

Selected topics on PhD and research (12h) Course syllabus - 2024-2025

1. Course description

This professionalising 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 prioritises 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	08/10/24	Tuesday	13h30 – 15h00	IBD	Sebastian Bervoets
			15h00 – 16h30		Yann Bramoullé
			16h30 – 18h00		Renaud Bourlès
3	05/11/24	Tuesday	13h30 – 15h00	IBD	Roberta Ziparo
			15h00 – 16h30		Eva Raiber
			16h30 – 18h00		[TBA]
4	04/02/25	Tuesday	13h30 – 15h00	IBD	Cecilia García Peñalosa
			15h00 – 16h30		Timothée Demont / Paolo Melindi-Ghidi

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. 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 3. 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 4. 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 5. 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 6. TBA: “Managing multiple projects at a time”

Academics often have to juggle several projects at once in their research pipeline. This session will discuss the challenges that arise when working on multiple projects at varying stages of development and the ways early-stage researchers can best allocate and manage their time efficiently. The session will also touch on navigating work-life balance and other issues that academics perennially confront.

Lecture 7. Cecilia García Peñalosa: “Navigating Collaboration, Coauthorship, and Professional Relationships with a Special Focus for Women in Academia”

This course is designed to help doctoral students navigate the unique challenges arising from collaboration, co-authorship, and professional relationships in academia. Students will learn strategies for effectively managing coauthors, asserting their contributions, and navigating the unique challenges of gender dynamics in the workplace. The course offers practical guidance on building strong networks, negotiating authorship roles, and fostering collegial relationships with the goal of thriving in the academic world.

Lecture 8. Timothée Demont / Paolo Melindi-Ghidi (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.