

Selected topics on PhD and research (12h) 2026-2027

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. Tentative Schedule

Session	Date	Day	Time	Location	Speaker
1	Oct 2026	Tuesday	13h30 – 15h00	IBD (Room TBA)	Sebastian Bervoets
			15h00 - 16h30		Renaud Bourlès
2	Oct 2026	Tuesday	13h30 - 15h00	IBD (Room TBA)	Romain Ferrali
			15h00 - 16h30		Miriam Teschl
3	Nov 2026	Tuesday	13h30 - 15h00	IBD (Room TBA)	Roberta Ziparo
			15h00 - 16h30		Yann Bramoullé
4	May 2027	Tuesday	13h00 - 14h30	IBD (Room TBA)	Eva Raiber
			14h30 - 16h00		Timothee 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. Renaud Bourlès: "Writing skills"

Writing an interesting and concise paper is one of the most important pillars of research. In this session, doctoral students will learn how to improve their writing skills in preparation for submission to journals.

Lecture 3. Yann Bramoullé: "Publishing in economics"

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. Romain Ferrali: "Presenting at conferences and networking"

This course equips PhD students with practical skills for delivering clear, engaging, and impactful presentations at academic conferences. Students will learn how to design effective slides, tailor their message to diverse audiences, and handle Q&A with confidence. In parallel, the course emphasizes strategies for professional networking: initiating conversations, building meaningful connections with peers and senior researchers, and leveraging conferences to expand academic and career opportunities. Through interactive workshops and peer feedback, participants will gain both the confidence and the tools to make the most of conference experiences.

Lecture 5. Miriam Teschl: "Interdisciplinary research"

In multidisciplinary research, you often need to navigate several fields at once, each with its own methodologies and paradigms. This session will explore the challenges that arise when working on interdisciplinary projects at different stages of development, and how early-stage researchers can enhance their work by engaging with diverse disciplines and perspectives. It will emphasize the importance of developing a broad knowledge base and wider perspective to overcome the limits of monodisciplinary thinking.

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. Eva Raiber: "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 (Placement Officers): "The academic and non-academic job market"

The necessary preparation for the job market is not always clear for early-stage doctoral candidates. This session discusses the ins and outs of the academic and non-academic job market. The placement officers will share their insights on how to best prepare for the job market and which skills should be developed during the PhD.