OK, I NEED TO TRANSFER MY THOUGHTS FROM MY HEAD TO THIS SCREEN...

C'MON, WRITE!

WRITE!

WRITE!

THEY'RE TOUCHING!

TRANSMIT!

TRANSMIT!

thud! thud!

www.phdcomics.com

November 27, 2018
All-Thesis Meeting
Kiran Gajwani, Ec 985 Team
Outline for Today

- **Overview**: structure (20m)
- **Example**: structure, organization, clarity (15m)
- Combing the literature (5m)
- Organizing citations (5m)
- Using **MS Word** to the max (15m)
- General advice (10m)

*Please ask Qs at any time!*
Structure
Key Parts of an Econ Research Paper

- Introduction
- Background
- Conceptual Framework
- Data
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Appendices (optional)
Introduction

- What are you doing?
- Why should we care?
- How is it new?
- What do you find? (spoilers!)
- Is there a figure/graph that captures the heart of your paper?
Background

- Literature
  - Every thesis needs this!
  - *Synthesis* of previous work

- Setting/Details/History...
  - Depends on topic

Sometimes separate; sometimes in Intro
Example (ultra-compact!) from Grennen (2013). Bold added:

“Despite the ambiguity of the predictions from theoretical work on price discrimination and bargaining, the empirical literatures in these areas are still relatively small. ... Of the recent empirical studies involving price discrimination (Duggan and Scott Morton 2006; Hastings 2008; Villas-Boas 2009), bargaining (Dranove, Satterthwaite, and Sfekas 2008; Dafny 2010; Ho 2009; Crawford and Yurukoglu 2012), and vertical contracting relationships more generally (Ho, Ho, and Mortimer 2012), only Hastings (2008) and Dafny (2010) have had access to data on the actual buyer-supplier transfers. Hastings (2008) looks at the effects of price discrimination versus uniform pricing between gasoline stations and wholesalers, but does not consider bargaining. Dafny (2010) is interested in diagnosing the presence of market power among providers of employee health insurance, but not analyzing bargaining or price discrimination per se. This paper builds on previous empirical and theoretical research by quantifying several mechanisms previously illustrated in theory and demonstrating new interactions between price discrimination and bargaining in a context where both are important.”

Conceptual Framework

- Early in paper, provide theoretical/intuitive explanation of what’s going on, what you think impact could be
  - Lotsa math = a model
  - No math? No worries!
    - Use words.

Sometimes separate, sometimes in Intro
Example of verbal conceptual framework from Ottoni-Wilhelm et al. (2017). Bold added:

“...we show that under impure altruism the degree of crowd-out is sensitive to the charity’s output level. Intuitively, as the charity’s output increases, the marginal utility from further increasing output decreases, and so an impure altruist’s marginal motive for giving shifts away from being influenced by altruism (the benefit of increasing output) toward being influenced by warm-glow (the private benefit of making the gift). This shift in marginal motive toward warm-glow decreases how substitutable donations by self and others are, and in turn decreases crowd-out. Thus, for a given set of impurely altruistic preferences, the degree of crowd-out varies with the output level at which it is measured.”

Data & Methodology

- **Data**
  - Clear description, snapshot of data
  - Length hugely varies

- **Methodology/Empirical Strategy**
  - What econometric tools do you use?
  - What are the assumptions in believing your estimates?
  - What are methodological concerns?
Results

- Tables, Graphs
- Sign, magnitude, “economic significance” of coefficient estimates
- Synthesis of results
- Robustness checks
  - Anticipate readers’ concerns
  - Check sensitivity of key results
Discussion

- Big takeaways
- Mechanisms
- What does it all mean?
  - For your question?
  - For policy?
  - For future research?

Sometimes separate; sometimes in Conclusion
Conclusion

- Remotivate, remind
  - Concise!

- Discussion (if not separate)
Appendices

- Optional!
- Extra details a reader might want to see, but not worth crowding up main text
  - Surveys/Questionnaires
  - Nitty gritty data cleaning details, if necessary
  - Supplemental regression results
  - Math proofs
An Example
(and a trick!)
Misc. Thoughts
Miscellaneous Tips

- Combing literature (link)
- Organizing citations (link)
- JEL articles
- Using MS Word to the max
  - or try LaTeX or a LaTeX editor like Overleaf. Ask me for more deets.
- Check official “formatting guidelines” (link)
- File management habits
- GTD, Pomodoro Technique
Useful Links

- https://economics.harvard.edu/senior-thesis
  - *Writing Economics* and other awesomeness

- https://library.harvard.edu
  - For EconLit

- https://guides.library.harvard.edu/cite

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique

GOOD LUCK!!!

WHO'S AWESOME?
You're Awesome