

Advanced Paper Writing 2009/10 – Course Outline

The purpose of this course is to extend one or several papers (or selected aspects covered in there) published in major finance or economics journals. Your paper can be ‘advanced’ compared to the first year paper by broadening the scope of the analysis, covering more details, using more advanced techniques, investigating new or additional hypothesis, etc. For theoretical papers you should consider a significant extension or respecification of the analysis in the underlying paper(s). If you do an empirical paper you can include additional variables, change the formulations, use a different estimation procedure¹, use a different sample, etc. You may also want to combine theoretical and empirical work. The focus is twofold: do a thorough and careful analysis and write it up properly. Both of these tasks are *equally essential*. Have in mind that your paper is suitable to be sent to a conference or journal. Make use of the writing tips by Thomson, Stulz, Karpoff and Cochrane mentioned below. Allocate enough time for collecting data, writing programs or estimating models.

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

The course will proceed as follows:

1. After the kick-off meeting (**Nov 20, 2009**) you should spend the next three 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 VGSF faculty and visitors (guest professors or presenters at the research seminar). There are many opportunities for such discussions (e.g. after the meetings of the finance reading group, the research seminar, or after courses).
2. In **March/April 2010 (tba)**, there will be a meeting (mini-conference) where you will present your ideas.² Give a brief survey of the relevant literature. Focus your presentation such that the faculty can give substantive feedback to your proposal. You can also raise specific issues that you would like to discuss with the faculty. There will be about 30 minutes for presentation and discussion.
3. Based on the feedback obtained you can redefine the topic and the scope of your paper. This should lead to an elaborated written proposal (which should also serve as the basis for the paper). Around April there will be a meeting with your supervisors to evaluate this written proposal.
4. In **September 2010 (tba)** you have to hand in a first draft of your paper. A week thereafter (**tba**), you have to present your paper in a meeting (maxi-conference). You will have about 40 minutes for your presentation! The paper will be read by (i) your supervisor, and (ii) another faculty member. They will give you feedback and specify anything left to be done before you can hand in the final version of your paper
5. The final draft has to be handed in by **31st of October, 2010**.

The following writing tips may be helpful:

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

René Stulz: [Tips for authors](#)

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

John Cochrane: [“Writing Tips for PhD 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. 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.

² Please send the slides of your presentation to Ulrike Walsler (Ulrike.Walsler@vgsf.ac.at). Please do this a full week before the meeting. Ulrike will forward your slides to the VGSF faculty.