



**Faculty of Humanities, Languages  
and Social Sciences**

**Module handbook 2005/6**

**Module Code UPEN3M-15-M**

**RESEARCH METHODS I**

**School of Economics**

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## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. LEARNING OUTCOMES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. ORGANISATION OF THE MODULE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
3.1. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS .....	3
3.2. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	4
3.3. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES .....	4
3.4. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.....	4
<b>4. MODULE PROGRAMME</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5. LECTURE DETAILS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>6. SEMINAR DETAILS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>7. ASSESSMENT OFFENCES – CHEATING, COLLUSION AND PLAGIARISM</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>14</b>
8.1. REGULATIONS.....	14
8.2. FIRST ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITY .....	15
8.3. GUIDELINES .....	15
8.4. SECOND ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITY (REFERRAL).....	17

## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the Research Methods I module. We hope very much that you find rewarding the programme of study we have constructed for you. The module certainly has, if you allow us to blow our own trumpets, some strong attributes which enhance it and hopefully will augment your study of it. The module is a stand-alone module, or it acts as preparation for other modules, such as Research Methods II. As a stand-alone module, it has a full and varied programme of study, designed to offer you a complete, useful introduction to the key issues in research methods. The module focuses simultaneously on conceptual and practical goals. On the one hand, you will be introduced to multiple perspectives on the philosophy of science. For those of you in Economics, this is a rather novel feature; but we regard it as one crucial to your understanding of the research process. Once that philosophical grounding has been given, we move onto more practical concerns, such as the design, planning, execution and presentation of research. This segment of the module is crucial because the module functions as a foundation for your own research later in the Master's programme. At the end of the module, indeed, you will have formulated a research proposal, which, we intend, will form the basis of your dissertation. Finally, the module offers you practical skills in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis; this includes invaluable practice on statistical computer packages.

This is a Master's level module. The level of the material may well be higher than anything you have encountered before. Certainly, the pace of the module will be faster than you are used to. If you are new to Economics, and lack the background knowledge which this module assumes, you will need to work hard to catch up. For example, try to read a book on the history of economic thought and/or a book of basic economic concepts. Naturally, all of this will require considerable work, including, of course, much reading. This reading will be essential for you to be successful on the module. However, as always, we think the work will be rewarded by the enjoyment of a stimulating and essential module.

## 2. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module the students should be able to:

- Show knowledge of alternative methodologies in the social sciences (assessed via components A and B)
- Design a research project (component B)
- Use the internet for research purposes (component B)
- Write a research proposal (component B)
- Find relevant statistical sources (component B)
- Undertake basic quantitative and qualitative analysis using SPSS (components A and B)

## 3. Organisation of the Module

### 3.1. Teaching and Learning Methods

Nominally, the module will be organised around a lecture-seminar model. This means that once a week, we meet and basically I lecture to you. As you will be aware, lectures provide core material and the framework for the module. **Lectures** also create the basis for seminars and for further reading. **Seminars** allow us to explore further the topics introduced in the lecture, clarify points of misunderstanding, and practice written and oral skills. The format of the seminar will vary according to the task at hand. The seminar will be aided by your own **private study**. A good seminar will deal quickly with the basic issues, without regurgitating lecture material, and it will encourage discussion and exploration of the topic. This will only be facilitated by private study on your part. You should read the required reading as listed in this handbook, but also I shall give

you supplementary reading. Also, at postgraduate level, it is particularly important to find for yourself books and particularly articles to read.

## 3.2. Student responsibilities

### Lectures

You should be aware that lectures are designed to provide a framework for discussion and analysis. Your responsibility therefore is to attend these lectures on a regular basis. **Failure to do so may seriously affect your ability to keep abreast of the course and hence impact on your final grade.**

### Seminars

A seminar is designed to enable students to investigate an issue or theme in greater detail. The onus is on you to keep up to date with the reading on a weekly basis. **Seminars work well if everyone has done some preparatory reading, have thought about interesting questions to ask and come along prepared to discuss the theme in question.** Do not leave it to others to do the work. As you can see the reading lists for seminars are extensive. The purpose is two fold: to give an idea of what is available in our library; and to introduce various opinions expressed by a number of authors. This does not mean that just because a book is not listed here that it may not be relevant to the course. **We would encourage you from the outset to explore the wide variety of material contained in our library, which can be equally useful when preparing for a seminar or writing an essay.** Equally important, you are strongly encouraged to use journal articles, which publish the latest research. Articles are extremely useful because they concentrate on a specific issue or debate. They get to the heart of a debate and therefore provide insight into complex issues. So get into the habit of using the journals for all facets of your work.

