

Akita International University
Global Business Program
Capstone Seminar [ECN401]

Syllabus

2020

Instructor

Clinton Watkins Ph.D

Professor, Global Business Program, Akita International University

Email: clinton-watkins@aiu.ac.jp Phone: 018-886-5945

Office: A4-7

Office Hours: Wednesday 13:00-14:30 or by appointment.

Web: http://dbsg.aiu.ac.jp/html/128_en.html

Scheduled Sessions: Monday and Wednesday, 17:00 – 18:15. Sessions will be held synchronously on-line via Zoom as detailed in schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Course Description: This seminar course is designed for you to write a research paper on an appropriate research topic of your choice. Potential research areas include finance, applied econometrics and other areas of empirical analysis in business.

Course Objectives: Objectives include developing research, writing, presentation, communication and planning skills. The overall objective is to produce a high quality research paper.

Credits: 3.0

Language: English

Course Format: Synchronous on-line sessions via Zoom during the scheduled lecture times. Use the Zoom link on AIMS to join the sessions. Participation is compulsory. Please observe the AIU rules for on-line classes. In particular, please keep your video on so that we can interact fully during each session.

Expected Academic Background: Ideally, students will have undertaken appropriate coursework in their area of research interest either at AIU or during study abroad. In particular, a good understanding of empirical methods is important. Good references for empirical methods include those you may have covered in your courses at AIU plus:

- Gujarati, D. N. (2011). *Econometrics by Example*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vinod, H. D. (2011). *Hands-on Intermediate Econometrics Using R*. World Scientific.
- Francis Diebold has open textbooks on his website for econometric data science, forecasting and time series econometrics [[Link](#)].

Assessment Rubric:

Rubrics	(1) Topic Selection	(2) Contribution to the Seminar Teamwork	(3) Communication with the Supervisor	(4) Commitment to Seminar Activities	(5) Competency in Research Implementation
Exemplary =4~5	Identify a creative and manageable topic that addresses potentially important aspects of the topic.	Play a leading role in creating a collaborative climate that fosters productive group outcome including constructive contribution to peers' work.	Regularly consult with and report to the supervisor on the research method, progress and outcomes.	Complete tasks or assignments (reading, presentation, etc.) on time with exceptional quality results.	Synthesize appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks <i>from across disciplines</i> , as well as synthesize evidence to reveal <i>insightful</i> findings.
Acceptable =2~3	Identify a doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Exhibit behaviors consistent with a collaborative climate that fosters productive group outcome including constructive contribution to peers' work.	Occasionally consult with and report to the supervisor on the research method, progress and outcomes.	Complete tasks or assignments (reading, presentation, etc.) in a reasonably timely fashion with acceptable quality results.	Develop appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks, and organize evidence to reveal <i>important</i> findings.
Unacceptable = 1	Identify a topic that is too far general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.	Exhibit a demeanor and interpersonal style that was not supportive, self-centered, or domineering, thus detracted from the team's ability to work collaboratively.	Rarely consult with and report to the supervisor on the research progress and outcomes.	Complete tasks or assignments (reading, presentation, etc.) either late or lacking in acceptable quality.	Misunderstand the methodology or theoretical framework, or list evidence in an unorganized and unconvincing manner.

Evaluation: Performance in the course will be evaluated as follows.

Topic Selection	10%
Teamwork (Presentations, Discussion & Participation)	10%
Communication with Supervisor	10%
Commitment to Seminar Activities	10%
Competency in Research Implementation (Final Research Paper)	60%

It is your responsibility to complete the intermediate deliverables and your final research paper on time. The grade of incomplete will only be used where appropriately severe and documented illness or other major issue disrupts a large part of a student's semester.

Excellent Capstone seminar papers may be suitable for publication in the AIU [Student Journal of international Liberal Arts](#). Where a seminar paper is of a very high standard, revision and development of the paper may lead to an academic journal publication joint with the Capstone supervisor.

