



# EE489: Seminar in Industrial Economics

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DR.WANWIPHANG MANACHOTPHONG

# Some Info.

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**Class Time:** Tuesdays, 2.00 - 5.00 PM

**Instructor:** Dr. Wanwiphang Manachotphong

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Office hours: by appointment (email me)

# Course Description

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## **Course Description:**

Seminar and research on specific topics in industrial economics and industrial organization under supervision and guidance of the lecturer.

## **Prerequisites:**

a) EE481 and EE482 or

b) EE481 and at least one 400-level subject by lecturer's consent

# Course Objectives:

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In this course, students will learn to conduct a systematic research on their topic of interest. Since this course focuses on industrial economic issues, your topic should be related to industrial economics and/or industrial policies. What the course will do is to stimulate an active-learning environment. Unlike most of the classes you have attended, there won't be that many lectures. My role in this class will be a facilitator and an advisor, rather than a lecturer.

This course is split into two big parts. In the first part, I hope to introduce you to important elements of good research. To do this, we will discuss how to come up with meaningful research questions. We will then, discuss different components of a standard research report (your seminar paper). This includes introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and findings. You will be assigned to read journal papers and lead discussions about these papers.

In the second part, students will take turn to present your research progress. Occasionally, we will turn the class into individual meetings. This is where you discuss specific questions regarding your research and methodology with me.

## **Textbooks:**

There is no specific textbook for this course. However, I will post some good readings on "how to write" on Moodle. There is also a list of suggested readings by topics at the end of this course outline.

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## **Other teaching materials:**

If there is any PowerPoint presentation, the file(s) will be uploaded on BE-Moodle at least 1 day prior to class.

## **Grading:**

Group assignments	30%
Class participation and comments	20%
Final paper (presentation)	10%
Final paper (report)	40%

# Your final research report (your seminar paper)

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The paper should be between 15-20 pages (5,000-7,000 words) long (double-space, excluding graphs, tables, figures, bibliography and appendices).

The paper could be (but not limited to) composed of 5 main parts:

1) introduction

2) literature review (related literature)

<You can add the section “industry background” between 2&3>

3) conceptual/theoretical framework and methodology

4) findings

5) conclusion

# Teaching Plan (tentative)

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- ❖ Please look at the course outline



Research topic  
Problem statement  
Objectives  
Hypotheses

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# Research Report Components

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Research topic/Research problem

Research question/Hypothesis

Literature review

Theoretical/conceptual framework

Methodology

Findings

Conclusion

# What is Research?

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*“Systematic investigation towards increasing the sum of knowledge”*

*(Chambers 20th Century Dictionary)*

*“An endeavour to discover new or collate old facts etc. by the scientific study of a subject or by a course of critical investigation.”*

*(The Concise Oxford Dictionary)*

*“Research is about **asking** and beginning to answer questions, **seeking knowledge** and **understanding** the world and its processes, and **testing** assumptions and belief.”*

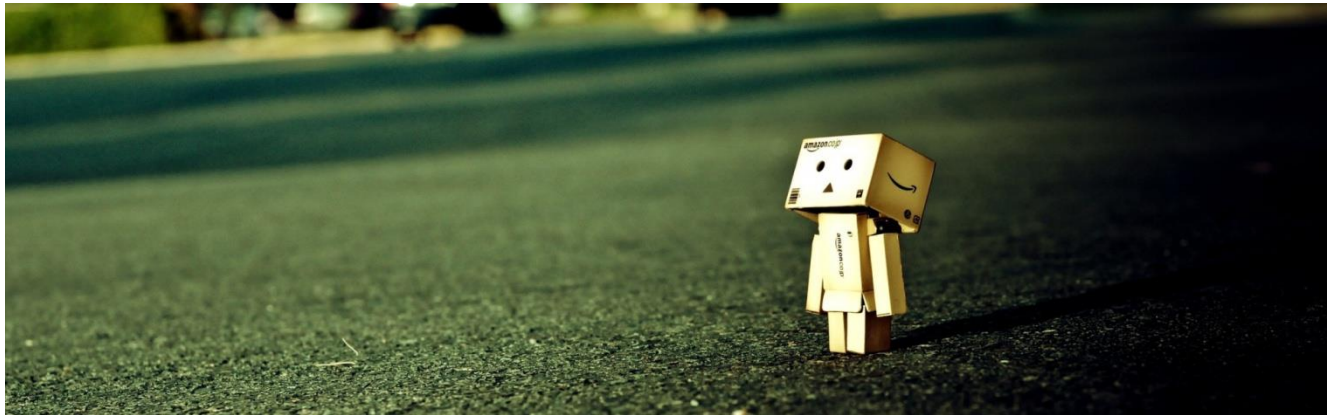
*(Wisker, 2008)*

# Starting a Research Project

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Overwhelming for everyone, even for experienced researchers.