### Library

A final point concerns the library system. You are expected to use the full potential of the UWE library system. As a multi-campus institution, resources are scattered. Books and periodicals may be housed on only one site. So be prepared, especially when preparing essays, to use the inter-site loan system or (better still) travel to the other sites to obtain relevant material. UWE is well equipped with **electronic media**. Increasingly it is necessary for libraries to take journals in electronic form, and UWE does this well. Please take advantage of the resources available through the Library catalogue as well as internet-based research aids. Additionally, you will need to be versed in requesting books and journals from outside the UWE system, via **Inter-Library Loans (ILLs)**. If you do not already know how to get an ILL, please find out as soon as possible.

## 3.3. Staff responsibilities

Staff will endeavour to produce useful, interesting and thought provoking lectures, which are well informed by up-to-date secondary literature and, where appropriate, by visual aids. In seminars tutors will help to generate and sustain discussion while at the same time recognising the students' responsibility to stimulate debate. They will also try their best to return work, with detailed feedback, within the agreed timescale of the submission date. Staff will be available to discuss your work on a one-to-one basis at specified times. In addition, they will make time to discuss issues raised by the group in the regular weekly seminar slot.

## 3.4. Facilities and Resources

To be successful in the module, you will need to use a range of resources. Attend lectures and seminars, of course! However, as I have already indicated, you must take advantage of the Library and the electronic media available to you.

There is a wide reading list for the module. You are not expected to buy all of these books. Many of the books are substitutes, and there are other readily available substitutes for most of them. No single book will serve you for the entire module. Naturally, you will do best if you combine readings. The main books are:-

Blaug, Mark (1992) *The Methodology of Economics, or How Economists Explain*, Cambridge University Press.

Caldwell, Bruce (ed) (1984) *Appraisal and Criticism in Economics: A Book of Readings*, Allen & Unwin.

Dow, Sheila (2002) *Economic Methodology: An Inquiry*, Oxford University Press.

Mayer, Thomas (1993) *Truth versus Precision in Economics*, Edward Elgar.

Shipman, Martin (1997) *The Limitations of Social Research*, Longman.

Sayer, Andrew (1992) *Method in Social Science*, Routledge

Fielding, Jane and Nigel Gilbert (2000) *Understanding Social Statistics*, Sage Publications.

Field, Andy (2000) *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS for Windows*, Sage Publications.

In addition to these books, others might be recommended to you either in the schedule of seminars below, or during the course of the module, in class or on *Blackboard*. In addition to books, as already stated, there are many electronic media which you will find indispensable. Electronic media are particularly useful for tracking down crucial articles. Some articles will be listed as reading in the lecture and seminar details below; or, again, you might be instructed to read a specific article in class or on Blackboard.

Clearly, this module will make some use of the Faculty's *Blackboard* system. I shall assume that you know how *Blackboard* works: if you don't, you need to find out. It is quite end-user friendly, so you should not have too many problems with it. Remember that a copy of this module handbook will be there for you to look at if you ever forget where you put your personal copy. You can also download another copy if you ever actually lose yours. Please note that you tutors do not hold stocks of 'spare' module booklets. You can access *Blackboard* either on the intranet (log on to any Faculty machine and use the UWE online icon) or on the internet (log on via <http://online.uwe.ac.uk>). You will need the username and password provided by the Faculty during induction.

Handouts, exercises, and notices will also be posted periodically to the *Blackboard* system. Please remember to log in to this system every so often and look on the module conference for anything flagged as new.

