

**AGEC 602**  
**PREPARATION FOR POLICY ANALYSIS**  
**M,W,F 8:30AM, Room G-7**  
**Spring 2007**

**Instructor**

**Krannert 569**

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**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:

<b><u>Material</u></b>	<b><u>% of Grade</u></b>
Papers	45%
Project	30%
Midterm	20%
Class Participation	5%

You will need to visit with me OFTEN as you draft your project proposal!

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**The Project**

The first assignment, a one-page problem statement, will be due February 5th. 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 5th assignment.**

When you get your February 5th assignment back with my comments, you need to visit with your evaluating professor, and probably me, by February 9<sup>th</sup>, and discuss how your problem statement can be improved. Your second assignment for the project—due February 19<sup>th</sup>—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 5th, a revised objective plus an hypothesis statement. Again, visits with me are likely to be helpful.

Your fourth assignment—due March 30th -will be a description of the procedure and data requirements (methodology) needed to test your hypothesis. 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. 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.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<b><u>How to Think Like a Scientist/Economist</u></b>			
1/8	Project & Beveridge		A paper will be due <u>every</u> week
1/10	Beveridge	Beveridge, <u>Art of Scientific Investigation</u> , Part 1	
1/12	Knowledge Resources		
1/15	Holiday	Martin Luther King Day	
1/17	Beveridge		
1/19	Beveridge	Continued, introduce double Helix	
1/22	Double Helix	<u>The Double Helix</u> , Part 1	
1/24	Double Helix	<u>Double Helix</u> , Part 2	
1/26	Paradigms	Friedman	Choose evaluating professor
1/29	Paradigms	Robbins	
1/31	Paradigms	Stigler & Becker	
2/2	Paradigms	"The When, the How, and the Why of Mathematical Expression in the History of Economic Analysis"	Initial Problem Statement due

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<b><u>Asking Good Questions</u></b>			
2/5	Objectives/ Problem Recognition	Waugh, "Does the Consumer Benefit from Price Stability?"	Visit with evaluating professor improve problem statement formulate objective statement
2/7	Literature Reviews	"The Economics of Schooling"	
2/9	Problem Recognition	Hueckel, "Historical Approach to Growth"	
2/12	Problem Recognition		
2/14	Problem Recognition	Doering, "The Full Costs of Farm Exports"	Expanded problem/Objective Statement Due
<b><u>How to Design Experiments</u></b>			
2/16			
2/19	Hypotheses	Schmitz & Seckler, "Tomato Harvester"	
2/21	Hypotheses	Friedman, <u>The Great Contraction</u>	
2/23	Hypotheses	Pauly, "Moral Hazard"	
2/26	Hypotheses		
2/28	Validity	"The Wizard Who Oversimplified" and "Sunspots & Cycles"	
3/2	Validity and Causality	Validity Reading	
3/5	Causality	Granem, "Cause and Effect"	Revised Objective/Hypothesis Statement Due
3/7	Experimental Design	"Does The Surgeon General Need A Statistics Advisor?"	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
3/9	Experimental Design		
	SPRING BREAK		
3/19	Construct Validity	Bonnen, "On the Role of Data and Measurement . . . . ."	
3/21	Step Back & Think		
3/23	Aggregation Problems	"Selection of Benchmark Farms"	
3/26	Experimental Design	IN-CLASS EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN EXERCISES	
3/28	MID TERM EXAM		
	<u>How to Design a Survey</u>		
3/30	The Statistical Process/ How to Sample	Pennings, Irwin, & Good, "Surveying Farmers"	Data/Methodology Paper Due
4/2	Surveys as Data Sources	Christenson, "Mail Survey"	
4/4	Questionnaire Design		
	<u>Practicum</u>		

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
4/6		Doering, "Looking Back while Going Forward"	You are Revising
4/9		Hicks, "Money Law and Credit"	The Whole Project Proposal
4/11		Tolley, "Essentials of a good Ag. Policy" and Doering Ag. Policy Primer "Sowing Disaster" and "Saving the Family Farm"	
4/13		<u>Wealth of Nations</u> , Chapt. 2	
4/16		Trade/Domestic Policy Issue Handouts	
4/18		"The Economics of Fatal Mistakes"	
4/20		Introduction to Welfare Economics (Turvey)	Final Project Due
4/23		Welfare Economics Context (Bromley)	
4/25		Role of the Policy Economist	
4/27			

