The Thesis: Putting it All Together

February 6, 2019
The Ec 985 Team

Today

- Part 1: Logistics

- Part 2: Finishing Your Thesis

Part 1: Logistics

- **Formatting**
  - See "Formatting Guidelines" online

- **Submitting (and Celebrating!)**
  - One hard copy, one PDF
  - Free binder @ Thesis Relaxation Lunch, 2/27, 11am-1pm
  - Champagne Celebration! 4-6pm, 3/14.

- **Grading**
  - Two readers: 1 <u>might</u> be your advisor. Other assigned by Ec Dept.
  - You won't know your readers until early May when we distribute grades and comments. Please don't ask. ☺

- **The Unmentionable**
  - Sorry, we have to mention. Honors Exam, 4/10. Just to have on your radar!

- **AM/Ec**
  - Two readers: 1 is your advisor, 1 assigned by Ec Dept. You do *not* need to find your own 2nd reader.
  - Coordinate with your 985 instructor about how you'll work together March 14-29.

Part 2: Finishing Your Thesis

w/Professor Jeffrey Miron

Finishing Your Thesis

Outline

- How long should it be?
- What is the standard structure?
  - Do you need a model?
- What is important? Not Important?
- How much detail?
- Formatting
- Stata, miscellaneous

How Long Should Your Thesis Be?

- Long enough.
- The length of a standard journal article.
- It depends.
- 45-75 pages.
- But:
  - Less is frequently more.
  - Long enough to do the job, **but no longer!**

Standard Structure

- Introduction:
  - This sets the hook
- Review of Earlier Work (Critique)
- Model: Do you need one?
- Estimation and Data
- Results
- Conclusion

What Is Important?
What is Not Important?

- Important:
  - Convincing your readers that you have done something that is:
  - New
  - Interesting
  - Correct
- Not:
  - Getting Large t-statistics
  - Solving every problem related to your literature
- Rather, you want a contribution to knowledge; a step, not necessarily a huge leap

How Much Detail?

- Enough to convince the reader of your conclusions.
- The exact amount depends in part on the nature of your results.
- Case 1: really consistent results
  - Then modest amount in text, rest in appendices or footnotes.
- Case 2: messy, conflicting results:
  - Then much more in text.

How Much Detail, continued

- Similar considerations arise in describing your data.

- If it's a standard, familiar data set (GDP and M for a bunch of countries), then you don't need a ton of blather.

- If it's something brand new that you constructed, you have to explain really clearly exactly how you collected the data.

Formatting the Final Product

- See the Thesis portion of the Department's web site for formatting guidelines:

- https://economics.harvard.edu/senior-thesis

Stata, Miscellaneous

- See Kiran's document on the web site.

- RefWorks/EndNote

- Writing Economics handbook