

Fall 2021-Spring 2022 Economics 300-301 Prospectus

- **Course ID and 6-digit Number:** ECON 300-301

- **Course Description and Level:** ECON 300-301 is a year-long senior honors thesis course requiring an economics GPA of 3.5 and approval of instructor to enroll. Each student will write an independent thesis and will interact with other students about their theses. Students are required to enroll for both the fall 2020 and the spring 2021 semesters and receive two course credits for successfully completing the course. Professor Behrman will serve as the primary advisor for each student's thesis. Each student also will have a secondary advisor whom s/he identifies (with help from Professor Behrman if needed), generally a member of the Economics (often from the Economics Faculty Undergraduate Research Advisory Committee) or some related Faculty (most frequently, Wharton, but also others throughout the University) with Professor Behrman's approval.

- **Synchronous Activities:** The students in the course will be divided into small groups, probably five. Each group will meet six times over the academic year and each student in a group will give a presentation at each group meeting and comment on other students' presentations at each group meeting. Each student must attend all of the six sessions of his/her group because interactions among the students are a critical part of the course. All meetings currently are scheduled to be in person and in the 3:30 – 6:30 ET Wednesday afternoon window.

- **Workload, Class Flow and Assignments:** For each of the six sessions for a students' group, each student will prepare and present a power point presentation of ~13 minutes. The first will be on a good senior thesis from a previous year, the second on a paper (usually a published article) in the area of in an area of the student's interest for his/her thesis, and the third-sixth on various stages of the student's own thesis. For the third-sixth sessions each student also will be assigned to be the initial commentator on another student's presentation. Almost all students will choose to undertake an empirical thesis. For these theses a critical step is to obtain the data necessary for the thesis. The time required to obtain and prepare data varies considerably depending on the nature of the data to be used so it is important that students pin down their data early on. Beyond obtaining and preparing data, the other major steps are first conceptualizing the theses and the economic modeling for the theses, undertaking statistical analysis of the data, interpreting the estimates, and writing-up the study.

- **Feedback on Thesis Work in Addition to Group Sessions:** There will be some scheduled one-on-one in-person or Zoom meetings with the instructor at critical stages of the thesis project. In addition Professor Behrman will be available for one-on-one in-person or Zoom meetings when any student wishes to meet and sends him an email with some suggested times to meet and an indication of what questions or issues the student wants to discuss. The students also are encouraged to share their progress with their secondary advisors at critical stages and request meetings with them as appears useful. Students also in past years have found it useful to meet outside of the group sessions with some of their peers to provide and obtain feedback, a practice that is encouraged.

- **Weightings in Final Grade:** The quality of the final thesis is the primary basis for the final grade, accounting for over 80% of the final grade. The student's interactions and contributions to other students in the group sessions account for the remainder of the final grade. For the fall semester grades of S are given, which are changed to a normal letter grade at the end of the spring semester with the same grade for both semesters.

- **Further Information:** The course outline follows. If you have questions please contact Jere Behrman jbehrman@econ.upenn.edu.

ECONOMICS 300-301 COURSE OUTLINE

Professor Jere R. Behrman

11 July 2021

e-mail: jbehrman@econ.upenn.edu Start subject line with “ECON 300” and then your surname on all e-mails to me.

Dropbox: Students in the course have been invited to a dropbox folder entitled “ECON 300 2021-22” that will be used for various course materials. For materials that you deposit in dropbox (see below) always put them in the correct folder as indicated below and name the files with your surname first and then the topic of the file (as indicated below). When you open a file in dropbox, PLEASE REMEMBER TO CLOSE IT so we can avoid “conflicted” copies. Feel free to copy the papers from dropbox, BUT BE SURE TO COPY AND NOT TO MOVE.

Office Hours In-Person or Zoom: If you want an appointment, please send me e-mail with several time options and an indication of why you want to meet. If we agree on a Zoom meeting, I will send you a Zoom invitation right before the agreed-upon scheduled time.

Class Meetings In-Person: We will meet in PCPSE 510 in five separate groups to facilitate discussion and interaction within class. You should attend all the meetings for your group, but not the meetings for the other two groups. Group 3 is a fast-track group that will move at a somewhat faster pace that may be advantageous for some students if they want, e.g., to use their paper as part of the basis for Ph.D. applications in December or for me writing a letter for such or other applications. In the table below the first column is for Groups 1A and 1B, the second column is for Groups 2A and 2B, and the third column is for Group 3 (Fast Track).

