

Department of Economics  
Barnard College  
Fall 2020 (online)

Economics BC 3061: Senior Thesis

Professor Sharon G. Harrison

**Course prerequisites:** Ideally you will have completed all of your other major requirements, including your upper level electives, before starting your senior thesis. However, you may concurrently complete your electives.

**Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this course you will:**

1. Be able to reduce a broad research question, related to your own interests, to a relatively narrow and focused research question or proposition that you can feasibly address within the academic year.
2. Similarly, be able to articulate a well-defined research question that does not have an obvious answer, and that has not been sufficiently explored in previous work.
3. Investigate your question through several possible means, including: (i) reviewing prior, related research; (ii) collecting new data sets or creating new data sets by combining existing ones; (iii) analyzing data; (iv) examining and analyzing primary and secondary sources; and (v) summarizing, developing, and applying relevant economic theory.
4. Apply a broad range of skills and learning obtained in previous courses, either within or related to the economics discipline, to achieve the ends of the research project you choose.
5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate economic ideas effectively in written and oral form, including in formal presentations.
6. Develop and edit your writing so that it follows good practices for style, grammar, and organization for research papers – i.e. the "organization and style" criteria described in the thesis evaluation form posted on courseworks.

**Class meetings:** This class will meet via zoom Mondays from 2:10 to 4 pm. All group meetings will be recorded.

**Contact Information:** Please e-mail at [sh411@columbia.edu](mailto:sh411@columbia.edu).

**Courseworks:** Assignments, important announcements, and other information will be posted throughout the semester on the courseworks page for this class (go to <https://courseworks.columbia.edu/>).

**Office Hours:** TBA.

**Required reading:** Please buy a copy of: McCloskey, D. N. *Economical Writing*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. I'll post all other required reading on courseworks.

**Honor code:** I value Barnard's Honor Code for the integrity it fosters. The code says, in part:

“We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. ”

Please note that The Barnard Honor Code includes relevant language for the proper use of electronic class material: any recorded class content is the intellectual property of your professor and your fellow students, and should not be distributed or shared outside of class

**Students with Disabilities:** From the Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS): "If you are a Barnard student with a disability, we encourage you to register with us, even if you are not sure whether you'll need accommodations. Registration with CARDS is confidential and can serve as a type of insurance policy for you in the event of a flare-up or other disability-related need. . . Please note that accommodation plans are not intended to be retroactive, so we can only set up accommodations for your classes or exams after you have your intake meeting with us. . . It is important to register with CARDS early in the semester to use your accommodations for all your coursework." If you are registered with CARDS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. CARDS is located in 101 Altschul Hall.

**Wellness Statement:** It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself—your own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>; <http://barnard.edu/counseling>
- <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- [http://health.columbia.edu/files/healthservices/pdf/alice\\_Stressbusters\\_Support\\_Network.pdf](http://health.columbia.edu/files/healthservices/pdf/alice_Stressbusters_Support_Network.pdf)

**Affordable Access to Texts Statement:**All students deserve to be able to access course texts. The high costs of textbooks and other course materials prohibit access and perpetuate inequity, and Barnard librarians are partnering with students, faculty, and staff to increase access. By the first day of advance registration for each term, you should be able to view on CourseWorks information provided by your faculty about required texts (including ISBN or author, title, publisher and copyright date) and their prices. Once you have selected your classes, here are some cost-free methods for accessing course texts, recommended by the Barnard Library: find out if your faculty has placed the texts on reserve at Barnard Library or another Columbia library, and look for course texts using CLIO (library catalog), Borrow Direct (request books from partner libraries), Interlibrary Loan (request book chapters from any library), and NYPL. Students with financial need or insecurity can check items out from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library and Butler Library and can consult with the Dean of Studies and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for getting access to course texts. Talk with your librarian and visit the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability guide ([library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability](http://library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability)) for more details.

(Rough) Class Meeting Schedule: See Courseworks for more details

*WEEK 2* Sept. 14: Group Meeting

- What is a thesis?
  - Guidelines
- What are your ideas for topics?
  - Broad is OK for now!

- What questions do you have for me?

*WEEK 3:* Sept. 21: Individual Meetings

- Work on narrowing down your topic
- Find relevant sources and potential data, if applicable

*WEEK 4:* Sept 28: Group Meeting

- Meet with Social Sciences Librarian Jennie Correia
- What makes a good thesis?
  - Read examples of previous theses

*WEEK 5:* Oct 5: Individual Meetings

- Begin your annotated bibliography and find data sources
  - This research and writing will help you narrow down your topic

*WEEK 6:* Oct 12: Individual Meetings

- Goals:
  - Turn in annotated bibliography and data sources

*WEEK 7:* Oct 19: Group Meeting

- Goals:
  - Gain focus on your research question
  - Start writing your literature review
  - Begin to analyze your data

*WEEK 8:* Oct 26: Individual Meetings

- – Continue the above goals
- *WEEK 9:* Nov 2: **Election Day Holiday**
- *WEEK 10:* Nov 9: Group Meeting
  - Share your research question, literature review, and data analysis with your peers
  - Goal: Draft of thesis proposal and/or literature review/Chapter 1

- *WEEK 11:* Nov 16: Individual Meetings
- Begin work on formal presentations

*WEEK 12:* Nov 23 Individual Meetings

- Feedback on draft, next steps

*WEEK 13:* Nov 30: Individual Meetings

- Goal: Draft of formal presentation

*WEEK 14:* Dec 7: Group Meeting

- Formal presentations

*WEEK 15:* Dec 14: Group Meeting

- Formal presentations