

ACCT 6389: Accounting Independent Study Spring 2022

Instructor: David Folsom
Office: BUSN 254
Phone: 915-747-7759
Email: dmfolsom@utep.edu
Office Hours and Meeting: Mondays from 1:00 to 2:30

I. Objectives of Course

The objective of this course is to deliver a complete working paper. Ideally, the paper will be your **own** and **original** research idea and developed under the guidance of the instructor. At the end of the semester, the instructor will evaluate your paper to discuss potential future steps (e.g., solo authored work, coauthored work with faculty members, etc.) and submission outlets.

II. Details

During the first **four** weeks of the semester and in conjunction with your instructor, you will determine an original research question that can be answered using empirical methods. You should complete the majority of the data analysis under the direction of your instructor.

You are expected to produce publishable tables representing your findings. Please note, your final grade will not be dependent on finding statistically significant results that support your hypotheses, but that the empirical methods used to investigate your question are current, appropriate, and well-thought-out.

After getting your empirical results, you will write a paper describing your efforts. As the research question is original, you are expected to explain in detail the theory behind your predictions and why the research question is important (i.e., the motivation). Your written version should also give more detail on the sample selection and research design choices. You should also explain why you include (or do not include) certain control variables and the logic for the inclusion (or not) of fixed effects in chosen empirical models.

You will also make a workshop-style presentation for faculty members based on your paper. The quality of your paper and presentation should be similar to those provided by new PhD job market candidates. You will be doing similar presentations for your own job placement very soon.

IV. Materials to Submit

1. Your own code (SAS and/or Stata code) for the paper.
2. A complete working paper in good format.
3. A workshop-style presentation for faculty and other PhD students.

V. Important Dates

The following dates are suggested milestones leading up to the presentation. Depending on your progression, these dates (with exception of the presentation date and final paper due date) may be altered as approved by Dr. Folsom. Please remember that proper research takes time. Please do not delay work on your project.

Feb 11 – Finalize choice of original research question.

Feb 14-18 – Short presentation of proposed research question (time may change depending on faculty availability). The presentation is solely about the front end of the story, and the feasibility of the study.

Mar 14 – Finish compiling sample (mainly for the case that you need to collect data from sources other than WRDS).

Apr 14 – Finish empirical analyses.

May 5 – Presentation before faculty: 60 minutes. Date is tentative.

May 12 (midnight) – Final paper due.

VI. Grade

Course Requirement	Grading Weight
Presentation	50%
Final paper (in a working paper format)	50%

The grading of research papers is always difficult and sometimes subjective. A rough metric is developed below:

For an A, you should complete a full working paper with tables (descriptive, multivariate regressions or equivalents with thorough controls, etc.). You need to test multiple hypotheses or one strong hypothesis in multiple ways. The paper should also include cross-sectional or appropriate falsification tests. Basically, it should be something that can be presented in an external workshop or sent to a conference.

For a B, you will have a skeleton working paper with preliminary tables (descriptive and a basic multivariate test with limited controls for each major hypothesis). Alternatively, you might have a well-developed front-end that doesn't have supporting empirical results that are statistically significant. If the empirical tests are exhaustive and well-developed, then a "non-results paper" may be given an A.

For a C, the paper will be a draft with limited hypothesis development and tests. Note that a C is the lowest grade allowed for a graduate course.