- So, never think that you are alone!



# Students' Background

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- What's interests you the most?
- What do you like to do on your free time? any hobby?
- Any research topic in mind?
- Any business/industry where you have access to information and data?

# **Good suggestions from Turabian (2013)**

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# 1. Think big but work on small goals

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“You can’t plunge into a project blindly; you must plan it, then keep the whole process in mind as you take each step. So think big, but break the process down into small goals that you can meet one at a time.”

## 2. Engage with the readers

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“Your best research will begin with a question that you want to answer. But you must then imagine readers asking a question of their own: So what if you don’t answer it? What should I care?”

## 3. Write every day

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“From the outset, you should try to write every day, not just to take notes on your sources but to clarify what you think of them. You should also write down your own developing ideas to get them out of the cozy warmth of your head into the cold light of the day, where you can see if they still make sense. You probably won’t use much of this writing in your final draft, but it is essential preparation for it.”

## 4. Write well

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“No matter how carefully you do your research, readers will judge it by how well you report it, so you must know what they will look for in a clearly written report that earns their respect.”

## 5. Read (suggested by myself)

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“For most students whose English is their second language, getting yourself familiar with English writing is the most effective through reading a lot. So, go to a bookstore and pick a good novel written in English. Contemplate the grammar and the writing style as you read.”

To modify some points

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# Connecting with your reader

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You need to identify of yourself and your audience.

Compare the two following statements:

1. The regulation of the interaction of the contractile proteins actin and myosin in the thin filament of the sarcomere by means of calcium blockers is now a common means of controlling cardiac spasms.

# Connecting with your reader

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You need to identify of yourself and your audience.

Compare the two following statements:

2. Your most important muscle is your heart, but it cannot do its work when it is seized by muscle spasms. These spasms can now be controlled with drugs known as calcium blockers. Calcium blockers work in small units of muscle fibers called sarcomeres. Each sarcomere has two filaments, one thick and one thin. The thick filament contains two proteins, actin and myosin. When actin and myosin interact, your heart contracts. That interaction is controlled by calcium blockers.

# From interest to topics to questions

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1. Find an interest in a broad subject area.
2. Narrow the interest to a plausible topic.
3. Question that topic from several points of review.
4. Define a rationale for your project.

# From interest to topics, and to questions

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<b>Interest</b>	<b>Industrial Organization (Football)</b>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Impact of salary on the performance of professional football players</b>
<b>Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. What determines professional football players' salary?</b></li><li><b>2. Does salary has any impact on performance?</b></li><li><b>3. If so, how?</b></li></ol>
<b>Rationale For the topic</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. In order to understand whether financial incentives has any correlation with the performance of professional players.</b></li></ol>

# Research Process

## Type A

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Problem/experience/  
observation

Does this happen in a  
scientific hypothesis? It is  
expected that if this  
happens, then this will  
happen, ...

Investigation and  
experimentation to test the  
hypothesis

## Type B

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- ▶ Asking a research question-  
how and why things happen  
and work?
- ▶ Constructing knowledge and  
believing that knowledge is  
constructed rather than  
trying to prove it.
- ▶ Come up with theories
- ▶ Development of research  
design, methods and  
methodology to answer the  
question

# A typical beginner's mistake

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A beginner may be tempted to solve tangible problems in the world, e.g. inequality, prostitution, homelessness, etc.

- No research paper/thesis can solve homelessness
- BUT a good paper/thesis must give us knowledge to help solving it.
  - Nature of homelessness
  - Forms of homelessness
  - Cause of homelessness, etc.

# Research Topic

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## Criteria for selecting a topic:

- Does the topic really interest you?
- Is there a theory base for research?
- Is the study achievable in reasonable time?
- Is the problem a significant one? (i.e. So what?)

# Research Planning

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Research topic (issue)

Research problem (statement of the problem)

Research questions/Hypothesis

Literature review

Industry background (if appropriate)

Theoretical/conceptual framework

Data and methods

# Today's Homework

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- ❖ Start thinking about a research topic and research questions.
- ❖ Make sure that it is feasible within 1 semester:
  - Not too difficult to obtain the data
  - Not too complicated
  - Is not too broad