## 4. Module Programme

UWE Week	W/C	Class	Title
10	3-Oct	L1	<b>Introduction: Key Concepts in Research Methods</b>
		S0	No formal seminar
11	10-Oct	L2	<b>Issues in Methodology I: Positivism and its variants</b>
		S1	Key concepts in Research Methods
12	17-Oct	L3	<b>Issues in Methodology II: Interpretivist approaches</b>
		S2	Issues in Methodology I
13	24-Oct	L4	<b>Issues in Methodology III: Critical Realism</b>
		S3	Issues in Methodology II
14	31-Oct	L5	<b>Research Design, Planning and Writing</b>
		S4	Issues in Methodology III
15	7-Nov	L6	<b>Data Collection I: Primary Data and Sampling</b>
		S5	Research Design, Planning and Writing
16	14-Nov	L7	<b>Qualitative Analysis: Overview</b>
		S6	Data Collection I: Primary Data and Sampling
17	21-Nov	L8	<b>Introduction to SPSS; descriptive statistics and inference on SPSS</b>
		S7	Qualitative Analysis: Overview
			<b><i>Agreement on dissertation proposal</i></b>
18	28-Nov	L9	<b>Data Collection II: Secondary sources (including the Internet)</b>
		S8	Introduction to SPSS; descriptive statistics and inference on SPSS
			<b><i>Agreement on project topic and title</i></b>
19	5-Dec	L10	<b>Regression Analysis on SPSS I</b>
		S9	Data Collection II: Secondary sources (including the Internet)
			<b><i>Presentation of dissertation proposals</i></b>
20	12-Dec	L11	<b>Regression Analysis on SPSS II</b>
		S10	Regression Analysis on SPSS
			<b><i>Submission of dissertation proposal (Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec)</i></b>

## 5. Lecture Details

- Lecture 1: Introduction to the module: Key Concepts in Research Methods (week commencing 4/10/05)  
Lecture 2: Methodology I - Positivism and its variants (week commencing 10/10/05)  
Lecture 3: Methodology II - Interpretivist Approaches (week commencing 17/10/05)  
Lecture 4: Methodology III - Critical Realism (week commencing 24/10/05)  
Lecture 5: Research Design, Planning and Writing (week commencing 31/10/05)  
Lecture 6: Data Collection I - Primary data; Sampling (week commencing 7/11/05)  
Lecture 7: Qualitative analysis – overview (week commencing 14/11/05)  
Lecture 8: Introduction to SPSS - descriptive statistics and inference on SPSS (week commencing 21/11/05)  
Lecture 9: Data Collection II - Secondary sources (including the Internet) (week commencing 28/11/05)  
Lecture 10: Regression analysis on SPSS I (week commencing 5/12/05)  
Lecture 11: Regression analysis on SPSS II (week commencing 12/12/05)

## 6. Seminar Details

This section presents details of the seminars to be undertaken in the module. It provides the learning outcomes for each seminar, the reading to be undertaken and the questions to be dealt with in class. Where the books are those listed above, only the name of the author and the chapters to be read (if applicable) are listed. For new references, the whole reference is listed the first time. For all seminars, these reading lists are not exhaustive: for example, please read other relevant literature. In some seminars, there are long lists of questions. It might not be possible to cover all of these questions in class, so you should use them for revision and study purposes. **For every seminar, additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.**

### Pre-reading for Module:

Read one or more of any of the key readings for the module. I recommend Dow (2002) *Economic Methodology: An Inquiry* and/or Caldwell, Bruce (ed) (1984) *Appraisal and Criticism in Economics: A Book of Readings*, Allen & Unwin.

### Seminar 1: Introduction to the module: Key Concepts in Research Methods (week commencing 10/10/05)

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the salient issues in Research Methods
- Explain various types of logic used in Research Methods
- Engage with the main issues involved in theory evaluation and testing
- Examine the notion of scientific progress

#### Reading:

Chalmers, A. (1990) *What is this Thing Called Science?* Open University Press.

Dow, chs. 1-2, 6, 9

Blaug, chs. 1-3

Hausman, D. (1984). *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, Cambridge University Press, chs. 1-4

Shipman, chs. 1, 7, 11 (and related controversies)

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. What is science?
2. What makes a theory better or worse than another theory? How reliable are the grounds for deciding such things?
3. Provide an example of a formulation of the problem of induction other than the ones mentioned in the lecture. How severe is the problem of induction in the case you have identified?
4. Give an example of the Duhem-Quine problem.
5. Why is the experimental set up considered the pinnacle of scientific practice?
6. Make up examples of syllogisms such that a) the conclusion does not follow from the assumptions; b) the conclusions follow from the assumptions, but the assumptions are silly; c) there are hidden assumptions which might affect the conclusions; and d) the assumptions are reasonable and the conclusion follows from them.

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

**Seminar 2: Issues in Methodology I - Positivism and its variants (week commencing 17/10/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the main elements of positivism
- Compare and contrast different variants of positivism
- Critically assess the main positions adopted by positivism and by its critics
- Examine the implications of positivism and its variants for social science, particularly economics

*Reading:*

Hughes, J. and Sharrock, W. (1997). *The Philosophy of Social Research*, Longman, chs. 1-4  
Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and Nachmias, D. (1996) *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Arnold, chs. 1-4

Shipman, chs. 2, 9 (also read related controversies)

Hausman, chs. 8-12

Mayer

Caldwell, chs. 1-4

Blaug, chs. 4-5

Sayer, chs. 5, 7-8

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. What are the main "positive" contributions of the positivist tradition?
2. Is economics a "positive" subject? Please explain.
3. Is it possible to eliminate subjectivity and values from observation? Please explain.
4. Should Karl Popper be considered a positivist? Please explain.

