

Paper Writing 2007 – Course Outline

In this course you will replicate/extend a paper published in a major finance or economics journal. For theoretical papers you should consider a slight extension or respecification of the analysis. Alternatively, you may want to replicate an empirical paper, possibly based on a different estimation procedure¹ or a different sample. The focus is twofold: do a careful analysis and write it up properly. Both of these tasks are *equally essential*. Don't under-estimate the time it takes to write well. Make use of the writing tips by Thomson, Karpoff and Cochrane mentioned below. *Don't spend time gathering data*; only use data that is readily available through existing databases or websites.

Please do not contact the authors of the paper you are replicating/extending.

The course will proceed as follows:

1. On the **2nd of February** 2007, there is a kick-off meeting at WU – UZA4, room A619.
2. You should spend the next three/four months to select a paper you are interested in. Take your time, read, think, read more, and think more. Try to do some preliminary steps in the intended directions to see whether your ideas are feasible. You can discuss things with the post-docs, VGSF faculty and visitors. There are many opportunities for such discussions (e.g. after the meetings of the finance reading group, the research seminar, or after courses).
3. On the **16th of May** 2007, there will be a meeting (mini-conference) where you will present your ideas for the first time. Start by briefly presenting the paper you want to extend/replicate. Then explain what you want to do. There will be 45 *minutes* for presentation *and* discussion. Make sure that your plan is based on some preliminary analysis. Most of the work should however be done during the summer months.
4. Make sure that you send the slides of your presentation to Ulrike Walser (Ulrike.Walser@vgsf.ac.at). Please do this a full week (Deadline: **9th of May**) before the meeting. Ulrike will forward your slides to the VGSF faculty and the post-docs.
5. Upon receipt of your presentation materials a supervisor we will be formally assigned to you. If possible, this will be a faculty member with whom you had some prior discussions.
6. You will be working on your paper during the summer.
7. On **18th of September** you have to hand in a first draft of your paper. A week thereafter (**25th and 26th of September**), you have to present your paper in a meeting (maxi-conference). The paper will be read by (i) your supervisor, and (ii) another faculty member. They will give you feedback and specify anything left to do before you can hand in the final version of your paper.
8. The final draft has to be handed in by **Oct 15, 2007**.

The following papers may be helpful:

W. Thomson, 1999, A young person's guide to writing economic theory, *Journal of Economic Literature*, **37**(1), 157-183.

Jonathan M. Karpoff: "[Some Writing Style Suggestions](#)"

John Cochrane: "[Writing Tips for Ph. D. Students](#)"

D.J.C. Smart: "[Tips for writing assignments / term papers](#) and "[Suggestions on Academic Study](#)" (see the checklist for critical reading of academic literature on that page)

¹ It is not ok if you simply use programming code that has been made available by the authors of the paper you are extending/replicating. We will check whether any code has been made available, either on the journal's website or on any websites of the authors. It is ok to use available code if you modify it in a substantial way.