

Duke University
Fuqua School of Business

Professors M. Brandt & A. Rampini
Finance 591

Financial Economics
Fall 2008/Spring 2009

Ph.D. Research Seminar in Financial Economics: Syllabus

Course Description

This course is intended for second- and third-year Ph.D. students with an interest in financial economics. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the art of critically reading and analyzing current research in finance. Each class focuses on the upcoming week's seminar paper. One student provides a formal discussion of the paper, and a different student provides a written referee report on the paper. The work of these two students provides a catalyst for discussion among the broader group.

Course Requirements

Classes meet on Fridays from noon to 1:20PM (some meetings may be rescheduled based on everyone's commitments). The first class meeting is on Friday, September 12. The class meets in the DeSanctis Seminar Room, unless otherwise announced in class or by email.

We can be reached at mbrandt@duke.edu and rampini@duke.edu respectively.

Your grade for this course is based on two paper discussions and two referee reports per semester. Each week one student is responsible for presenting a discussion of that week's paper. This discussion should be structured roughly along the lines of a conference discussion: it should last ten to twenty minutes and include accompanying slides. During the discussion, the student should provide a concise summary of the paper and should offer salient criticisms of the paper's shortcomings, as well as an appraisal of its strengths.

Each week a different student prepares a referee report on that same paper. This should be treated as if the student had been asked by the editor of a major finance journal for their opinion on the paper's publishability.

Each of these two students should work separately, without contacting the other student assigned to that paper. Their work provides a catalyst for discussion among the broader group.

Attendance in both the finance seminar and the finance pre-seminar is mandatory.

Course Materials

The materials for this course are each week's seminar paper as well as any background reading required to understand that paper. It is the student's responsibility to determine the range of background materials required for any given paper.