ACCT 930
Seminar in Auditing Research I - Fall 2014

Professor Information

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Class Hours: Fridays 9:00a-11:45a in Summerfield 409
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Course Objectives

This course will expose you to specific streams of the empirical/archival auditing literature. You are expected to critically analyze the papers that we read and to suggest ways to improve and extend the extant literature. In analyzing the course readings, we will discuss the papers in their entirety, including the studies’ “front-ends,” research designs, analyses, and conclusions.

As academics, we spend a lot of time presenting our work and critiquing others’ work in both verbal form (discussant) or written form (formal reviews). To hone your presentation/discussant skills, you will be asked to discuss certain published papers assigned as class reading. To practice writing formal critiques, you will also be required to prepare a written critique of each paper, and you will also be asked to prepare a formal review of a working paper.

This course will also include hands on data manipulation and analysis using SAS and Stata. In addition to the research papers that we read, we may also read some of the SAS and/or Stata documentation along with some articles intended to improve your data analysis skills. The goal of this portion of the course is to help you learn how to use the most common tools and data to perform archival auditing research.

Please note that this syllabus may need to be adjusted as we move through the course.

Course Grades

Your grade for this course will be based on your participation in class, your paper summaries, your discussions, your hands-on data assignments, and your paper review as follows:

Preparation for and participation in class meetings 70%
Paper review 30%

Participation

The key to a meaningful and interesting seminar experience is class participation. As a result, you are expected to make a significant contribution to our discussion of each of the readings. Measurement of a “significant” contribution includes both the quantity and quality of comments that you make. This implies that you must read papers carefully prior to class. Also, you may benefit from reading other research on which the authors of the assigned papers rely heavily. This will improve your ability to make comparisons across studies and provide you with material for questions and comments that will enliven class discussion.
Article Summaries

I expect you to read each assigned article carefully. You will be required to turn in a written summary using either bullet-point or outline format. This outline can be single-spaced and should not exceed one page in length. Include the following items in your outline:

- author and title
- research question(s) and why it(they) is(are) interesting and important
- theory supporting the expected relation between the test variable(s) and the dependent variable(s)
- hypotheses (if applicable)
- data source(s), sample, research design, and testing method (identify the statistical technique [e.g., multiple regression, logistic regression, etc.], the dependent variable, the test variable[s], and control variables)
- the findings
- the contribution and implications
- constructive criticisms and limitations of the study
- related ideas for future research

Prior to each class, email your article summaries in PDF form to your classmates and me.

Discussions

You are required to read and be prepared to discuss each assigned paper. However, one student will be assigned as the discussion leader for each study. Discussion leaders need to prepare a professional presentation that briefly summarizes the paper, discusses the paper’s strengths, critiques the paper, and provides constructive suggestions for improving the paper. This presentation should take no longer than 15 minutes and should use appropriate visual aids (e.g., Keynote slides). Following the presentation, the discussion leader will be responsible for facilitating our discussion of the study for the remainder of its allotted time. The course schedule identifies the discussion leader for each assigned paper.

Hands-on Data Exercises

We will be using WRDS, SAS, and Stata for our hands-on data exercises throughout the term. Please bring a laptop to class so that you get the most from this part of the course, and confirm that you have both software programs installed and running on your computer before the class begins. I will post the various assignments and links to related readings on my website.

Paper Review

Towards the end of the term, I will give you a package that contains a cover letter from the editor (me), a working paper to critique, and examples of reviews performed by other academics. As with any formal review, I will ask you to provide feedback to me by a certain date and I will have a specific format for you to follow.
Tentative Course Schedule

Meeting #1 (8/25, 1:00PM, SUM 122): Course Overview/Academic Accounting

Note: No formal presentations or article summaries are required for this class meeting.


Williams, Paul F. 2014. The myth of rigorous accounting research. Accounting Horizons, Forthcoming Xin

Meeting #2 (9/5): Overview of Archival Auditing Research

Note: No formal presentations or article summaries are required for this class meeting.


Meeting #3 (9/10, 1:00PM, SUM 122): University of Illinois Audit Symposium papers


Meeting #4 (9/19): Methodological Issues in Audit Research


Meeting #5 (9/24, 9:00AM, SUM 320): Audit Quality #1


Meeting #6 (10/1, 1:00PM, SUM 320): Audit Quality #2

Meeting #7 (10/17): Auditor Reporting

Meeting #8 (10/24): Audit Fees

Meeting #9 (10/31): Auditor Turnover
Meeting #10 (11/7): Industry Expertise

Goodwin, J., and D. Wu. 2014. Is the effect of industry expertise on audit pricing an office-level or a partner-level phenomenon? *Review of Accounting Studies*, Forthcoming. **Xin**


Meeting #11 (11/14): Non-Audit Services and Auditor Independence


Meeting #12 (11/21): Auditor Litigation

Assigned Readings


Additional Reading


Meeting #13 (12/5): Audit Committees


Meeting #14 (12/12): International

