Scientific Writing and Publishing

Or,

How to survive and prosper as a young academic in economics

This course addresses students considering a scientific career in economics. The course provides a general overview rather than coaching students in writing a specific paper. The entire process of scientific writing and publishing will be covered. Although the course is of interest to various scientific fields, applications will be drawn from economics.

The course addresses the following questions:

What is a “scientific publication”? Why publish? What makes a paper “publishable” in a good journal? How to assess the quality of scientific publications? How do referees and editors evaluate papers? How to write a scientific paper? What could be a promising strategy for submission? What are the right journals for my paper? How should I read, understand and deal with referee reports? How can I be a good referee? Which norms and rules must I observe?

Requirements and Grading:

a) 20% for active participation in classroom discussions
b) 30% for writing a referee report along with a cover letter to “the editor” on a paper I suggest (or some paper of your suggestion). Deadline: May 25, 2016 (24:00)
c) 50% for final paper. Students write a paper on a topic of their choice consisting of (i) title page including abstract of 100 words and JEL-codes, (ii) introduction of max. 2.5 pages, and (iii) references mentioned in the introduction (max. 1 page). Deadline: June 22, 2016 (24:00)

Times and Places

Part I: Wednesday, April 27, 09:15-16:00 (room tba) and Thursday, April 28, 09:15-12:00 (room tba)

Part II: Thursday, June 15, 09:15-16:00 (room tba) and Friday, June 16, 09:15-12:00 (room tba)
Outline

Day 1: The publishing process, refereeing

1. Introduction
   Why publish?
   The academic environment
   Some facts on publishing in economics
   The players in the publication process
2. Refereeing
   General remarks (Choi)
   Some examples (from JPubE, AER, RES)

Day 2: The entire publishing process in journals

1. The entire publishing process in a journal – Case study I
   How to respond to referee reports and editors’ requests
2. Case study II, Case study III

Assignment 1: Write a referee report and a cover letter

Day 3: Writing Papers

1. Discussion of your reports
2. Writing a good paper – Principles and examples
   Choosing a topic, Drafting, Revising, Writing an Introduction (Cochrane)
   Selected examples
3. Publication Strategies and Careers – what to do, where to go, whom to know

Day 4: Other topics (your suggestions are welcome)

1. Evaluation
   Publication- and citation-based evaluation of individuals, journals, and institutions
2. How to write and read a CV
3. PhD programs, the international Job market for PhDs in economics
4. Why is the publication process so slow?

Assignment 2: Write an introduction to a paper (choose a topic)
Readings


* Cochrane, J.E. (2005): Writing Tips for PhD Students. (link)

Coen-Pirani, D. (2013): Job Market Guide for Ph.D. Students in Economics at the University of Pittsburgh (link)


Neue Zürcher Zeitung: Vermessene Wissenschaft. (10.8.2011: 52)


The Economist: Unreliable Research: Trouble at the Lab (Oct. 19, 2013, [link](#)).


* Denotes required reading, # recommended reading.