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

**Seminar 3: Methodology II - Interpretivist Approaches (week commencing 24/10/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the main elements of interpretivism
- Compare different variants of interpretivism
- Contrast interpretivism with positivism
- Critically assess the main positions adopted by interpretivism and by its critics
- Examine the implications of interpretivism and its variants for social science, particularly economics

*Reading:*

Hughes and Sharrock, chs. 5-9  
Shipman, particularly chs. 3, 9 (also read related controversies)  
Fielding and Gilbert.  
Caldwell, ch. 5  
Sayer, chs. 1-2

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. What are the main arguments against value neutrality? How reliable are these arguments?
2. What are the main differences between the positivist and interpretivist traditions?
3. The interpretivist tradition has argued that scientific explanation is impossible. Please explain and criticise this view.
4. How would an interpretivist economics or social science differ from the actual contemporary situation?

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

**Seminar 4: Methodology III - Critical Realism (week commencing 31/10/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the main concepts in Critical Realism
- Examine the location of Critical Realism in the context of positivism and interpretivism
- Assess the recent critiques of social science – particularly economics – made by Critical Realism
- Explain what a social science based on Critical Realism would look like

*Reading:*

Bhaskar, R. (1978) *A Realist Theory of Science*, Verso  
Lawson, T. (1997) *Economics and Reality*, Routledge  
Lawson, T. (2003) *Reorienting Economics*, Routledge  
Recent *Journal of Economic Methodology* symposium on Lawson book  
Sayer, ch. 4  
Sayer, A. (2000) *Realism and Social Science*, Sage  
Dow, ch. 8  
Danermark, B, Ekstrom, M, Jakobsen, L. and Karlsson, J.C. (2002) *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*, Routledge  
Downward, P. (ed) (2003) *Applied Economics and the Critical Realist Critique*, Routledge, particularly, chs. 2, 4, 7

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. What is ontology? How does Critical Realism differ in its approach to ontology compared with positivism and interpretivism?
2. Experimental methods are increasingly used in economics, and have been common in psychology for years. How would you criticise experimental methods from a Critical Realist perspective?
3. What is the role of quantitative methods in a Critical realist approach to social science?

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

**Seminar 5: Research Design, Planning and Writing (week commencing 7/11/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Survey literature in order to identify a research project
- Design and plan a research project
- Be proficient in presenting written results of research work
- Understand methods of presenting data and statistical analysis in a scholarly way

*Reading:*

Bryman and Cramer, ch. 1

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, chs. 5-6

Shipman, chs. 1, 10 (and related controversies)

Kumar, R. (1999) *Research Methodology: a Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, Sage.

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. Consider a topic of economic interest which you might want to research (if you have dissertation ideas, this would be an obvious choice). Imagine that you aim to write an 8000 word long paper on that topic. Design and plan your work on that topic. Remember that you must include all the relevant stages, including writing and rewriting your final paper. You might even use tools such as Gantt charts in order to do this.
2. Read any article which has no abstract (or get an article but don't read the abstract!!). Write an abstract of 100 words for that article.
3. Using the spreadsheet supplied (you will need to view this electronically through Blackboard), summarise the data and write up an analysis of it. The level of statistics used is low: only means are used. Pay particular attention to how you would present the data (- would you even try to?)

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

### **Seminar 6: Data Collection I - Primary data; Sampling (week commencing 14/11/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Compare and contrast various types of primary data
- Assess the relative advantages and disadvantages of primary data
- Understand the principles and practices of sampling
- Collect and organise primary data

*Reading:*

Bryman and Cramer ch. 6

Shipman, chs. 4-7 (and related controversies)

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, chs. 7-10

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

*Questions:*

1. Formulate a randomly sampled list of firms in the local area, which you might want to collect data from.
2. Choose two methods of collecting the data (on any issue which the firm might be interested in). Compare and contrast the two methods. Which one seems best? Is this universally true? How does the object of analysis affect the choice of technique? Consider this issue by comparing what you have proposed with another member of the group (in the seminar time).
3. How does random sampling relate to the concerns of Shipman (1997) about reliability and generality? How useful are purely sample specific data?

