

Finance PhD Student Tutorial

University of Arkansas — Sam M. Walton College of Business

Term: Spring 2026

Time: Tuesday 12:30–1:30 p.m.

Location: RCED 228

Office Hours: By appointment

Instructor: Kyle Zimmerschied

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Description

This tutorial provides practical tools for developing as a finance PhD researcher. It focuses on helping students develop systems to generate and select ideas, design empirical strategies, build reproducible data workflows, produce tables and figures, write effectively, and present results. Students will practice giving and receiving constructive feedback and are expected to participate actively in discussion.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, students should be able to:

1. Generate and refine research ideas using a repeatable process
2. Evaluate and select projects based on feasibility, contribution, and identification
3. Execute an empirical research project using a reproducible workflow, including:
 - (a) Research design & identification
 - (b) Data construction & cleaning workflows
 - (c) Table and figure production
 - (d) Writing and presentation skills

Format and Expectations

Sessions will be discussion-based and interactive. Some sessions will be led primarily by the instructor, while others will incorporate student questions, ideas, work-in-progress, or short informal presentations. Peer feedback will be incorporated throughout the semester.

Tentative Schedule

The schedule below is tentative and may change based on progress. Resources are optional but strongly recommended to reinforce the material and improve discussion.

Class	Date	Topic	Resources
1	Jan 20	Overview of Finance PhD Program & Job Market	Economist's Craft pp. 1–26 pp. 187–211 pp. 226–233 Eric Zwick's Graduate School Advice Eric Zwick's Job Market Advice Kim Fe Cramer's Job Market Advice Kim Fe Cramer's Job Market Tips AEA Mentoring Materials
	Jan 27	Snow Day	
2	Feb 3	Creating Research Ideas	Economist's Craft pp. 27–53 Paul Niehaus Medium Post Paul Niehaus: <i>Structural Change</i> Paul Niehaus: <i>Asking Important Questions</i>
3	Feb 10	Pitching Research Ideas & Giving and Receiving Feedback	Economist's Craft pp. 27–53 Paul Niehaus Medium Post Paul Niehaus: <i>Structural Change</i> Paul Niehaus: <i>Asking Important Questions</i>
4	Feb 17	Overview of Writing Finance Papers & Project Planning	Economist's Craft pp. 54–67
5	Feb 24	Identification & Research Design	Causal Inference: <i>The Mixtape</i> Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion
6	Mar 3	Cleaning Data & Efficient Research Workflows	R for Data Science ch. 2-8 Sean Higgin's Stata Workflow Guide
7	Mar 10	Producing Tables Workflow	Tables in Stata
8	Mar 17	Producing Figures Workflow	R for Data Science ch. 1 R Graph Gallery Data Visualization in Stata Eric Zwick's Advice Economist's Craft pp. 108–112 The Visual Display of Quantitative Information
	Mar 24	Spring Break	
9	Mar 31	L ^A T _E X Workflow (Paper Formatting)	Overleaf Tutorial
10	Apr 7	How to Write an Introduction	Economist's Craft pp. 68–85 How to Write the Introduction Michael Roberts Writing Advice
11	Apr 14	Writing Data, Institutional Details, Methods, and Results	Economist's Craft pp. 86–96 pp. 97–128 John Cochrane's Writing Tips for PhD Students
12	Apr 21	Navigating Referees, Revisions, and Resubmissions	Economist's Craft pp. 160–186
13	Apr 28	Presenting Research & Beamer Workflow (Slide Formatting)	Beamer Tutorial Paul Goldsmith Pinkham's Beamer and Presentation Tutorial Jesse Shapiro: How to Give an Applied Micro Talk Amanda Y. Agan's Presentation & Other Tips