

**Prof. Dr. Robert Gillenkirch**

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## **Doctoral Course: Experimental Research in Accounting**

*March 30 and 31, 2017, at the University of Osnabrück*

### **Objectives of the Course:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce participants to the experimental research method, and how it can be successfully applied to investigate accounting research questions. The focus of the course will be on how to derive an experimental design from an accounting research question which provides a valid test of the hypotheses developed from the research question. Course work will focus on discussing recent research papers that provide insights into state-of-the-art experimental accounting research, and which will also give the participants the opportunity to practice evaluating research.

### **List of Research Papers:**

In the course, six research papers will be discussed:

1. Bol, Kramer, and Maas (2016): How Control System Design Affects Performance Evaluation Compression: The Role of Information Accuracy and Outcome Transparency. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 51, 64-73.
2. Cardinaels and Yin (2016): Think Twice before Going for Incentives: Social Norms and the Principal's Decision on Compensation Contracts. *Journal of Accounting Research* 53 (5), 985-1015.
3. Cardinaels (2016): Earnings Benchmarks, Information Systems, and their Impact on the Degree of Honesty in Managerial Reporting. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 52, 50-62.
4. Christ, Cianci, and Napshin (2016): The Interactive Effects of Perceived Environmental Uncertainty and Control System Type on Managers' Willingness to Recommend Strategic Change. Working Paper, ssrn.
5. Erickson, Hewitt, and Maines (2016): Do Investors Perceive Low Risk When Earnings are Smooth Relative to the Volatility of Operating Cash Flows? *Discerning Opportunity and Incentive to Report Smooth Earnings*. *The Accounting Review*, forthcoming.
6. Lachmann, Stefani, and Wöhrmann (2015): Fair Value Value Accounting for Liabilities: Presentation Format of Credit Risk Changes and Individual Information Processing. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 41, 21-38.

The papers can be organized along the Financial vs. Managerial Accounting and the Decision Usefulness versus Stewardship categories:

	Financial Accounting	Management Accounting
Decision Usefulness of Accounting Information	5,6	4
Stewardship Value of Accounting Information	3	1,2

### **Course Language:**

Presentations and discussions will be either in English or German language, as preferred by the participants.

### **Room, Travel and Accommodation:**

Please come to the seminar room no. 29/E13 in Rolandstr. 8.

For travel and accommodation options please contact Monika Schramm:

monika.schramm@uni-osnabrueck.de, Phone: 0541-9692731.

### Course Requirements:

#### A Introductory Reading

In preparing for the course, participants are required to read the following literature:

- Friedman, D., and Sunder, S. 1994. Experimental Methods. Chapters 1-3.
- Libby, R., Bloomfield, R. and Nelson, M. W. 2002. Experimental research in financial accounting. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 27: 775–810.
- Sprinkle, G.B. (2003): Perspectives on experimental research in managerial accounting. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 28, 287-318.

You may prefer to focus on one of the survey papers (either Libby et al. or Sprinkle) according to your own research profile.

#### B Discussion Paper and Discussion Leadership

For each research paper from the list of six, discussion leaders will be assigned. Their task is to carefully read the paper in order to provide a 3-4 pages discussion. The discussion has to be submitted to Prof. Gillenkirch via E-Mail no later than **March 24, 2017**. It has to address at least the following issues: (i) What is the research question of the research paper? (ii) What is the answer to the research question, as reported in the paper? (iii) What is the experimental design? (iv) What insights does the paper give you? (v) What are your concerns with the paper, esp. with theory development and experimental design? - In the course, the papers will be discussed after informal introductory presentations (10-15 minutes) of the discussion leaders (no slides, please). Discussion leaders will moderate the discussion.

#### C Discussion Participation

Participants are expected to come prepared to the course, implying that they have read *all* papers from the list of six. In reading the papers, make sure that you can answer the questions (i)-(iii) as above.

### Course Schedule *(Starting time might be changed according to participants' travel schedules):*

Day 1: 10:00 - 11:30 Introduction to experimental research in accounting • 11:30 - 11:45 Coffee Break  
• 11:45 - 13:00 Testing theory by way of an experiment • 13:00 - 13:45 Lunch Break • 13:45 - 15:00 Experimental Design Issues (1) • 15:00 - 15:15 Coffee Break • 15:15 - 16:30 Experimental Design Issues (2) • 16:30 - 16:45 Coffee Break • 16:45 - 18:00 Analyzing experimental data. (Joint Dinner: 19:30)

Day 2: 10:00 - 11:30 Presentations 1 and 2 • 11:30 - 11:45 Coffee Break • 11:45 - 13:15 Presentations 3 and 4 • 13:15 - 14:00 Lunch Break • 14:00 - 15:30 Presentations 5 and 6 • 15:30 - 15:45 Coffee Break • 15:45 - 17:00 Wrap-up.

Day 1 will be lectures by Prof. Gillenkirch, day 2 will be classroom discussions.

### Course registration and Discussion Assignments:

Please contact Prof. Gillenkirch for all questions regarding the course except travel and accommodation. Contact: robert.gillenkirch@uni-osnabrueck.de

Registration is open until March 10, 2016.

When registering for the course, please provide a full preference list over the six papers for Prof. Gillenkirch. After the registration deadline, assignments of participants to papers will be made and announced. If two participants are assigned to a paper, they are expected to work independently on their discussion, but to coordinate a joint presentation in the seminar.

### Research Proposal:

You are kindly asked to prepare an additional task for the seminar: Think about a research question you would like to investigate. Think about why and how you would use the experimental method for this investigation. Prepare a 1-2 page proposal for your research idea. Preparation and presentation in the seminar are voluntary.