

University of Maryland
Department of Economics

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Meetings: 1118 Tydings, M 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Additional Meetings/Hours: Scheduled as needed

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**Syllabus for ECON488K: Applied Market Research Practicum;
Kaulkin Ginsberg Research Fellow**

Practicum Website: <https://www.elms.umd.edu/>

Objectives:

Fellows will work in groups to gather macroeconomic research, industry-specific data, and qualitative information to analyze and interpret the information, ultimately utilizing the findings to develop investment recommendations for a simulated private equity client.

The culmination of each group's efforts will be a PowerPoint presentation of research and findings (~20 minutes) and a final report (~2,500 words). Kaulkin Ginsberg Company (KGC) may use high-level research by fellows to communicate changes in market conditions and the regulatory environment to clients through quarterly industry reports.

Expectations:

- Prepare for class and outside meetings.
 - Meeting time – both as a class on Mondays and individually as groups – is best spent focused on ways to improve research and clarifying points of focus.
- Attend meetings and always be on time.
 - Being timely demonstrates respect for team members and instructors, in addition to distinguishing oneself as a professional.
- Read the news.
 - Current events will help fellows develop an understanding of the assigned industry research so fellows can ask questions during meetings.
- Communicate regularly with team-members and instructors.
 - Regular communication prevents surprises and helps keep everyone focused on the tasks at hand. Asking questions is one of the most valuable things fellows can do to succeed in this practicum.

Benefits:

Throughout the Practicum, fellows will be given feedback and guidance on their research to help develop final products. Upon Practicum completion, fellows will have received written feedback on midterm and final presentations and final reports. Moreover, KGC will provide fellows with a letter of recommendation and references acknowledging each fellows' hard work during the



Practicum upon request and approval. Additionally, KGC will hold a post-Practicum dinner to discuss job market questions relating to resumes, cover letters, interview preparation, and any other questions fellows may have.

Market Assignments:

Each semester, KGC employees assign a market for each group to research throughout the duration of the Practicum. Fellows will size the respective market, while highlighting economic drivers, major players, regulatory climates and impacts, among other things, and how each is applicable to the accounts receivable management (ARM) industry – KGC’s target audience. KGC employees will spend time each class devoted to meeting with every group to discuss ongoing research and answer any questions.

Examples of prior market research assignments are:

- Auto Loan Financing Market
- United Kingdom ARM and Call Center Industries
- Insurance Market
- Credit Unions
- State Governments (e.g., Northeast States)
- Utilities
- Healthcare
- Cable & Telecommunications
- Student Loans

Resources:

Fellows have a number of resources available to them, but will have to actively seek out these resources to most greatly benefit.

1. Weekly meetings with Practicum instructors
2. Research support from librarians at McKeldin Library
 - Lily Griner
3. Database access through the University
4. The Stata Lab at LeFrak
 - Website: <http://www.oacs.umd.edu/ComputerLabServices.asp>
5. Online resources to consider:
 - The Wall Street Journal – www.WSJ.com
 - MarketWatch – www.marketwatch.com
 - IBISWorld – www.ibisworld.com
 - InsideARM – www.insideARM.com
 - Bureau of Economic Analysis – www.bea.gov



- Bureau of Labor Statistics – www.bls.gov
 - FRED - <http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/>
 - Federal Reserve Bank of New York - www.newyorkfed.org
 - Lynda Training - <http://www.it.umd.edu/lyndatraining/>
 - UMD's Virtual Business Information Center - <https://www.lib.umd.edu/vbic>
 - This list is not exhaustive and only represents some commonly used resources
6. Faculty assistance – most professors will make themselves available to provide guidance
- Before reaching out for guidance, consult faculty and staff biographies to identify a professor's field of expertise and ask if they are available
 - Website - <http://www.econ.umd.edu/faculty/profiles/>
7. The University of Maryland Writing Center
- <http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>
 - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
8. The University of Maryland Oral Communication Center
- <http://www.comm.umd.edu/undergraduate/OCC>
9. The University Career Center and the President's Promise
- Crystal Sehlke – Program Director and BSOS Liaison
 - Email: csehlke@umd.edu

Tips to Succeed:

1. Develop a timeline for research and tasks, budgeting extra time since “life happens”.
2. Identify each fellow's roles and responsibilities, mitigating confusion and inefficiencies.
3. Utilize strengths, whether it be statistical analysis, financial prowess, or public speaking.
4. Establish time(s) for group meetings to discuss occurrences and share findings.
5. Take advantage of all the resources available on campus – note Week 3 on the calendar.
6. Enjoy learning, developing research, and analyzing trends, while challenging oneself.



Meeting Calendar:

Week 1: January 28, 2019 – Introduction and general Q&A. Presentation on developing project management timelines (PMTs).

Week 2: February 4, 2019 – Presentation on econometric modeling. We'll review how to perform practical regression analyses using Excel and how to design graphs and forecasts. Discuss *The Accounts Receivable Management Industry Overview*.

Week 3: February 11, 2019 – Introduction to research systems with Ms. Lily Griner (McKeldin Library, Room 6101). Discuss *Conducting an Industry Analysis*.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TIMELINES ARE DUE VIA EMAIL BY 5:30PM.

Week 4: February 18, 2019 – Presentation on private equity firms and how they operate. We'll review the definition of private equity – the simulated client for the class. Discuss *The Law and Economics of Consumer Debt Collection and Its Regulation*.

Week 5: February 25, 2019 – Review of companies' annual reports and discuss *The Economics of Debt Collection: Enforcement of Consumer Credit Contracts*.

Week 6: March 4, 2019 – Presentation on *Presentation Skills and Design*. Discuss *An Industry in Transition*. We'll review good and bad presentation habits and review various types of graphs fellows may utilize and when to use each.

Week 7: March 11, 2019 – **MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS.**

Week 8: March 18, 2019 – **SPRING BREAK. NO IN-CLASS MEETING THIS WEEK.**

Week 9: March 25, 2019 – Review midterm presentation feedback and ongoing research opportunities within each group. Instructors will review midterms with groups, in addition to discussing and answering specific questions.

Week 10: April 1, 2019 – Presentation on writing for professional research. We'll discuss the final reports and how to properly write and format a professional research submission as it relates to this Practicum.

Week 11: April 8, 2019 – Discuss resumes and cover letters. We'll review examples of good and bad resumes and cover letters to understand goals and learn some best practices.

Week 12: April 15, 2019 – Final review and Q&A session.

FINAL REPORTS OUTLINES DUE VIA EMAIL BY 5:30PM (OPTIONAL).

Week 13: April 22, 2019 – **FINAL PRESENTATIONS.**

Week 14: April 29, 2019 – **FINAL REPORTS DUE VIA EMAIL BY 11:59PM ON MAY 3.**

Week 15: May 6, 2019 – End-of-the-semester dinner (optional). This is an opportunity for KGC to thank fellows for their hard work, while allowing instructors to share feedback in-person with fellows on Practicum experiences and discuss professional references, letters of recommendation, or any post-graduate/internship experiences.