

Bachelor's Thesis Seminar in Economics

Introductory lecture

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Agenda for today:

- Seminar practices
- Expectations for a Bachelor's thesis
- Choosing the topic
- Finding relevant literature
- Research plan
- Writing
- Presenting and acting as an opponent
- Assessment

Expectations

- A Bachelor's thesis is not a research project.
- Rather, a survey into a topic of interest.
- Often the thesis = a literature survey.
- Theoretical framework often valuable.
- Could contain an empirical part (with data), but this is not necessary.
- Remember: this is a thesis in the field of *Economics*.

Timeline for work with the thesis

1. Choosing a topic and finding literature
2. Presenting your research plan

This is done in a classroom presentation. Feedback at this stage can help you focus and narrow down your research focus, find relevant literature, and more.

3. Writing of the thesis
4. Presenting a final draft

This is done in a classroom presentation. You will need to submit your draft online a few days before the presentation so that opponents and discussants can read it. Each student will be the opponent on one other thesis draft and an additional reader on two other thesis drafts.

5. Submission of the thesis.

Choosing the topic

- Which sub-field of economics / which applications are you most interested in?
- Search for ideas from your courses, text books, economics-related news, surveys, ...
- What literature is already available on the topic?
- Narrow vs. broad topic?
- Well studied vs. novel topic?
- Some sources for inspiration for research topic: NBER working paper series, voxeu.org, voxdev.org

Finding literature:

- References in text books
- Review articles/survey articles
- Influential journal articles
- Citing patterns by google scholar
- See the video recording on information retrieval under "materials" of the course home page.
 - A practical part about searching through the library's sources
 - See a separate document "Instructions on literature search" more focused on finding and identifying literature in economics.

Research plan

- You should be able to motivate and explain succinctly your:
 - Topic
 - Research question
 - Approach (method of analysis)
 - At least some relevant literature
- The research plan should be submitted as a two-page document in a return box under “research plan presentation” (before the actual presentation session).

Writing of the thesis

- Pay attention to:
 - Structure
 - Rigorous argumentation
 - Scientific style
 - Definition of key concepts
 - Appropriate citing practice
 - **Can an outsider follow your arguments?**
 - Language

Final draft presentation

- Improving your presentation skills is one learning goal in this seminar.
- In your presentation, make sure to:
 - Explain why your topic is interesting and relevant.
 - Focus on key points in your thesis and arguments.
 - Explain what you do and why in a clear way: an outsider to your particular topic should be able to understand.
 - Explain properly your method of analysis/theoretical framework.
- Opponent:
 - Be critical, but try to suggest ways to improve.
 - Point out strengths as well as weaknesses.
 - Be constructive: how can the draft be improved?

Assessment of the Thesis

- Criteria for assessment:
 - Choice of topic and research question
 - Choice and use of literature
 - Analysis and interpretation (literature survey / theory / empirics)
 - Writing (academic style, language, readability)
 - Consistency and coherence of the thesis
- The full evaluation criteria are on the mycourses page under Materials.

Grading of the Seminar

The seminar grade is based on three components:

- 50%: presentations (Research topic and Final draft)
- 25% opposition on another student's final draft
- 25% active participation in the seminars

Guide on mycourses

A PDF guide for the work with the thesis has been added to the mycourses section Materials.