Guidelines for 2nd Year Research Paper  
UCSC Economics Department

The 2nd year paper is an important requirement, and is a key milestone as you begin on your research career. While it is not expected that the paper should be publishable as is, it should be fully formulated and should look like a real paper.

Starting in the spring of your 2nd year, you are expected to start working on this paper before it is due. This document contains a few guidelines for the paper.

1. What is the central question of your project? Motivate the topic: why is this an interesting question that merits more research? The paper should include a well-written introduction and a thorough literature review.

2. How is this paper different from previous work? You should be very specific as to how your idea relates to other work, and how it fills an important gap in the literature.

3. If you are constructing your own model, describe the key ingredients and assumptions of the model. Explain what you want the model to show. At a minimum, derive basic comparative statics.

4. If your project is empirical, explain the data in detail. Write out regression specifications. What econometric techniques are you using? Why? What are possible threats to inference? Describe and interpret your results in detail.


Important dates
- You must pick an advisor for the paper by the end of the winter quarter of your 2nd year. You will enroll with this advisor in the spring quarter.

- The paper is due on August 31st. Failing to meet this deadline will result in academic probation. You will receive an I on course work for the paper until it is accepted by an advisor.

- As you are working on the paper, think about how this might relate to your ideas for your oral defense. Many people use the 2nd year paper as the basis for their oral exam.