	Group 1 Wednesday		Group 2 Wednesday		Group 3 (Fast Track) Wednesday
	1A 3:30-4:55	1B 5:00-6:30	2A 3:30-4:55	2B 5:00-6:30	3:30-6:30
Oral Presentation Assignment 1 (Previous Thesis)	8 September 2021*		15 September 2021**		1 September 2021
Individual Appointments (Your Topic) [Signup in dropbox file ECON 300 Individual Appointments]	10-18 September 2021				
Follow-up Individual Appointments [Timing Determined in First Individual Appointments]	19 September – 2 October 2021				
Tentative Bibliography	11 October 2021		13 October 2021		22 September 2021
Oral Presentation Assignment 2 (Article Related to Your Topic)	29 September 2021		6 October 2020		22 September 2021
Written Thesis Proposal	8 November 2021		10 November 2021		6 October 2021
Oral Presentation Assignment 3 (Thesis Outline)	3 November 2021		10 November 2021		13 October 2021
Literature Review	20 December 2021		22 December 2021		3 November 2021
Oral Presentation Assignment 4 (Work in Progress)	19 January 2022		26 January 2022		8 December 2021
Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review and Outline	7 February 2022		9 February 2022		8 December 2021
Oral Presentation Assignment 5 (Work in Progress)	16 March 2022		23 March 2022		16 February 2022
Oral Presentation Assignment 6 (Final Oral Presentation)	20 April 2022		27 April 2022		13 April 2022
Final Written Submission of Thesis to Dropbox Folder and to your Secondary Advisor and of Academic Integrity Statement to Dropbox Folder	29 April 2022		2 May 2022		27 April 2022
*If you are in Group 1 and will not be attending this session due to Rosh Hashanah, please email Professor Behrman by 25 Aug and give your OPA 1 presentation on 1 September with Group 3.					
** If you are in Group 2 and will not be attending this session due to Yom Kippur, please email Professor Behrman by 25 Aug and give your OPA 1 presentation on 1 September with Group 3.					

Please choose your group in the dropbox folder file named “Group Assignments” by 20 August 2022. After that date I will put anyone not in a group into one for which there is a vacancy. Group assignments are first come, first choice. I have put people into group 3 based on our earlier email correspondence.

General Information: This course is a seminar in which advanced undergraduate economics students learn how to do research by reading and discussing recent research in economics and by applying research methods in writing a senior honors essay. This is a single course that meets for two semesters and counts as two course units but you must actively register for both semesters (not just for the Fall). A grade of “S” (satisfactory) is initially given for the Fall semester, but this will be changed to the same grade for both semesters at the end of the Spring semester (however please note that when I upload grades at the end of the spring semester, the Spring semester grade will be available to you immediately but the Fall semester grade of S will be changed by the system only after about a day, so do not panic if you check your Spring semester grade but still find S for the Fall semester). ECON 300 counts as only one course toward the major, and may count toward one of the four 200-level course requirements. Consequently, honors majors have 11 economics course units. Enrollment in ECON 300 is only possible with the permission of the instructor. As a guideline for admission, students should have taken ECON 101, 102, 103, 104 (ECON 104 may be taken concurrently in the Fall), and two 200-level economics courses with an Economics GPA of at least 3.5 (the Economics GPA is based solely on economics courses). Enrollment in the Honors Seminar is during the Fall semester only. Credit is awarded only upon completion of both semesters of ECON 300. Students who do not enroll in and complete the second semester of the Honors Seminar do not receive credit for the first semester. Grades are based on the quality of the honors paper, on oral presentations and on classroom participation.

A senior honors essay is a major research paper, with the text approximately 20-30 single-spaced pages with tables and figures and with citations to the literature in any standard reference style, which makes some original contribution either to economic theory or to the accumulation of empirical knowledge. The paper may, for example, propose and implement an empirical test for an existing economic hypothesis or it may offer a new explanation for some economic phenomenon. The paper topic is chosen by you with guidance from me (and possibly other faculty members) in choosing one that is manageable. You will have a professor generally in the economics department to serve as a secondary adviser in addition to me, most likely one of the members of the Undergraduate Research Advisory Committee (the membership of which for 2021-2 is: Jere Behrman (chair), Karun Adusumilli, Francesco Agostinelli, Juan Pablo Atal, Luca Bossi, Camilo Castillo, Alessandro DAVIS, Anne Duchene, Kevin He, Joachim Hubmer, Margaux Luflade, Andrew Postlewaite, Gizem Saka, but possibly some other faculty member in economics or, in some cases, outside of economics who seems a good match for your interests, perhaps in part because of your previous experience with particular faculty members. If you have a preference for a secondary adviser who seems like a good match for your interests, you may reach out to such a faculty member about serving as your secondary adviser, but please keep me in the loop so I know what is happening and can be supportive. You should have a secondary adviser by mid-November (mid-October for Group 3), either from your reaching out or from me doing so. At a minimum, you should provide your secondary adviser with a copy of your thesis proposal (item 5 in the list below for the fall activities), your Oral Presentation 4 and 5 slides, and your final thesis at the same time that you upload these assignments to the course dropbox (see assignments below) You should work out with your secondary adviser in-person or zoom meetings if you have substantive questions to raise (they are busy people so please be prepared before you meet with them and make clear when you try to arrange meetings what you want to discuss). It may be mutually convenient for you to check about meeting with them when you send them the four items mentioned above.

To receive honors in the economics major, you need grades of B- or better in ECON 300. You also need a GPA of 3.5 or higher in your economics courses.

