Syllabus
Research Methods for Studying Housing, Land, and Cities

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Class Times: T/R 5:15-6:30 pm
Location: HCB 313
Office Hours: T/R, 1:30 pm to 3 pm

Readings & Resources

I strongly recommend that you acquire a primer on statistics and multiple regression analysis. This will become an essential reference for you throughout the course. The primer can be Cliffs Quick Review *Statistics*, *Statistics II for Dummies*, *Econometrics for Dummies*, *Statistical Analysis with Excel for Dummies*, or some other primer (or combination). Essential topics will be hypothesis testing, statistical inference, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. Primers with discussions of ANOVA are highly recommended.

Students should also have access to a statistical analysis software package. Most projects can be successfully completed using a contemporary version of Excel (make sure the statistical package is installed). Other statistical software is also acceptable, including GRETL (a free on-line, open-source package), SAS, SPSS, or STATA,

Course Overview and Objectives

This class is a "boot camp" for applied policy research with a focus on the empirical analysis of housing and urban development. Students will learn how to evaluate the appropriateness of varied approaches to empirical analysis and apply empirical tools and techniques to a topic of their choosing with relevance to local, state and national policy. Topics can range from the effects of local regulation or permitting on local economic development to the performance of national mortgage markets, but other topics will be considered. All research topics must be approved by the instructor. The capstone project is an applied original research paper that incorporates all the essential components of a major project, including a literature review, a methodological framework, empirical analysis of results, and discussion of policy implications.

Students will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate a working knowledge of how to:

- identify viable research projects;
- determine which empirical methods are most suitable to analyzing a particular topic;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to empirical research;
- productively engage with their fellow researchers in the development and implementation of their research project and effectively evaluate the empirical results;
- effectively present key elements of a research project;
- design, implement, and complete a major research project;
- evaluate the practical policy implications of their empirical research.

Grading Policy & Scale
This course uses a standard grading scale (letter/%) to evaluate student performance: A (95), A-(93), B+ (88), B (85), B- (83), C+ (78), C (75), C- (73), D (65), and F (0).

The following criteria are generally applied to determining grades for papers:

A = <u>Superior performance</u>. The paper has a clearly articulated and well organized argument, without errors in analysis, and the research maximizes the available research using appropriate methods. The paper is well written, and arguments are grounded in facts and/or evidence. Papers are presented in a professional way, absent grammatical, typographical and formatting errors. This grade represents a paper or presentation suitable to a professional audience.
B = <u>Above average</u>. A well-articulated paper that thoughtfully and completely incorporates theory and evidence to make a consistent argument. No fundamental errors are evident, but the analysis lacks depth, a comprehensive understanding of the research subject, or may be limited in its application of empirical methods.
C = <u>Average</u>. Papers in this range are organized, and the arguments are fundamentally sound, but suffer from minor errors, inadequate support, or a lack of depth in relevant empirical methods. Papers or presentations earning a C (or lower) would not be suitable for a professional work environment.
D = <u>Below Average</u>. Papers below average typically suffer from fundamental flaws in argument, lack evidence to support the main points, fail to incorporate principal theories and evidence, and are poorly written.

Late papers will be penalized 5% per day.

The class grade will be determined by a weighted average for the following specific course assignments:

Literature review (paper)	15%
Methodological framework (paper + presentation)	20%
Preliminary empirical analysis (presentation)	20%
Final paper	20%
Class participation	25%

All presentations must use powerpoint (or similar presentation software) and <u>must be submitted by noon on the presentation day</u>.

Classroom Attendance and Participation
This class is designed to mimic the process of what might be experienced in a working policy research organization or think tank. Peer evaluation and participation is essential to a well functioning organization. Thus, the course is designed to maximize input and interaction with the goal of improving the quality of the work produced. Classroom attendance, like coming to work in an office, is assumed as the base-line for a C (average) grade for participation. Students are expected to interact with their peers, offer helpful comments, provide constructive feedback, and ask questions relevant to improving the quality of the research presented in class and in the final papers.

Papers

Each student will be expected to complete a research project relating to housing and real-estate markets, land development, housing finance, local economic development, or local government regulation. The topic will be of the student's choosing but with the consultation and approval of the instructor. Your paper topic and tentative hypothesis(es) are due on **Tuesday, 19 September**.

You will be expected to complete four papers, three of which will become essential components of your final (and fourth) paper:

- A <u>Literature Review</u> of the topic you have chosen as your research project. Your literature review should show you are familiar with and understand the main issues and writings on your topic, you have explored the relevant research, and can properly cite sources and evidence. Typical literature reviews are 6-10 manuscript pages (double spaced) using 12-point size type. Students should survey their topic and field sufficiently to summarize the essential current "state of knowledge." A minimum of six respected, academic sources must be cited and included in the review. (Submit in MS Word via turnitin on Blackboard.)