Framework: We will use the "Pitching Research" framework developed by Professor Robert Faff of the University of Queensland to organise and develop the Capstone research project. Check Professor Faff's [Pitching Research website](#), in particular the [Pitch Examples](#). There are many useful resources for developing your research project on this site. See the paper describing the framework:

- Faff, R. W. (2019). Pitching Research. SSRN Electronic Journal. [\[SSRN\]](#)

Recommended Reading:

- Silvia, P. J. (2019). *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. [\[amazon.co.jp\]](#)

Software: I recommend you use [R](#) and [RStudio](#) or [RStudio Cloud](#) for the analysis of data, and ideally, to write your whole paper using [R Markdown](#). If you intend to do graduate study you should learn and use [LaTeX](#) for typesetting documents from now.

Use a reference manager such as [Mendeley](#) to manage the papers that you refer to.

Check your writing for spelling, grammar and plagiarism using [Grammarly](#) using the account provided for you by the university. I expect all submitted work to be of good standard and not be plagiarised. Check and edit your work before submission.

Capstone Video Competition: This is a voluntary opportunity for you to show your capstone project to your fellow students and improve your research communication skills by producing a short video about your capstone project. Please see the instructions document for the competition. Bonus points will be awarded for acceptable participation. Watch some of the videos of research talks given as part of the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition run by the University of Queensland for graduate students [[3MT Link](#)]. Watching these videos will also help you understand the research process and the type of projects that graduate students work on.

Deliverables (Due Date):

1. Present (about 10-15 minutes) a research article in your area of interest (23 & 28 September).
2. Research proposal and presentation (7 October).
3. Draft introduction (12 October).
4. Draft literature review (21 October).
5. Draft data description (2 November).
6. Work-in-progress presentation (16 November).
7. Draft results (25 November).
8. Draft discussion of results (2 December).
9. Draft conclusion (14 December).
10. Project presentation (16 December).
11. **Optional – Capstone Video Competition submission (15 December).**
12. Final research paper and completed research pitch (22 December).

In principle, the schedule applies to all student projects. However, some variation may be made to accommodate different types of research project.

AIU Academic Dishonesty Policy: In accord with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) will result in the failure of the course at a minimum. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination or assignment in lieu of the final examination will result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs for relevant action.

Please participate in this course to the fullest extent of your ability and with your highest level of personal and professional integrity.

Schedule: The course schedule is shown on the next page. The schedule may be revised. Revisions will be posted on AIMS.

Week	Monday	Wednesday
1	7 Sept. Course Introduction (Zoom)	9 Sept. Syllabus and Pitching Research Framework (Zoom)
2	14 Sept. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	16 Sept. Research discussion. (Zoom)
3	21 Sept. Individual consultation if required. (Zoom)	23 Sept. Research Article Presentations. (Zoom)
4	28 Sept. Research Article Presentations. (Zoom)	30 Sept. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
5	5 Oct. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	7 Oct. Research proposal presentations. (Zoom)
6	12 Oct. <i>Holiday</i>	14 Oct. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
7	19 Oct. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	21 Oct. Draft literature review due, individual consultation. (Zoom)
8	26 Oct. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	28 Oct. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
9	2 Nov. Draft data description due, individual consultation (Zoom)	4 Nov. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
10	9 Nov. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	11 Nov. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
11	16 Nov. Work-in-progress presentation. (Zoom)	18 Nov. Work-in-progress presentation. (Zoom)
12	23 Nov. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	25 Nov. Draft results due, individual consultation (Zoom)
13	30 Nov. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	2 Dec. Draft results discussion due, individual consultation. (Zoom)
14	7 Dec. Individual consultation. (Zoom)	9 Dec. Individual consultation. (Zoom)
15	14 Dec. Individual consultation. (Zoom) Draft conclusion due.	16 Dec. Final research project presentation. (Zoom)
16	21 Dec. Individual consultation if required. (Zoom)	22 Dec. Final research paper and completed research pitch due!