

# Econ 191: Senior Essay Seminar

Information Session

# About Me

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# What is Econ 191?

- A set of two classes where students pursue a research topic in economics.
- Typical completed paper runs 5,000-7,500 words.
- Examples from students in previous cohorts [here](#).

# Classes in Econ 191

We will cover:

- Research methods
- Introduction to library resources
- Student presentations of work in progress
- Attendance is required
- The bulk of the research process will be carried out independently

# Common Sequence in the Research Process

- Topic selection
- Specifying hypotheses
- Consultation with specialist librarians to identify data and literature
- Literature review and data acquisition
- Devising a specific analysis plan in consultation with expert faculty
- Managing data and conducting the analysis
- Building from a detailed proposal and rough draft to a polished paper

# Should I take Econ 191?

Good reasons to apply:

- If you suspect you may enjoy research and would like to learn if you actually do.
- If you are curious about economic-related issues that you would like to know more about.
- If you are happy doing independent work.

Bad reasons to apply:

- I have good grades and this seems to be the thing that you do if you have good grades.
- The only thing I care about is that I want to graduate with the phrase "with highest distinction."

## Enrollment in Econ 191

- Small class to assure close contact with the faculty supervisor.
- Limited to students with GPA of 3.5 or better in upper division courses.
- Students who have completed intermediate microeconomics (100 sequence) and econometrics (120 sequence).

# Application

1. Application form
  - You have to write a paragraph describing your research interests.
2. Application task



## Application Task

- You are hired as an adviser to a county government in California. The county asks for your recommendation on ONE of the following two questions:
  1. Should they issue more/fewer licences for the production of cannabis?
  2. Should they issue more/fewer licences for retail sales of cannabis?

## Application Task

- The county and the question assigned to you depend on the first letter of your last name, as described by a table in the application task.
- For example, if your last name starts with letter "G", then you would be assigned Santa Clara County and Question 2.

## Application Task

The task:

- Write a report of **four pages or less**.
- There is no specific structure for the report.
- If you want to do some analysis and suggest actual recommendations, you are welcome to do that.
- But I don't expect you to provide specific answers.
- If you simply want to explain how you could provide a good answer to these questions, that is fine too.
- I am interested in learning how you think about the problem and how you would try to answer the questions.

## Application Task

- If you wanted to use data, the application task form has a list of sources you may want to take a look at.
- Independence is key, so I will not answer any specific questions on how to do the task or on how a certain approach looks like.

## After enrolling

- If you are admitted to the class, you will have to spend some time over spring break polishing a research proposal to have a good starting point in the spring.