- A detailed description of the <u>methodological framework</u> you will use to evaluate your thesis and guide your empirical analysis. This paper should include a *theoretical model* of the <u>empirical relationships</u> between dependent and independent variables, a clear statement of hypotheses, a discussion of the methods that will be used to estimate the model, identification of the sources of data, and speculation on the nature and character of the relationships between variables (e.g., positively or negatively related). *This paper should **not** include preliminary data or analysis.* This framework should be presented in class for feedback and discussion using <u>a power point presentation</u>. Typical lengths for this paper are 4-6 pages, including tables summarizing variables, their sources, and key relationships. (Submit in MS Word via turnitin.)

- A <u>preliminary results oral presentation</u> will report your progress on your project for class and instructor feedback. The presentation should include first round results from empirical analysis and a tentative evaluation of your primary hypothesis(es). Empirical results should **not** be final. Comments from the class based on the presentation should be incorporated into the final paper.

- The <u>final paper</u> should incorporate the previous three papers after comments have been used to revised the paper(s), present the final empirical results, and present policy recommendations based on the empirical analysis. (Submit in MS Word via turnitin on Blackboard.)

→ Oral presentations should structured to include a formal, 5-minute power point presentation and 3-minute Q&A, for a total presentation time of 8 minutes.

→ Handouts and/or power point presentations should be submitted directly to the instructor via email at <u>sstaley@fsu.edu</u> before *noon* <u>on the day of the scheduled presentation</u>.

→ Final papers are due at 9 am on Monday, **11 December** and <u>should incorporate comments from the final presentations</u>. (Submit in MS Word via turnitin on Blackboard.)

Paper Format, Referencing, and File Naming Protocol for Submitting Papers
Papers should be typed, double spaced, use 12-point font size, and have 1-inch margins. Papers should have a <u>title page</u>, and a header and footer that explicitly identifies the author, the subject of the paper, **class**, date and page number. <u>Points will be deducted for deviations from this format</u>. All references should be sourced using the author/date reference system (e.g., (Staley 2008, p. 12)) with complete sources in a separate reference section listed by last name of the author. Consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* if you have questions. Proper referencing can also be found on Wikepedia.

All insights, data, and information that is not your own should be referenced. Citations should follow the Chicago Manual of Style (standard for social science research) and use the author-date system. If you are unfamiliar with this citation style, use www.citethisforme.com, and choose Chicago style, and follow the directions.

Papers should be submitted via Blackboard's turnitin tool, formatted in MS Word format with the filename in the following format:

4618,lastname,firstname,assignment
(e.g, 4618,Smith,Joe,Litreview, or 4618,Jones,Amanda,PrelResults)

*Papers submitted without following this protocol will be penalized **5 points (half a letter grade)**.*

Final Exam/Paper
This course does not have a final exam. Final papers should be submitted by 9 am, Monday, <u>11 December 2017</u>, and should be submitted via turnitin assignments.

Academic Honesty
Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to " . . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm.)

American Disabilities Act Statement
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: 1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC); and
2) Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating that you need academic accommodations and what type. Please do this within the first week of class.

NOTE: Updates to the course material, changes in expectations, and modifications to assignments, required readings, and other elements of this course will be communicated via blackboard. Please consult this regularly.

Preliminary Class Schedule

Week 1: Aug 29/Aug 31

The Practice of Policy Analysis and Research

Week 2: Sept 5/7

Research Methods: A Review of Basic Concepts

- Research question(s)
- Research design
- Hypothesis testing
- Policy implications
- Structuring policy research papers

Week 3: Sept 12/14

Research Methods: *Correlation analysis, inference, data quality, and sample size*

Week 4: Sept 19/21

Research Methods: Regression Analysis

- Simple regression
- Multiple regression
- Common pitfalls

Research topics and hypothesis(es) due @ noon, Tuesday, <u>19 September</u>

Week 5: Sept 26/28

Methodology presentations

Literature review due @ noon Tuesday, 26 September

Week 6: Oct 3/5

Methodology presentations

Week 7: Oct 10/12

Methodology presentations

Week 8: Oct 17/19

Methodology presentations

Methodology papers due @ noon via turnitin on Thursday, 19 October

Week 9: Oct 24/26

Preliminary empirical results presentations

Week 10: Oct 31/Nov 2

Preliminary empirical results presentations

Week 11: Nov 7/9

Preliminary empirical results presentations

Week 12: Nov 14/16

Preliminary empirical results presentations

Week 13: 21/23
Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Nov 28/Dec 30

Preliminary empirical results presentations

Week 14: Dec 5/7

Final paper workshops/wrap up

Week 15: Dec 12/14—FINAL EXAM WEEK

Finals week! FINAL PAPERS are due at 9 am on MONDAY, 11 December