Objectives

When you finish this course you should have improved your ability to ask critical policy and other research questions, to identify and structure problems, and to design appropriate research approaches. You should have improved your ability to write clearly, precisely, and concisely. You should be able to read your own work and that of others with improved critical attention to data, methods, validity, and effective communication. You should also have gained a sense of the breadth of economics and a background in some basic economics literature, some history, and some appreciation of the role of institutions.

Required Texts

The Art of Scientific Investigation by Beveridge (out of print - reproduced in 602 Readings)
The Double Helix by James D. Watson
Ag. Econ. 602 Readings, Available at Copymat, Chauncey Hill Mall

Course Requirements

1. Reading the assignment and attendance in class is essential. See me ahead of time if you must be absent
2. All 602 students shall attend the Snyder Lecture and at least one Department Seminar during the Spring Term! You are also strongly encouraged to attend a concert or other Convocations performance during the term.

Grades

Your grade will depend on the papers, midterm, and class participation with the following weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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You will need to visit with me OFTEN as you draft your project proposal!
AG ECON 602
PREPARATION FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

The Project

The first assignment, a one-page problem statement, will be due February 6th. To prepare, you should pick an area of interest—if not a specific proposal. You should then go to a professor who has expertise in that area and ask him or her if they are willing to be your "evaluating professor." Presumably, you will already have some knowledge of, or interest in, the area before you talk with the professor. If you are uncertain, you may need to talk with several professors. IT IS NOT THE PROFESSOR'S JOB TO DEFINE YOUR PROBLEM. Your initial problem statement will be graded and returned to you with suggestions for improvement. You must put the name of your evaluating professor on the top right corner of the February 1st assignment.

When you get your February 6th assignment back with my comments, you need to visit with your evaluating professor, and probably me, by February 11th, and discuss how your problem statement can be improved. Your second assignment for the project—due February 20th—is a reformulation of your initial problem statement, plus a statement of the objective of your research. After I return this to you, it would be wise to have this reviewed by your evaluating professor, whose comments will ultimately affect your grade.

Your third assignment for the project—due on March 9th, a revised objective plus an hypothesis statement. Again, visits with me are likely to be helpful.

Your fourth assignment—due April 1st—will be a description of the procedure and data requirements (methodology) needed to test your hypothesis. You will also make a knowledge map. Again, you will hand in continuously revised problem statement, objective, and hypothesis as well.

Your fifth assignment—due April 20th—will be a three to five page compilation of 1) the problem, 2) the hypothesis (or hypotheses) you propose to test, and 3) procedures and methodology and your knowledge map. You now have a complete and concise project document. This will be reviewed by your evaluating professor, whose comments will help determine your grade on the project. I will need 2 copies of your final assignment. I will give one to your evaluating professor and I will keep one to review.

Remember, you will be doing readings and other writing assignments as well, so keep on schedule with your work on the project.