Econ 2416 Syllabus

Professor Gabriel Chodorow-Reich
Harvard University
Spring 2021

Course overview

Logistics
Meeting time: Thursday 3:00pm-5:45pm
Location: zoom
Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/84799
Instructor: Gabriel Chodorow-Reich
Office hours: Tu 3-4pm (Zoom). Please sign-up ahead at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QE6zaSLV90N4xTw7bs1texR444ZQnroJ2ggNN10e8kI/edit?usp=sharing.
Email: chodorowreich@fas.harvard.edu. Please include “econ 2416” in the subject line.
TA: Armando Miano
Office hours: W 3-4 (Zoom). You may sign-up ahead at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tF7W7Kww2znqiKbWPqyuYm82y0BaXnu_J411j_ybWU/edit?usp=sharing.
Email: amiano@g.harvard.edu.

Prerequisites
Completion of the first year Ph.D sequence, or permission of instructor.

Requirements in brief
Weekly readings, preliminary “fact” presentation, two problem sets, and a final project and presentation.

Grade
Final project (50%), other homeworks (25%), class participation (25%)
Requirements details

Weekly readings
Much of the class will revolve around discussion of assigned readings. This makes it essential that you read the starred papers before lecture and come prepared to discuss and critique them.

Homework I
For your first homework assignment, you will present one empirical result from a published or working paper. Your selected paper must satisfy two criteria:

- It is discussed in one of the February 4 readings.
- It is not on this syllabus.

You will make an in-class, 5 minute presentation for which you should prepare one or two slides (no more!). Your slides should describe relevant background (context, data, methodology) and present the result. IMPORTANT: you are not meant to present an entire paper. Just one result you found intriguing. Provide enough context for us to understand the result (what data was used? empirical specification?). Do NOT try to contextualize the result within the full paper. No two students may present results from the same paper. Students may claim papers by signing up on Canvas on a first-come, first-claimed basis. You must email me your slides by 2pm on February 4.

Homework II
The second homework will be a problem set. You may work together, but each student must submit his/her own independent write up.

Homework III
The third homework will be a problem set. You may work together, but each student must submit his/her own independent write up.

Final Project
This will be your main project for the course. The purpose of making the assignment a virtual paper is that I would rather you get 50% of the way toward a project you are excited to continue after the semester finishes than you complete a project in the timeframe of the course to which you will never return. You will formulate an original research idea, develop a practical plan for executing the idea, and take initial steps in the execution. The paper may take the following form:

1. Introduction: What is the question and why is the question of interest?
2. Literature Review: How does your paper fit into the broader literature?
3. Theoretical Motivation: This could be actual theory or just a sketch of the relevant theory that underlies your question.

4. Data: What data would you use to answer/address this question? Why are the data well suited to the question?

5. Empirical Methodology: How would you use the data to answer your question? Be explicit about causal identification, keeping in mind that the same set of empirical facts can often support many theories. Depending on the nature of your question and the ease of accessing and using the data, I may ask you to make significant progress in the actual implementation of your proposed empirical work.

6. Falsification Tests: What other specifications, tests and investigations could either bolster or cast doubt upon the primary tests of your hypotheses?

7. Preliminary Results: The extent of the results provided will differ across students based on the project and discussions with me.

Deadlines for the virtual paper:

- **February 18**: Email me a two page write up of proposed idea. Please include “econ 2416” in the subject line.

- **March 25**: Meet with me to receive feedback on proposed idea.

- **April 8/15 and 22**: Class presentations, 25 minutes per student.

- **May 7**: Papers due via email. Please include “econ 2416” in the subject line.

You may request approval from me to work jointly on the virtual paper. You may also develop an idea you started in another course or independently. Of course the bar for sufficient progress will be higher in these circumstances.

**Audit policy**

If you are a 3rd year or above and wish to audit the course, send me an email introducing yourself and so you can be added to the class list (as always, please include “econ 2416” in the subject line). Auditors are not required to complete the written assignments, but are expected to do the starred readings and participate in class.
Course outline

1. January 28: Overview and structural models

2. February 4: Empirical macroeconomics
   Homework I due

3. February 11: Applied time series I
4. February 18: Applied time series II


5. February 25: VAR Applications

Homework II due.


Christian Wolf (Forthcoming). “SVAR (Mis-)Identification and the Real Effects of Monetary Policy Shocks”. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*


6. March 4: Narrative approach


7. March 11: Shift-share designs

Homework III due.


Gabriel Chodorow-Reich and Johannes Wieland (2020). “Secular Labor Reallocation and Business Cycles”. *Journal of Political Economy* 128(6), pp. 2245–2287. URL: [https://doi.org/10.1086/705717](https://doi.org/10.1086/705717)


8. March 18: Cross-section and aggregation


9. March 25: individual project meetings

10. April 1: Measurement: unemployment


11. **April 8**: Wellness day

12. **April 15**: Student presentations

13. **April 22**: Student presentations