Selected topics on PhD and research
2023-2024
Course syllabus

1. Course description

This professionalizing course intends to equip early-stage PhD candidates with the skills to succeed and thrive in a career in research. Drawing from the AMSE faculty's extensive experience, the course will discuss various dimensions of a researcher's professional life with the goal of helping PhD candidates transition from students to producers of knowledge. In each session, the speaker will focus on a particular aspect of the research process (i.e. generating research ideas, writing papers, presenting at conferences, submitting articles for publication) or a professional skill relevant to a research career in economics (i.e. navigating the academic and non-academic job market, collaborating with co-authors, building professional networks).

2. Format

The course will be held in sessions of up to 1.5 hours. Each session will be a seminar-style discussion and will take place at either IBD (Marseille) or MEGA (Aix-en-Provence). To obtain credit for the course, students must attend and actively participate in every session. This course prioritizes first-year and second-year PhD candidates, but later stage PhD candidates are welcome to attend.

3. Schedule

Interdisciplinary and professionalizing course (12h)

Session	Date	Day	Time	Location	Speaker
1	21-Sep	Thursday	14h00 – 15h30	MEGA	Sebastian Bervoets
2	03-Oct	Tuesday	14h00 – 15h30	MEGA	Marc Sangnier
			15h30 – 17h00		Yann Bramoullé
2	17-Oct	Tuesday	14h00 – 15h30	MEGA	Habiba Djebbari
			15h30 – 17h00		Cecilia García Peñalosa
3	06-Feb	Tuesday	13h30 – 15h00	IBD	Robert Ziparo
			15h00 – 16h30		Yannick Dupraz
			16h30 – 18h00		Timothée Demont

4. Outline and learning outcomes

Lecture 1. Sebastian Bervoets: "Things I wish I knew before starting my PhD"

This session discusses challenges that early-stage doctoral students confront during the course of their PhD. Doctoral students will have the opportunity to address these challenges and learn from the personal experiences of senior faculty.

Lecture 2. Marc Sangnier: "You and your supervisor"

This session discusses how to best interact and collaborate with one's supervisor. It is crucial for early-stage doctoral students to understand the role of their supervisor and efficient ways to make progress on their research and manage setbacks throughout the PhD. The session also tackles issues on how to best handle disagreements between doctoral students and supervisors.

Lecture 3. Yann Bramoullé: "The publication process"

Publishing in economics journals is a long and not always easy process. This session will discuss how publishing and peer review in economics works, what to expect from rejections and resubmissions, how to deal with reviewers, and how best to select journals.

Lecture 4. Habiba Djebbari: "The art of writing a literature review"

Whether provided explicitly in a paper or used as a personal reference benchmark, a well-developed literature review is crucial for knowing one's place in the academic literature and writing a high-quality academic paper. By the end of the session, doctoral students will be able to survey the literature and succinctly summarize it.

Lecture 5. Cecilia García Peñalosa: "Managing multiple projects at a time"

Academics often have to juggle several projects at once in their research pipeline. This session will discuss the challenges that arise when working on multiple projects at varying stages of development and the ways early-stage researchers can best allocate and manage their time efficiently. The session will also touch on navigating work-life balance and other issues that academics perennially confront.

Lecture 6. Roberta Ziparo: "Generating and assessing research ideas"

Many early-stage doctoral students struggle with generating and assessing the potential of a research question. This session will discuss the best ways of formulating research questions, distinguishing between feasible and unrealistic ideas, and assessing the contribution of a research project.

Lecture 7. Yannick Dupraz : "Collecting and managing data for empirical projects"

The growth of data sources available to researchers has enabled the field to ask new questions, collect new facts, and test new mechanisms. In empirical work, a substantial share of time in the research process is spent collecting, cleaning, and maintaining the integrity of data. This session discusses finding novel sources of data and ways to collect them, the challenges that arise when collecting primary data (via surveys and experiments), and best-practices on managing your research workflow.

Lecture 8. Timothée Demont: "The academic and non-academic job market"

Knowing what type of careers are available for researchers and how to best prepare during a PhD is not always trivial. This session discusses the features of the academic and non-academic job market. It gives insights into how to best prepare for the job market and what skills should be developed during the PhD.