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

## **Seminar 7: Qualitative analysis – overview (week commencing 21/11/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Compare and contrast different types of qualitative analysis
- Understand the main aspects of qualitative analysis
- Assess the main advantages and disadvantages of qualitative analysis
- Examine critically the common strict distinction between qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Explain the positions taken by positivism, interpretivism and Critical Realism on qualitative analysis

### *Reading:*

Bryman and Burgess, particularly introductory chapters and chs. 5, 9, 11

Danermark et al, particularly ch. 6

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, chs. 11-12

Shipman, ch. 5 (and related controversies)

Sayer, ch. 6

Lee, FS (2002) 'Theory Creation and the Methodological Foundation of Post Keynesian Economics', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 26: 789-804

Downward, P (ed), chs. 6, 11, 14

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

### *Questions:*

1. Discuss the pros and cons of any one type of qualitative analysis.
2. How would a positivist view qualitative analysis?
3. How might a strategy of triangulation be justified within a research project?
4. Are qualitative and quantitative analysis strictly different?
5. Read Lee's article on grounded theory. What the advantages and disadvantages of grounded theory?
6. Think of a specific economic issue you might be interested in. How would you set up a participant observation study to help your investigation?

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

## **Seminar 8: Introduction to SPSS - descriptive statistics and inference on SPSS (week commencing 28/11/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Enter data into SPSS
- Calculate basic descriptive statistics
- Understand and interpret statistical measures of location and dispersion
- Use SPSS to construct and present statistical inferences

### *Reading:*

Field, chs. 1-3, 6-8

Bryman and Cramer, chs. 2-3, 5-8

Shipman, ch. 10

Ziliak, S. and McCloskey, D. (2004) 'Size Matters: The Standard Error of Regressions in the *American Economic Review*', *Journal of Socio-Economics*, forthcoming, November 2004 (and see other papers in that issue).

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

### *Questions:*

1. According to Ziliak and McCloskey, what are the main problems in using statistical significance to assess economic relationships?
2. Take the following raw data on the responses to a questionnaire. Then do the following:
  - a) represent the data in a suitable frequency table
  - b) calculate relative and cumulative frequencies for the data
  - c) show the relative and cumulative frequency in i) histogram ii) frequency curve iii) pie chartFor (c), make sure the presentation of the data is of a suitable standard.

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

### **Seminar 9: Data Collection II - Secondary sources (including the Internet) (week commencing 5/12/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the various types of secondary data
- Be familiar with the main sources of secondary data
- Construct data sets from secondary data
- Locate secondary data on the Internet

#### *Reading:*

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, ch. 13

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

#### *Questions:*

1. Use the Internet to collect data on the following economic variables:
  - a) GDP per capita UK; last 10 years
  - b) GDP per capita EU countries; last 10 years
  - c) Any data which you consider could be used to assess the convergence of a set of countries in terms of productivity growth
  - d) Any data which you consider could be used to assess the convergence of a set of industries in the UK in terms of profitability

In each case, collect the data into an SPSS worksheet and prepare it for use in some type of statistical analysis. Bring that data with you to the seminar.

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

### **Seminar 10: Regression analysis on SPSS (week commencing 12/12/05)**

Learning Outcomes: this seminar is designed to enable the student to be able to:

- Understand the basic principles of OLS regression analysis
- Generate regression results on SPSS
- Interpret regression results produced by SPSS

#### *Reading:*

Field, ch. 4, 11

Bryman and Carter, chs. 7-11

Additional reading will be indicated to you prior to the seminar, ad hoc, via verbal announcement and/or via Blackboard.

#### *Questions:*

1. Collect data in a time series on price inflation, money supply, and cumulative rainfall for the UK over a time period suitably long enough to run OLS regressions.

2. Run a regression (or set of regressions) on SPSS for the data you have. You must show that you have used SPSS to do this. Report the correlation coefficient for that regression. Comment on the correlation coefficient and the regression.
3. Which famous essay on regression and correlation have you just imitated?
4. How could you run a better estimation of the causes of inflation? Use economic theoretical reasons and econometric reasoning to explain why your regression is better than those done earlier. Collect the relevant data. Run the regressions on SPSS. Comment on the results.

Additional questions and any accompanying reading (where necessary) will be distributed either in class and/or via Blackboard.