Requirements: You will be expected to complete assignments on time (see below) and to participate in class discussions. You will be expected to meet deadlines in submitting thesis outlines and drafts, to make oral comments on presentations of peers in the class (particularly as a Designated Peer Commentator), to make oral presentations to other members of the seminar about your work in progress and to give a final presentation of your completed paper. You will also be asked to serve as a Designated Peer Commentator on presentations of two other classmates.

Grading: Your grade is determined by the quality of your honors essay, the quality of your presentations and your participation in the class. The essay is graded by me in consultation with your secondary advisor. Approximately 80% of your grade will be based on the essay and 20% on class presentations and participation in class including your role as a Designated Peer Commentator on two classmates’ presentations (see below).

Types of Essays: In principle, there are two options. But almost all, perhaps all, students will select the first option because, given their backgrounds, the second option is likely to be too challenging.

1. *An empirical essay:* For this type of essay, you develop an empirical question, either one that you take from the literature or one that you develop, and you use data to provide evidence about it. To answer your question of interest, you use economic models that help identify the important variables and how they interact. Data are analyzed using rigorous statistical methods, which means that you may have to learn on your own or through other mechanisms, if you do not know already, how to use some standard software for statistical analysis (e.g., Stata, EVIEWS, R)¹. The data that you analyze can come from published sources or you can gather them yourself. Published data may be available on-line or you may have to enter them yourself. Locating interesting data that can be used to investigate your question is a major component of your project, and you should not delay in attempting to find such data. For some possible data (e.g, if you collect primary data), Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals may be necessary (but not generally for de-identified public-use data that you download from the web).

2. *A theoretical essay:* This type of essay develops an economic model to better understand some economic phenomenon. A theoretical essay should (1) motivate the need for the model and (2) discuss how your model differs from and improves on others in the literature as well as discuss its limitations. Naturally, any model you propose will be more convincing if you can also present some empirical support for it. You may use previously published tables or figures to support your model as long as they are cited correctly.

Steps in Writing the Essay:

1. *Search for a Topic:* Find a topic that is of interest to you, well-suited to your skills, and tractable within the time constraints of ECON 300 and your other commitments. You probably have many defuse interests, but it is important that you focus for this course on a well-defined and tractable topic. The titles of past papers (grouped by broad topic areas) in an excel file in the dropbox entitled “ECON 300 Thesis Titles” might be useful to understand the range of past topics and possibilities for your study. Also of use may be the excel file entitled “ECON 300 Examples of Good Papers” which lists the titles of the papers available in the folder “Papers from Previous Years” through which you may want to look. Some past students have written very good thesis by building on or extending work in previous publications, in some cases with the advantage of starting with the online data available for such studies.

2. *Review Literature:* Do extensive reading in your area of interest and take notes on your readings. A section of your final thesis will be devoted to a discussion of the existing literature in your area and how your research contributes to it. A good place to start is with an intermediate-level economics textbook and with economics journals. Also, look through reading lists and class notes from your previous courses. Try to make your topic as focused as possible and plan your research strategy.

3. *Locate Data.* If you are doing an empirical study, find out what data sources are available to you. Many interesting data sources are online, including data related to particular articles that may be of interest to you. You may have to make formal application to use some data. You also may need to revise your topic because of data availability. Collecting your own data is an option, although you will need to carefully design the method by which you collect the data and may need Human Subjects and IRB approvals. For empirical work, you will also need to choose and to learn how to use the software for your data analysis. Empirical research should be carried out in a way that someone else could take the same data and replicate your results, so it is important to document how variables are created, etc. (this is usually done in a data appendix to the paper). Examine your data carefully (graphs are usually very helpful for this) to be sure that there are not peculiar variable values that probably reflect some data errors and, if ignored, could confound your analysis. Document

¹ A previous student found useful the platform called “Udemy,” “introduction to regressions using R” at the following link: <https://www.udemy.com/course/introduction-to-regression-using-r/>. She also noted that the same platform also has a course for “introduction to R programming” that she personally didn’t use but had heard is helpful as well for a more broad understanding of the language: https://www.udemy.com/course/introduction-to-r-programming/?utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=udemyads&utm_campaign=R_v.PROF_la.EN_cc.US_ti.7432&utm_content=dea14584&utm_term=.ag_79286085246.ad_420694847717.kw.de_m.dm.pl.ti_dsa-774930038089.li_9012044.pd.&matchtype=b&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI8K-Q1ebI6AIVFmKGCh3QsghXEAAYASAAEgI-JvD_BwE

decisions you make in analyzing your data (for example, how many observations are deleted because of missing values or do you impute missing values?). You may be able to obtain help in locating data from Lauris Olson: olson@upenn.edu <https://www.library.upenn.edu/people/staff/lauris-olson> in the library. Also here are links to the data guides on the Penn Libraries pages: https://guides.library.upenn.edu/sb.php?subject_id=92962.

4. *Develop Outline:* When you have a good idea of the main points you plan to make in the paper, write an outline of how they will be organized and try a rough draft of an abstract and the introduction. As you learn more about your topic, refine your outline, abstract and introduction.

