



# **EC331 – RAE Project**

Dr Andrew Harkins

Term 1 – 2021/22

# Class 3

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Developing a research question

Writing the literature review

Finding data

# RAE 2021/22

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## Office Hours (Term 1):

Tuesday	'Afternoon'	(In person)
Friday	2:30pm-4:30pm	(Teams)

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<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/aharkins/officehours/>

# Timeline

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## Term 1

- ▷ Weeks 3-4: My research and advice on developing a project idea
- ▷ Weeks 5-8: Reading group presentations
- ▶ **Week 8: 1500-word literature review + project outline – (10%)**
- ▷ Week 8+: Data collection

## Term 2

- ▷ Weeks 4-7: Assessed presentation (dataset/method) – (10%)

## Term 3

- ▷ Week 1 (29/04/21): Submit final project – (80%)



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# Developing a Research Question

# Generating Ideas

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No step-by-step guide to generate good ideas but can:

1. Increase the chances of a eureka moment
2. Maximise the impact of those moments

Advice:

- ▷ Read first.
- ▷ Go to presentations.
- ▷ Speak to members of staff (and students).
- ▷ Write down your ideas and your inspiration for them.

# Evaluating Ideas (Empirical)

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Will it give a specific answer to an economically relevant question?

▷ e.g. “What is the value of an extra year’s schooling?”

If not, does it provide evidence which runs contrary to established theory or adds to an existing empirical debate?

Do you have a strategy to counter common problems with this topic?

Could you explain the question to non-economists in way that they would find interesting and relevant?



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# The Literature Review

# The Literature Review

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The purpose of the literature review is to summarise and assess the contributions of other scholars in the field.

- ▶ What have people looked at?
- ▶ How did they answer their questions?
- ▶ Were they successful?
- ▶ What did they neglect?

# The Purpose of the Literature Review

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Your objective is to carve out a *niche* for yourself.

Convince the reader that:

1. There is an interesting economically relevant question to be asked.
2. This question has not already been answered by others.

# Where to Look

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- ▶ Journal of Economic Perspectives
- ▶ Journal of Economic Literature
- ▶ Annual Review of Economics
- ▶ Handbooks
  - ▷ e.g. Handbook of Labour Economics, Handbook of Experimental Economics, Handbook of Economic Growth
- ▶ Also: [voxeu.org](http://voxeu.org), [nber.org](http://nber.org), [iza.org](http://iza.org)

# Reading

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How many papers should I include?

- ▷ Typically 7-10, sometimes more depending on topic.
- ▷ There is a word limit so it is hard to include everything that is relevant.
- ▷ You will typically have read twice as many papers as you reference.

Maximum 1-2 non-academic articles for motivation only.

More references will not automatically mean higher marks.

- ▷ Do not cite tangential material in order to pad your reference list!

# Reading

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**Q:** How can I tell if a piece of research is reputable before reading

**A:** A number of factors can be considered:

- ▷ Citations (go to <http://scholar.google.com>)
- ▷ Outlet of publication
  - ‘Top 5’: Econometrica, Quarterly Journal of Economics, American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Review of Economic Studies.
  - Rankings: ‘ideas journal rankings’. Top 100 is fine; be concerned if not in top 300!
- ▷ Affiliation of the authors

Try to stick to published academic articles or books.

- ▷ Avoid working papers which are more than a few years old and/or have a small number of citations (<10).

# Literature Review

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How should I write a good literature review?

1. Give an evaluation of the contributions
2. Synthesise and distil existing literature
3. Highlight the most important papers for *your* research



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# Finding Data

# Commonly used large dataset

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Datasets appearing frequently in UG dissertations (micro-biased):

1. Understanding society/BHPS (UK)
2. Labour force survey (UK)
3. European social survey
4. American community survey (US census)
5. Global preferences survey (new)

Source for first three: <https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/>

# A New Tool

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A new tool which can be used to seek out interesting data is:

Google Dataset Search Beta

 

( <https://toolbox.google.com/datasetsearch> )



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# Reading Group Presentations

# Reading Groups

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10am-11am Thursday

Week 5

Aadi

Thomas

Burak

Week 6

Dan

Shan

Micah

Week 7

Niranjan

Joe

Week 8

Dhruva

Justin