## 7. Assessment Offences – Cheating, Collusion and Plagiarism

Please read carefully the following definitions of cheating, collusion and plagiarism. These are serious offences and it is very important that you know how to avoid them. The University procedures for dealing with allegations of assessment offences are laid out in the **UWE Student Handbook**, and in the Academic Regulations (E12a).

### 7.1. Definitions

7.1.1 Cheating (in the widest sense of the word) is the use of unfair means of presenting work for assessment. It is a serious academic offence as it prevents examiners from being able to make a realistic judgement of a student's knowledge, understanding, ability and/or creativity.

7.1.2 Cheating in an examination includes:

- a) taking aids (eg notes, books, mobile phones, equipment) into an examination room which are not authorised for use in that examination
- b) copying another student's work
- c) seeking or obtaining help from another person
- d) assisting another student with an examination

7.1.3 Collusion includes:

- a) presenting work as one's own which is derived from unauthorised collaboration with others
- b) assisting another person by giving substantial help with ideas or with text which are not then acknowledged.

7.1.4 Plagiarism is a form of theft. It includes:

- a) the quotation of another person's words without quotation marks
- b) the quotation of another person's words or ideas without acknowledgement
- c) the use of another person's ideas without acknowledgement
- d) the use of another person's facts or experimental results without acknowledgment.

7.1.5 It is also an assessment offence to prevent another student from being able to be examined properly.

### 7.2. Avoiding Cheating in Examinations

7.2.1 Students can ensure that they do not unwittingly cheat in examinations if they

- a) take into an examination only those items which have been authorised. Particular care must be taken with programmable calculators and dictionaries which can only be used if specifically authorised.
- b) follow carefully the "Instructions to Candidates" (Examination Regulation 2) and communicate with no-one except an invigilator during an examination.

### **7.3. Avoiding Collusion**

- 7.3.1 Most collusion is unintentional. Students are often required to work on a topic or activity in groups and then to produce individual work for assessment. They must be careful to follow the instructions regarding the assessment. Some assessments may require the group to produce joint ideas or proposals, whereas others might assign this initiative to the individual. Unless the instructions specifically require a group report, students must produce their own written work without the help of other people.
- 7.3.2. It is a normal part of the learning process for students to discuss ideas for written work with each other. However, students should be cautious about lending essays, computer files or laboratory reports to other students in order to avoid the danger of the second student producing an essay or laboratory report similar to that of the first student.
- 7.3.3. Discussion between students can be a good way of learning: however, students should be careful to ensure that they think out and write the detail of their essays/assignments by themselves.

### **7.4. Avoiding Assessment Offences**

- 7.4.1. In order to produce good essays, assignments, etc, it is expected that students will base their ideas on several sources and will quote from them. Plagiarism is often a result of poor academic practice rather than a deliberate attempt to cheat. Good academic standards require that -
  - a) any phrase or longer text which is taken from another author must be quoted precisely using quotation marks and the bibliographical reference
  - b) where an author's text is summarised the summary must be in the student's own words. Merely changing the order of words or using synonyms does not form an acceptable summary
  - c) any facts, tables, diagrams or experimental results taken from another person must be acknowledged and referenced
  - d) any ideas or conclusions taken from another person must be duly acknowledged and referenced.

## **8. Assessment**

### **8.1. Regulations**

In order to pass this module you need to obtain an overall mark of 50% or above. In addition you need to obtain at least 40% in both assessment components.

If you do not get 50% or more in the **module**, you will be referred in each **component** for which your mark is below 50%.

If you do get 50% or more in the module but one of your components is below 40% you will be referred in that component.

If the minimum mark of 40% is not achieved in both required components of assessment (and the other is passed) at the first assessment opportunity the mark for the referred component will be limited to 50%. This is described as a capped mark. The mark for the other component will not be capped nor will the overall module mark. Where a component of assessment is not passed at the second assessment opportunity and a student makes another attempt at the module, the overall module mark achieved at the second attempt will be capped at 50%.

All students referred in a component will have to do the same referral work.

*Further information about assessment may be found in the University's Student Handbook.*

## 8.2. First Assessment Opportunity

The assessment has two components: an Examination Component (Component A) and a Coursework Component (Component B). Component A comprises a 2-hour examination in the assessment period between terms. The exam is worth 50% of the marks for the module. You will be informed about the exact nature of the examination well before you have to sit it. Most likely you will be expected to write at least one essay, plus answer a question on the practical aspects of research, possibly involving the analysis of results from SPSS. A past exam paper can be found in this handbook.