5. *Write Paper Components:* A good way to approach the writing of a large research paper is to view it as a collection of smaller 3-5 page essays (introduction, literature review, economic model, data sources and basic statistics, estimates, conclusion) linked together. Work towards completing each of these smaller essays one at a time and then tie them all together into one paper. Keep in mind that your first draft merely gets your ideas on paper and will be revised, probably a number of times. When you have finished presenting your empirical findings and/or economic models, draw thoughtful and honest conclusions from your work. The model you develop, the data that you use, and your estimation methods all will have limitations and you can suggest useful extensions to your research. Your empirical results may have turned out differently from your expectations or may seem counterintuitive. Whenever possible, turn adversity into an advantage by learning the most you can from your findings. Discuss empirical results that are puzzling or contradict your economic model as well as those that support it. Important advances in economics have come about in trying to explain results that may at first seem puzzling.

Assignments Related to Writing the Essay (Dates Given for Individual Groups in Table Above)

Fall Semester:

1. Oral Presentation Assignment 1: Oral presentation of a previous senior honors thesis. **Note that this assignment is for the first time your group meets.** The class dropbox folder contains, inter alia, a folder entitled “Papers from Previous Years (included individually by title and listed in word file entitled “ECON 300 Examples of Good Papers”). Pick a paper that you would like to present that still is available for your group (see last three columns in file entitled “ECON 300 Examples of Good Papers”) and put your name in the column for your group (if you are attending the first session with Group 3 because of observing Rosh Hasashana on 8 September or Yom Kippur on 15 September, you should sign up with Group 3). (There are hard copies in storage of a number of other papers from past years available that you can see if you wish; please send me an e-mail if you are interested. The titles of these papers are grouped by topic areas in a word file also in the dropbox entitled “ECON 300 Thesis Titles” that you might find useful to browse to have an idea of the range of past topics.) Make a 13-minute maximum oral presentation of a previous senior honors thesis in which you answer the following questions:

- a. What is the major question or issue addressed in the thesis?
- b. What economic theory or principles were used to address the issue?
- c. What data were used? What was the source of the data?
- d. What was the empirical approach or estimation method employed? Examples might be comparing means, analysis of variance, regression analysis.
- e. What were the major findings?

The oral presentation should have one slide for each of the above five questions. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 1” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 1”.

2. Choose a topic: Students in each group should sign-up by 10 September 2022 in excel spreadsheet in dropbox entitled “ECON 300 Individual Appointments” and put file with paragraph with idea and how you would approach it

by 7:00 am the day we meet in dropbox folder “Submissions/Initial Idea/ Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in); name your file with your surname first and then “Initial Idea”.

3. Tentative bibliography: Put file with tentative bibliography by 9:00 am on day that it is due in dropbox folder “Submissions/Tentative Bibliography; name your file with your surname first and then “Tentative Bibliography”.

4. Oral Presentation Assignment 2: Oral presentation of a paper in the literature on your topic. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 2” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 2”. Choose one paper you have read, preferably published in an economics journal, related to your topic and summarize it in a 13-minute maximum oral presentation by answering the following questions.

- a. What is the major question or issue addressed in the paper?
- b. What economic theory or principles were used to address the issue?
- c. What data were used? What was the source of the data?
- d. What was the empirical approach or estimation method employed? Examples might be comparing means, analysis of variance, regression analysis.
- e. What were the major findings?
- f. How is this paper related to the topic of your senior thesis.

5. Written thesis proposal (preliminary title, objective (question, hypothesis), model, and research plan, including data sources and contemplated analysis) – maximum of four pages (put file with tentative bibliography by 5:00 pm on date in schedule in dropbox folder “Submissions/Thesis Proposal/ Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3; name your file with your surname first and then “Thesis Proposal”). Provide copy to your secondary adviser.

6. Oral Presentation Assignment 3: Oral thesis proposal presentation. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 3” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 3”. Give a 13-minute maximum oral presentation of your proposed thesis including the following:

- a. What is the major question or issue you plan on addressing?
- b. What is the motivation for the question?
- c. What economic theory or principles will you use to address the issue?
- d. What data source(s) are you planning to use?
- e. If possible, present some preliminary descriptive statistics (means, correlations, graphs) either from your data or from the literature that illustrates the issue.
- f. Describe briefly the type of analysis you plan on doing.

Your Designated Peer Commentator 1 will give ~3 minute discussion.

7. Preliminary literature review – *maximum* of 10 pages that are tied in tightly with the questions/hypotheses that motivate your thesis and clarify what is the value added of your thesis. Put file with tentative bibliography in dropbox folder “Submissions/Literature Review/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 by 6:00 pm on date in schedule; name your file with your surname first and then “Literature Review”.

Spring Semester for Groups 1 and 2, some Fall and some Spring for Group 3:

1. Oral Presentation Assignment 4: Oral presentation on thesis work in progress. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 4” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 4”]. Give a 13-minute maximum oral presentation on your thesis work in progress: how have you advanced, what are preliminary results (including basic statistics – means, standard deviations, minimums, maximums – of your key empirical variables), what puzzles or problems have you encountered, what is next. Your Designated Peer Commentator 1 will give ~3 minute discussion. Provide copy to your secondary adviser.

