

## COURSE SYLLABUS

AGEC 291

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH HOURS - DUDENSING

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

**Course description and prerequisites.** Students will be introduced to the principles and practices of research and academic writing. Each student will select a topic related to economics and draft a research paper. 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

- formulate a research question and hypothesis
- attempt to answer the research question using basic analysis of data and other information sources
- think critically about what those answers may mean for society
- evaluate the relevance and credibility of information sources
- write in a clear, concise, academic style
- differentiate between their original work and source material
- 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://agrilife.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.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due week of:*</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percent of total grade</b>
Half-page research proposal <i>½ page single spaced proposal of research topic, why it is important, types of sources available, and your research plan</i>	June 15	30	6%
Research outline <i>Outline of paper's major sections with one-sentence explanations, as described in class meetings and the provided template</i>	June 29	30	6%
Paper draft 1 <i>First (rough) draft of paper.</i>	July 13	60	12%
Paper draft 2 <i>Second draft of paper incorporating feedback from draft 1 and additional info gathered and written after the first draft was submitted</i>	July 20	80	16%
Final paper draft <i>Final draft of 10-15-page double spaced paper incorporating feedback from previous drafts and including a paragraph about possible avenues of future research related to your paper.</i>	August 3	100	20%
Improvement between Draft 1 and Final <i>An important part of the research and writing processes are incorporating feedback and new information. Even the best first draft requires deeper, clearer thought and improvement.</i>	(August 3)	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, 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.

Undergraduate students often worry about whether their writing will be professional and exciting. Professional writing skills are developed with practice and by accepting and incorporating feedback. Grades on written assignments will reflect the extent to which a paper clearly and concisely conveys relevant information using appropriate spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting. The improvement grade will reflect the extent to which students have (1) incorporated feedback from the instructor and (2) improved their paper (including adding additional information and citations) on their own initiative.

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.

**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 [rmdudensing@tamu.edu](mailto:rmdudensing@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>Topic</b>	<b>Week of:</b>
What research is, selecting a topic, and forming a research question. Asking critical questions: Why? How? Really?	June 2
Discussion of possible research topics, finding and evaluating information sources, components of a research paper, and setting a research plan.	June 8
Review of research proposal. APA style overview, and writing in an outline. Exploring a hypothesis.	June 15
Digging into data, journal articles, and other academic sources. Citing sources and critically evaluating arguments.	June 22
Review of research outline. Writing cohesively, and critiquing your own work.	June 29
Working session to address student concerns, troubleshoot, review drafts of specific components, etc.	July 6
Review Draft 1. Recognizing the limitations of your research and opportunities for future research.	July 13
Review Draft 2	July 20
<i>No meeting. Work on final draft of paper.</i>	July 27
Review final draft	Aug 3

### **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.