

# ***Proposal Writing and Scholarly Publication***

## Course for Doctoral Students in Economics of Education and Business Economics

**Instructor: Prof. Dr. Uschi Backes-Gellner  
Teaching Assistant: Donata Bessey**

**Spring Term 2007  
Seminar: June 18-21, 2007**

### **Aims of the course**

We will discuss various topics related to writing a dissertation or working papers and publishing them in refereed journals. We focus particularly on how to find a topic, how to structure the argument (paper) and how to sell a paper (idea) as well as how to handle revisions and resubmissions.

The aim is pursued by three different course elements. Firstly, each student presents a piece of the required literature and thereby works out general guidelines based on their text. Secondly, students present and discuss their own work and receive feedback from the audience in general and from one fellow student in particular in form of a referee report to their work. During the discussion, we will put special emphasis on the quality of the text (style, argumentation, clarity). As a third element of the course, there will be inputs and presentations by leading researchers and experts on a small selection of crucial issues. Guest speakers are Prof. Dr. Ernst Fehr on "How to choose a topic and sell a paper", and Prof. Dr. Josef Zweimüller on "Writing and selling empirical papers - general lessons and particular challenges with 'non-Anglo-Saxon' data". We also plan a presentation on Do's and Don'ts when writing in English.

### **Target audience and preconditions for participation**

The seminar is particularly designed for doctoral students in the economics of education course programme, but is also valuable in general for doctoral students in economics or business economics. The seminar will take place en bloc in order to enable the external PhD students of the course programme in economics of education to attend.

Students are required to read the mandatory literature before the course starts. Full attendance is mandatory.

Course registration **until April 27** is mandatory. Individual assignments will be sent out by **May 16**.

For further details and questions please contact Donata Bessey ([donata.bessey@isu.unizh.ch](mailto:donata.bessey@isu.unizh.ch), 0041-44-6344260).

### **Credit Requirements**

In order to obtain a "Doktorandenseminarschein", all of the following requirements have to be met:

- Presentation of general guidelines on scholarly writing from an assigned piece of required reading (20-30 min)
- On the spot discussion of another piece of required reading (5-10min)
- Mind map and narrative table of content of dissertation project or working paper (2 pages)
- Presentation of dissertation project (working paper) based on mind map and narrative table of content (20-30 min)
- Referee report on one fellow students' working paper/dissertation chapter based on mind map and narrative table of content with respect to style, clarity of argument etc. (2 pages)

- Presentation of referee report (5 - 10 min)
- On the spot discussion on one fellow student's research project (5 min.)
- Revised version of working paper/dissertation chapter according to discussion (in exceptional cases and on consultation with instructor: revision of mind map/narrative table of content) (take home exam, 1 week)
- Written evaluation of revised version of fellow student's paper (1 page, within one week)

## Literature

Literature is posted on the course web page (password-protected, password will be distributed after final registration)

### 1. Learn from the Big Shots: How to Find a Topic

Davis, D.: Ph.D. Thesis Research: Where Do I Start?

Dixit, A. (1994): My System of Work (Not!)

Mankiw, N.G. (1994): My Rules of Thumb

Varian, H.R. (1994): How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time

### 2. Style Guide for Economists

Creedy, J.: From Manuscript to Publication: A Brief Guide for Economists

Cochrane, J.H. (2005): Writing Tips for Ph.D. students.

Thomson, W. (1999): The Young Person's Guide to Writing Economic Theory. JEL 37(1): pp. 157-183.

Always a good idea to start is The Economist's Style Guide:

The Economist Style Guide. Profile Books, ISBN-13: 978-1861979162.

### 3. Which Journal?

Journal Rankings

Mission Statements

Review Statistiken und Prozesse, Editors' Reports

### 4. Refereeing and How to Deal With Referee Reports

Stephen Chilton: The Good Reviewer

Hamermesh, D.S. (1992): The Young Economist's Guide to Professional Etiquette. JEP 6(1): pp. 169-179.

### 5. The Reviewing Process: Empirical Facts and the Personal View

Blank, R.M. (1991): The Effects of Double-Blind versus Single-Blind Reviewing: Experimental Evidence from the American Economic Review. AER 81(5): pp. 1041-1067.

Frey, B.S. (2003): Publishing as Prostitution? Choosing Between One's Own Ideas and Academic Success. Public Choice 116: pp. 205-233.

Gans, J.S., and G.B. Shepherd (1994): How Are the Mighty Fallen: Rejected Classic Articles by Leading Economists. JEP 8(1): pp. 165-179.

Hamermesh, D.S. (1994): Facts and Myths about Refereeing. JEP 8(1): pp. 153-163.

Harrison, D. (2002): Obligations and Obfuscations in the Review Process. Academy of Management Journal 26(6): pp. 1079-1084.

Van Dalen, H.P., and A. Klamer (2005): Is There Such a Thing Called Scientific Waste? Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper

A lot of hints (writing, refereeing, how to incorporate referees' advices) on the *Review of International Economic's* web page:

<http://www.roie.org/how.htm>

Another page with lots of advice:

<http://personal.lse.ac.uk/kudamats/tips4economists.htm>