2. Draft of Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review and Outline: Put file with draft of your title, abstract (200-400 words), introduction, literature review (probably updated as your work has progressed) and outline by 6:00 pm on date in schedule in dropbox folder “Submissions/Introduction Outline/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in); name your file with your surname first and then “Title Abstract Introduction Literature Review Outline”.

3. Oral Presentation Assignment 5: Oral presentation on thesis work in progress. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 5” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 5”]. Give a 13-minute maximum oral presentation on your thesis work in progress: how have you advanced, what are preliminary results, what puzzles or problems have you encountered, what is next. Your Designated Peer Commentator 2 will give ~3 minute discussion. Provide copy to your secondary adviser.

4. Oral Presentation Assignment 6: Final oral presentation. Put slides in the dropbox folder “Presentation Slides/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in)/Oral Presentation Assignment 6” at least 18 hours in advance; name your file with your surname first and then “OPA 6”. Give a 13-minute maximum oral presentation on your thesis covering your motivation (question, hypothesis), literature review, model, data, results and conclusion. Your Designated Peer Commentator 2 will give ~3 minute discussion.

5. Final thesis: Put file with final thesis by 6:00 pm on the date indicated in the table above in dropbox folder “Submissions/Final Thesis/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in); name your file with your surname first and then “Final Thesis”; also put file with scanned or photographed signed copy of academic integrity statement and confirmation of agreement to make your paper available to future students on cover page by 6:00 pm on the due date in dropbox folder “Submissions/Academic Integrity/Group 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B or 3 (whichever you are in); name your file with your surname first and then “Academic Integrity”. Provide copy of your final thesis to your secondary adviser.

Notes:

- 1) I will assign each student to be a Designated Peer Commentator 1 on another student’s presentations for Oral Presentation Assignments 3-4 and a Designated Peer Commentator 2 on yet another student’s presentations for Oral Presentation Assignments 5-6. This will enable each student to benefit from observations of peers and assure that each student is knowledgeable about and engaged in what peer students are doing. Designated Peer Commentators will be able to find the presentations on which they are commenting in the relevant dropbox folder. The assigned Designated Peer Commentator will initiate the discussion after each presentation.
- 2) Group class meetings are not scheduled for every Wednesday. Individual meetings will be scheduled from time to time on days on which there are not class meetings.
- 3) You will be asked to confirm in writing on the cover sheet of your final paper, as noted above, that your paper can be used for future classes to illustrate what past students in the course have done (including for Oral Presentation Assignment 1 in future classes).
- 4) The deadlines are deadlines, not fuzzy “more-or-less” targets. You are welcome to submit before the deadlines. Late submissions may receive no feedback or, if they are graded, be penalized 3% per 24 hours or portion thereof they are late. Please be respectful of your classmates, particularly your Designated Peer Commentators, by honoring the deadlines.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is a very important part of student life, and the Department of Economics takes it seriously. The department reserves the right to undertake procedures that would catch breaches of academic integrity, should any arise. Students who are suspected of committing infractions will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If a student is found in violation of academic integrity, it is at the professor's discretion to give the student a failing grade for the assignment and the course. You will be asked to confirm in writing that you have followed the strictures of academic integrity in preparing your own paper and in citing appropriately all sources that you have used on the cover page of your final submission.

PREDOC.org: This is a useful website for those of you thinking about continuing in economics and/or looking for a predoc research position for next year.

Grants to Support Undergraduate Research: Following is information about these grants for the 2020-21 academic year (which I presume will be updated in the 2021-22 academic year on the same websites or you can contact directly Ann Vernon-Grey):

Ann Vernon-Grey, PhD
Associate Director for Undergraduate Research
Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships
The University of Pennsylvania
The ARCH, 3601 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6224
curf@upenn.edu
phone - (215) 746-6488
fax - (215) 573-4869
<http://www.upenn.edu/curf/>
anneliza@upenn.edu

The University of Pennsylvania considers research experience integral to an undergraduate student's education. Penn's alumni community has created a number of grants to support the scholarly work of undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences. Research in any field is eligible for support. For more information, examples of previously funded projects and to apply for a **College Alumni Society Grant** please visit: <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/college-alumni-society-undergraduate-research-grant>. Applications and all supporting materials are due electronically to CURF by **date indicated on website**.

The **Vagelos Undergraduate Research Grant** is open to all undergraduates at Penn and provides funds to pursue an independent scholarly project in any field. Funds can be used for costs of materials and supplies, travel costs, or other project costs. **Students in the College should apply for the College Alumni Society Undergraduate Research Grant.** For more information, examples of previously funded projects and to apply, please visit (<https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/vagelos-undergraduate-research-grant>). Applications and all supporting materials are due electronically to CURF by **date indicated on website**.

Description

The **Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Race and Immigration (CSERI)** will award undergraduate research fellowships for projects completed during the 2020-2021 academic year. This CFA is a rolling submission - there is no deadline.

Students may receive grants for up to \$1,000 of research expenses. CSERI research support may be combined with funding from other programs.

Funding can be applied toward one of two goals:

- Research that will contribute to the writing of a senior thesis or the completion of an independent study course during the 2020-2021 academic year. Work may include research at libraries, archives, field or interview sites; data acquisition; transcription costs; etc.