**Component B has two elements. Element 1 is an applied project. Element 2 is a dissertation proposal. They are each worth 50% of the component, i.e., 25% each of the total for the module.**

**Both pieces of coursework must be submitted on disk or in some other electronic form, in order for us to be able to assess whether the work is yours. Failure to submit a *working electronic version* will result in failure of the assignment. It is your responsibility to make sure the electronic copy is working.**

**Element 1: Applied project.** This will be a project in which you apply the material of the module to an issue in economics, banking or finance. The project is in two segments. The first part is the completion of the project. In doing this, you will have to:

- Select a question of interest and relevance to you from economics, banking or finance
- Review very briefly the literature on that topic
- Collect data (usually secondary) relevant to the issue
- Prepare the data for analysis
- Analyse the data using some technique
- Reach some conclusions

All of the above will be worth approximately 80% of the marks for this assignment.

For the remainder of the marks (approximately 20%) you must reflect critically on the methodology you are employing. In doing this, you should:

- Consider the methodological perspective you have used (e.g. positivist, realist)
- Criticise what you have done from within that perspective
- Criticise what you have done from outside that perspective. For example, if you have used a mainly positivist approach, how could you criticise that from, say, an interpretivist perspective?

The word limit for this project is 2500 words.

**Important dates:**

**You must agree a title (and consider the execution of the project) with me by w/c 28th November, 2005.**

**The project should be handed in at the latest by Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2006, 2pm to HLSS reception (3E31).**

**Element 2: Dissertation proposal.** It is intended that this proposal will form the basis for your actual dissertation to be completed either by August, 2006, or by December, 2006, depending on what you elect to do. After you have submitted the dissertation proposal, you will be counselled about how to convert that proposal into the final dissertation.

The **purpose of this assignment** is to ascertain that you have gone through the process of completing a research proposal. It is designed to encourage you to think about the research process, and, consistent with the other material in the module, the methodological issues inherent to that process.

Although ideally you will complete the dissertation you have proposed here, **you will not be tied to whatever you submit** in this proposal. You will be allowed to change your topics from what you propose here: that will be done in consultation with myself and/or Professor Dunne. Again: the **main objective of the assignment** is that you think about the research process and complete a coherent proposal.

The dissertation proposal will contain two sections: one conceptual; the other administrative. Most of the proposal will be conceptual.

**To complete the assignment you should present the following:**

- A proposed dissertation **title**
- A preliminary review of relevant **literature** in this area
- A **rationale for this project**: Research Objectives; and a clear statement of how you propose your work to relate to the literature
- A **statement of Research Design**: a statement of the type of project this will be (e.g. explanatory; hypothesis test) and its methodological justification drawing on the philosophy of science literature covered in this module
- A discussion of **causal factors** and principal categories related to your proposal
- A discussion of the principal **empirical methods** to be used in the dissertation
- Commentary on the **data** (whatever form this might take) to be used and a justification for this; including any ethical issues arising from this choice (only relevant to primary data)
- A plan of the **final form** of the dissertation, i.e., possible chapter organisation and headings (these will necessarily be tentative, but they will help you think of the structure of the dissertation)
- A **plan for the dissertation** work to be completed, including: planned timetable, resources (financial and equipment) required, any data required and an indication of its likely sources

And finally: A **summary page** stating: title, objectives, principal empirical methodology, principal references, data sources

**The assignment will be assessed according to the following criteria:**

- Methodological coherence and awareness
- Evidence of thought about the research process
- Evidence of initial research into the topic
- Clarity of the proposal
- Evidence of thought about any causal relationships you have posited
- Awareness of the context of your research
- Feasibility of the project proposed
- Ability to write clearly and concisely and not to exceed the word limit (maximum 2000 words)

**Hints:**

- Use the proposal form in Professor Dunne's *Dissertation Handbook* (distributed in lecture 5) to sketch out the proposal. Most of the requirements above relate to categories in that proposal form.
- Your dissertation must have an international, a business and an economic element (however, the proportions of each is flexible).
- Structure the proposal carefully.
- Write in full sentences and paragraphs and (unlike this document!) avoid bullet points wherever possible.
- You are *encouraged* to include a significant empirical component in your dissertation; however, you are *not* required to engage in econometric modelling.
- Use the *Harvard* referencing and citation system.
- Consult with me before you submit a proposal: initially, I am your dissertation supervisor.

The word limit for this project is 2500 words.

