
Also--first draft of poster.	October 19		
Poster for outside review.	October 26		
PPT first draft.	November 2		
Final poster due.	November 9	100	20%
Final PPT due.	November 16		
Final presentation.	Nov 30 - Dec 9	100	20%
Course meeting participation <i>Attendance (as outlined in the attendance policy) and participation in the form of actively discussing the research topic, being prepared for meetings and timely with assignments, accepting criticism, evaluating feedback, and thinking critically about the research question.</i>	Throughout course	100	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

**\*Assignments are due 24 hours prior to the scheduled course meeting for that week.**

Grades on written and presentation assignments will reflect the extent to which a paper, presentation, or visual aid clearly and concisely conveys relevant information using appropriate spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting. Interim assignments (drafts and analysis those that are part of the research process but are not yet final projects) will be reviewed/edited and receive comments and an unofficial grade to aid the student in measuring his/her progress and improving their work. However, these “grades” are not calculated into the final course grade. Only the points noted above are included in the course grade, which reflects the quality of the research project and its delivery as well as the effort of the student (via the participation grade).

Participation scores are meant to encourage active engagement in the research process. Students who submit materials and attend meetings in a timely fashion and who demonstrate an interest in critically evaluating feedback and other new information (recognizing that critical thinking skills are developed over time) will score well on this metric. Naturally, the participation grade is often correlated with scores on graded final products; students who have engaged with professors, incorporated feedback, and been prepared and proactive in the course will tend to have higher grades on final products as well as participation.

**Final Grades** (may be curved upward at instructor's discretion)

- A 90% and above (450+ points)
- B 80-89.9% (400-449 points)
- C 70-79.9% (350-399 points)
- D 60-69.9% (300-349 points)
- F Less than 60% (fewer than 300 points)

**Attendance and make-up policies.** Preparation and attendance at scheduled meetings are paramount to success in a research course. Dr. Dudensing's Extension responsibilities will occasionally necessitate finding an alternate meeting time. She extends the same courtesy to students as fellow professionals. Please email [rmddudensing@tamu.edu](mailto:rmddudensing@tamu.edu) as soon as possible when you have a conflict to reschedule a meeting time. Diligent effort between meetings is crucial to success; however, a lack of preparation is not reason to cancel a meeting but rather indicates an immediate need to meet to get back on track. Following two unexcused absences or suspiciously canceled meetings, Dr. Dudensing and the student will meet to discuss communication issues and sign a memorandum documenting future expectations. Additional unexcused absences will result in dropping a letter grade.

**Course topics, calendar of activities, major assignment dates.** See the assignments table under grading policies for assignments and approximate dates. Course topics for weekly one-hour meetings are outlined below.

<b>Week of:</b>	<b>Topic</b>
August 31	Finding and vetting data sources. Am I asking the right questions?
September 7	Digging in to data sources. (Asking questions about their methods, access, citations, etc.) Summary statistics and exploratory analysis.
September 14	Data analysis 1. Describing results 1.
September 21	Review preliminary data analysis. Data analysis 2. Describing results 2. Relating back to the literature.
September 28	Review results & text. Identifying weaknesses (What can I do to fix them; what do I just explain?)
October 5	Drawing conclusions and finding your place in the literature.
October 12	Writing for and designing posters.
October 19	Designing PowerPoint presentations.
October 26	<i>No meeting. Work on PPT design.</i>
November 2	Incorporating feedback.
November 9	<i>Catch-up meeting. Topics TBD.</i>
November 16	Presenting a poster and an oral presentation.
November 23	<i>Thanksgiving week. Will meet only if needed. Work on oral presentation.</i>
Nov 30 - Dec 9	Oral presentation, on campus if possible or via ZOOM. Date TBD.

**Professional Development Opportunities**

Students are strongly encouraged but not required to submit their work to Texas A&M's Student Research Week (<http://srw.tamu.edu/>) and similar professional development opportunities.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for

reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

### **Academic Integrity Statement and Policy**

*“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”*

For more information refer to the Aggie Honor Code website link <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. A writing-intensive research course generates concern about potential plagiarism (as defined in Section 20.1.2.3.5 of the Honor System Rules -

<http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/RulesAndProcedures/HonorSystemRules.aspx#definitions>). In short “The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit” (Honor System Rules, accessed May 12, 2015) will not be tolerated. Appropriate citation of materials is an early topic of the course. Software such as TurnItIn may be used to check written work for originality.