- Research assistantships (RAs) on faculty-directed projects. Note that funding for assistantships will be directed to the account of the supervising professor.

If you are interested, please check the URL to make sure it makes sense for you to apply and let me know (since I will have to write a letter of recommendation) in adequate time before the deadline.

Paper/Thesis Prizes: There are several thesis/paper prizes that have been won by ECON 300 papers in past years. I give the most recent announcements that I could find (there may be updates during the 2021-22 academic year). I am willing to consider nominating some of this year's theses for these prizes, though for the nominations to be most effective I will need to limit them to a few possibilities among the students who are interested in each nomination. If you are interested in the possibility of your thesis being nominated for a specific prize, please let me know at least a week before the submission deadline since I will have to write a supporting letter. For the first two prizes below, polished theses must be ready by the time of the deadlines (that are over a month before the course deadline for theses for the second group of prizes). For the third prize below, theses must be sufficiently advanced by the end of March 2022 to form a basis for recommendation to the faculty selection committee, though polished final versions are not necessary at that time (though the more polished the higher the probabilities of success).

1) Phi Beta Kappa Prizes

Announcement for 2021 at <https://www.college.upenn.edu/node/967>:

“Phi Beta Kappa awards several prizes for outstanding scholarship.

- Students are not required to be members of Phi Beta Kappa to submit an entry.
- Entries may be submitted for consideration by faculty or by student authors.
- All submissions should be sent via email to [Danielle Venit](#) by 11:59 PM EDT on April 29 (the last day of classes in Spring '21).
- The competition will be conducted by the Executive Committee and Electoral Board of Phi Beta Kappa, with judging by ad hoc committees.

The Frederick W. Meier Jr. Thesis Prize \$1,000

Three Phi Beta Kappa Thesis Prizes \$1,000 each

- A written evaluation by the thesis advisor must be included with the nomination. This evaluation should be sent via email to [Danielle Venit](#) by 11:59 PM EDT on April 29 (the last day of classes in spring '21).
- Students or faculty may nominate a thesis, which must be accompanied by a letter of endorsement by a faculty advisor.

The Elmaleh Prize for an Undergraduate Essay in the Social Sciences \$150

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For further information, contact Dr. Janet Tighe, 120 Cohen Hall, 215.898.6341, jtighe@sas.upenn.edu.”

2) Penn’s Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF) Paper Prizes:

{**March 28 2021** Senior Thesis Prizes (1) Bodek Prize: <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/bodek-prize>

(2) Rose Award <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/rose-award>

(3) Yardley Prize <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/joseph-warner-yardley-prize>}

2A. **Graduating Senior Theses Rose Awards (announcement for 2020 at <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/content/rose-award>)**

Rose Award

Application Deadline

March 28, 2021

Only Spring 2021 graduates are eligible

The Rose Foundation generously funds the Rose Undergraduate Research Award recognizing outstanding undergraduate research projects completed by graduating seniors under the supervision of a Penn faculty member. The Rose Fund is administered by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, and awards are determined each April on a competitive basis. Seniors (fourth-year students) graduating in the Spring semester from any undergraduate school are eligible. Applicants must be in good standing in the University of Pennsylvania community. Ten student research projects will be recognized each year with individual awards of \$1000.

Student projects will be evaluated by a faculty committee designated by CURF on the basis of the project’s quality, originality, independence, and contribution to the field. Projects need not have been funded by undergraduate research grants in order to qualify for the Rose Award.

Research projects submitted for recognition must be supported by a letter from the Penn faculty member who supervised the research project. Projects may be in any discipline or may have an interdisciplinary scope. Applications from academic departments and individual faculty members are encouraged. Students may self-nominate, but applications will not be considered complete until all materials (including the Faculty Nomination Letter) are received. Students should submit the Project Abstract, the completed Project, and a digital copy of their Penn transcript through CURF’s [Common Research Award form](#). The Faculty Nomination Letter from the faculty member who supervised the project should be requested through the [Recommendation Request Form](#).

Application Procedure– Deadline: March 28

While various departmental deadlines may be significantly earlier or later than that for the Rose Award, this date is required to ensure submissions may be reviewed and decisions can be made prior to the end of the academic year. Exceptions will not be made.

To be considered for the Rose Award, students should follow this application procedure:

Prepare a Project Abstract in a word processing program, without any formatting. The Project Abstract should not exceed 750 words (roughly three double-spaced typewritten pages) and should contain the following information:

- Project Description intelligible to an educated non-specialist
- Description of Methodology
- Key Findings
- Conclusions and Implications
- List any grants received to support this project

Create a single .pdf containing:

1. the completed Project
2. electronic copy of your Penn transcript.

You must submit the project and your transcript together as a single file in .pdf format. No other format will be accepted. To create a copy of your Penn transcript, go to Penn InTouch and print your transcript to pdf. (If you don't have Adobe installed on your computer, download the free installer or use a Penn computer that has Adobe installed.) Print and save each document as a pdf, then use Adobe to create a single pdf file naming it your Pennkey as indicated above by navigating to Adobe's "File -> Create -> Combine Files into a Single PDF" feature.