**Important dates:**

**You must have agreed with me the topic to be explored in your dissertation proposal by week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2005.**

**You will present your dissertation proposal to the group in the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2005.**

**The dissertation proposal should be submitted to HLSS reception by Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2005, 2pm at the latest.**

**Failure to complete any of these elements on time will result in your failing this component.**

### **8.3 Guidelines**

#### **Assessment criteria for component A**

The criteria for assessment include: evidence of an understanding of relevant analytical techniques and theories; the ability to apply them effectively; the ability to gather, organise, analyse and present evidence and data in a coherent and concise fashion. Students will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of economic concepts, theories and principles at Masters level.

#### **Assessment criteria for Component B**

The criteria for assessment include: evidence of an understanding of relevant analytical techniques and theories; the ability to apply them effectively; the ability to gather, organise, analyse and present evidence and data in a coherent and concise fashion, employing a range of appropriate and properly referenced material. Students will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of economic concepts, principles and theories at Masters level. Particular emphasis will be placed on the effective use of statistical theories and techniques. For Element 2, the proposal will be assessed on its comprehensiveness, coherence, relevance and feasibility.

#### **General Assessment Criteria:**

The following section provides guidance on the criteria employed for assignments which receive a distinction, pass or fail award.

**Distinction level (75%):** For component 1, work which gains a distinction will demonstrate a standard of writing and critical analysis will be considered excellent. In other modules, excellence will be taken to mean that it could be considered for publication in that field. To be judged of distinction quality in specific assignments or in the overall performance for a module, assessed work will demonstrate all that is required for the PASS band and will also demonstrate a range of the following characteristics, as determined by the relevant subject specialists and programme

team. Care must be taken to ensure that this process does not invite subject specialists to ignore or devalue these generic criteria:

- a) creativity in developing new approaches and interpretation to existing or new areas of knowledge and/or innovations in practice
- b) original critical analysis which reviews the validity of theoretical perspectives and methodologies
- c) critical understanding of an appropriate range of research methodologies as well as the ability to explore the limitations of existing research strategies
- d) creativity in exploring the limits of current knowledge and contributing to the development of theory, research and practice
- e) work supported throughout by appropriate evidence
- f) correct use of language, unambiguous expression and clear presentation

**Pass (50%):** To be judged as a pass in specific assignments or in the overall performance for a module, assessed work will demonstrate the following characteristics as determined by the relevant subject specialists and programme team. Care must be taken to ensure that this process does not invite subject specialists to ignore or devalue these generic criteria:

- a) a comprehensive understanding of existing areas of relevant knowledge and practice and an awareness of gaps and weaknesses of such knowledge
- b) a standard of objective critical analysis which demonstrates academic rigour using relevant concepts and knowledge
- c) a creative attempt to contribute to the ongoing development of theory, research and practice
- d) most substantive points are supported by appropriate evidence, with avoidance of unfounded generalisations
- e) an ability to structure and organise material in a broadly logical manner with a clear development of ideas
- f) clear evidence of thorough reading of core texts
- g) largely accurate and complete referencing using an appropriate citation system
- h) largely correct use of language, unambiguous expression and clear presentation

**Fail:** Assessed work which is judged to fail will demonstrate a significant number of the following characteristics, as determined by the subject specialists and programme team. Care must be taken to ensure that this process does not invite subject specialists to ignore or devalue these generic criteria:

- a) insufficient critical analysis of the topic
- b) limited critical review of existing areas of knowledge and/or practice
- c) disorganised structure with incorrect or inappropriate sequencing of content/ materials
- d) failure to develop a clear line of argument
- e) inadequate use of supportive evidence
- f) disproportionate reliance on unsupported generalisations
- g) evidence of insufficient appropriate reading and reflection
- h) inaccurate referencing
- i) poor use of an appropriate citation system
- j) inappropriate or poorly executed research methodologies
- k) unclear presentation

## **8.4 Second Assessment Opportunity (Referral)**

The regulations for passing this module are expressed in section 8.1 above. All students referred in a component will have to do the same referral work. *Further information regarding assessment*

*may be found in the University's Student Handbook. The deadline date for the submission of referral work will be posted on the Faculty notice board when it is known.*

**The referral exam, component A (50%)** will be in the same format as the exam in the first assessment period, with a similar balance and style of questions.

**Re-assessment for the coursework, component B (50%)**

Element 1: resubmit an applied project according to the instructions given in section 8.2 above.

Element 2: resubmit a dissertation proposal according to the instructions given in section 8.2 above.

## **9. Past Exam Papers**