Go to the [Common Research Award form](#) with your document prepared, fill out all appropriate fields, and upload your document using the document upload field.

Faculty Nomination Letter

The student's faculty research advisor must separately submit a supporting letter of recommendation. Please request a letter from your faculty advisor via the [Recommendation Request Form](#). In the letter, the faculty advisor should address four criteria:

- the significance of the project within the discipline(s)
- the project's originality or creativity
- the independence of the research project (particularly if the student's project is part of a larger faculty research effort)
- Please make clear the nature and extent of the student's contribution in formulating and carrying out the project

This letter should be sent via the recommendation form interface no later than **midnight on March 28**.

Deadlines and Timeframes

Completed applications and letters from advisors must be submitted by **midnight on March 28**. Late applications will not be considered. Proposals will be reviewed by a faculty committee designated by CURF. All applicants will be notified of selection results by May 8. Awards will be announced before Commencement and publicized in the appropriate campus media.

Research Offering Type

[Senior Thesis Award](#)

Undergraduate School

[College Engineering Nursing Wharton](#)

Class Year:

[Senior](#)

Research Offering Source

[CURF-Administered](#)

2B. Joseph Warner Yardley Prize

Application Deadline

March 28, 2021

In June of 1877, Joseph Warner Yardley graduated as Valedictorian and Spoon Man. He died in August 1877. In 1878, the members of the Class of 1877 established the Joseph Warner Yardley Prize in his memory. The Yardley Prize is awarded to the best thesis on political economy written by a member of the senior class in any undergraduate school at Penn. The Yardley Award is administered by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, and awards are determined each April on a competitive basis. Seniors graduating in the Spring semester from any undergraduate school are eligible. Applicants must be in good standing in the University of Pennsylvania community. There will be one awardee annually.

Student projects will be evaluated by a faculty committee designated by CURF on the basis of the project's quality, originality, independence, and contribution to the field. Projects need not have been funded by undergraduate research grants in order to qualify for the Yardley Award.

Research projects submitted for recognition must be supported by a letter from the Penn faculty member who supervised the research project. Projects may be in any discipline or may have an interdisciplinary scope. Applications from academic departments and individual faculty members are encouraged. Students may self-nominate, but applications will not be considered complete until all materials (including the Faculty Nomination Letter) are received. Students should submit the Project Abstract, the completed Project, and a digital copy of their Penn transcript through CURF's Common Research Award form. The Faculty Nomination Letter from the faculty member who supervised the project should be requested through the [Recommendation Request Form](#).

Application Procedure – Deadline: Sunday March 28, 2021

To be considered for the Yardley Award, students should follow this application procedure:

Prepare a Project Abstract in a word processing program, without any formatting. The Project Abstract should not exceed 750 words (roughly three double-spaced typewritten pages) and should contain the following information:

- Project Description intelligible to an educated non-specialist
- Description of Methodology
- Key Findings
- Conclusions and Implications
- List any grants received to support this project

Create a single .pdf containing:

1. the completed Project
2. electronic copy of your Penn transcript.

You must submit the project and your transcript together as a single file in .pdf format. No other format will be accepted. To create a copy of your Penn transcript, go to Penn InTouch and print your transcript to pdf. (If you don't have Adobe installed on your computer, download the free installer or use a Penn computer that has Adobe installed.) Print and save each document as a pdf, then use Adobe to create a single pdf file as indicated above by navigating to Adobe's "File -> Create -> Combine Files into a Single PDF" feature.

Go to the [Common Research Award form](#) with your document prepared, fill out all appropriate fields, and upload your document using the document upload field.)

Faculty Nomination Letter

The student's faculty research advisor must separately submit a supporting letter of recommendation. Please request a letter from your faculty advisor via the [Recommendation Request Form](#). In the letter, the faculty advisor should address four criteria:

- the significance of the project within the discipline(s)
- the project's originality or creativity
- the independence of the research project (particularly if the student's project is part of a larger faculty research effort)
- Please make clear the nature and extent of the student's contribution in formulating and carrying out the project

This letter should be sent via the recommendation form interface no later than **midnight on March 28**.

Deadlines and Timeframes

Completed applications and letters from advisors must be submitted by **March 28**. Late applications will not be considered. Proposals will be reviewed by a faculty committee designated by CURF. All applicants will be notified of selection results by May 8. Awards will be announced before Commencement and publicized in the appropriate campus media.

Research Offering Type

[Senior Thesis Award](#)

Undergraduate School

[College Engineering Wharton Nursing](#)

Class Year:

[Senior](#)

Research Offering Source

[CURF-Administered](#)

Contact Information

Dr. Ann Vernon-Grey

anneliza@upenn.edu

Phone: 215-746-6488

Fax: 215-573-4869

3) The Lawrence R. Klein Prize for Outstanding Research in Economics by an Undergraduate (Awarded by [Penn Institute for Economic Research](#)) is awarded to a senior for outstanding research in Economics, upon recommendation of the faculty. The winner receives a cash award of no less than \$250. Emphasis is placed on a research paper, usually written in the Honors Seminar or in an Independent Study. The deadline for submission of your paper to me is one week before the deadline for uploading the Rose prize application.

4) International Atlantic Economic Society Best Undergraduate Paper Competition (below is 2021 announcement at <http://www.iaes.org/best-undergraduate-paper-award/>):

“To encourage undergraduate interest in economic issues, [the] President and [the] Vice President of the International Atlantic Economic Society cordially invite students to compete in the IAES annual Best Undergraduate Paper Award (BUPA) competition.... The IAES strives to recognize and reward outstanding research conducted by undergraduate students worldwide. BUPA winners receive:

1. A \$500 check;
2. A handsome commemorative plaque recognizing their accomplishment; and

3. Complimentary publication of the paper in the *Atlantic Economic Journal*.
4. Special awards and publication opportunities are also available for the 3 finalists....

Guidelines for submission

To be considered for the Best Undergraduate Paper competition, all entries must follow the guidelines below:

1. The paper must conform to *AEJ* manuscript style instructions, be 10 – 20 pages in length including tables, and be submitted in MS Word format. Papers not following these guidelines will be rejected. *AEJ* instructions can be found [HERE](#).
2. Submit the paper to journals@iaes.org by 15 June ... with the subject line: “Best Undergraduate Paper Competition – Last Name of Student”. Please send the paper in a Microsoft Word document. **PDF and LaTeX files are NOT acceptable**. Title page must include: (a) full name of student; (b) affiliation; (c) e-mail address; and (d) phone number.
3. Include an e-mail from the Department Chair certifying: (a) that the paper was written while the author was an undergraduate; (b) if the student has already graduated from the undergraduate program, that the degree was conferred within the past academic year ; (c) that the paper has not been submitted for publication elsewhere; and (d) that the department will sponsor the student’s hotel and travel if the student is selected as a finalist.”

5) Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Best Undergraduate Paper Competition

- * To encourage undergraduate interest in all fields of economics, the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Economic Association cordially invites undergraduate students to enter the Pennsylvania Economic Association Undergraduate Paper Contest.... The **winning student author(s)** will receive:
 - A \$1000 award (first place), \$750 (second place) and \$500 (third place)
 - A commemorative **plaque** for the first place and certificates for the second and third places
 - Complimentary publication of the paper in the *Pennsylvania Economic Review* and Picture of the winning student(s) with the PEA President posted on the PEA website
- * To enter a paper into the contest, please send the following by [**date in early May**]:
 - A cover letter as an email attachment to the PEA webmaster that includes your name, class/year, and also full contact information of your **faculty sponsor**
 - Your complete paper (with a minimum of **7 pages** and a maximum of **25 pages**) including the abstract as an email attachment to the PEA webmaster, Dr. Orhan Kara (okara@wcupa.edu)
- * Eligibility
 - Authors must be an undergraduate student
 - No faculty-student co-authored submissions will be accepted.
- * All manuscripts must be submitted according to the APA guidelines.
- * As part of the selection process, papers will be reviewed by a panel consisting of **five economist judges** representing Pennsylvania educational and research institutions. Reviewers assigned to each paper will be external to the student's institution and will follow the same [scoring rubric](#).
- * All students will present their papers in a dedicated session(s) of the Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Economic Association. The winning paper will be announced at the **conference luncheon**....

Contest Notes:

- (1) Co-authors will split the monetary prize.
- (2) The PEA will reserve the right to cancel the contest for insufficient submissions.
- (3) Faculty should encourage their students' participation early in the spring semester.

If you are an undergraduate student who plans to submit and present a paper for consideration of this prize, you must also complete the electronic paper submission form and indicate using the appropriate button that you will participate in the paper contest. Also, ... you must also register for the conference by following the Registration button below.

6) Penn Program on Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) Awards

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/gsws/program/undergraduate/gsws-awards>

“Carroll Smith-Rosenberg Senior Thesis Award in Women's Studies

The Carroll Smith-Rosenberg Prize awards \$350 each year for a superior senior thesis paper in the field of Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies. The prize is named in honor of distinguished historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, a founder of the Women's Studies Program at Penn.

To apply, please submit your paper to gsws-apc@sas.upenn.edu with the subject header "Carroll Smith-Rosenberg Prize submission." Include a cover sheet with the title “Carroll Smith-Rosenberg Prize” and the title of your paper, your name, and your contact information (your major, your advisor, your email address).

Lynda S. Hart Award in Sexuality Studies

A prize of \$350 will be given each year for a senior thesis or seminar/course paper in the field of LGBTQ Studies. Awarded in memory of Lynda Hart, Professor of English at Penn and groundbreaking scholar in feminist performance studies and queer theory, the prize recognizes original, rigorous scholarship on gender and sexuality by a Penn undergraduate in any field.

To apply, please submit your paper to gsws-apc@sas.upenn.edu with the subject header "Lynda S. Hart Prize submission." Include a cover sheet with the title “Lynda S. Hart Prize” and the title of your paper, your name, and your contact information (your major, your advisor, your email address).”