ECN 297
NOTES ON THE “PROSPECTUS”

Here is some guidance on what I expect in the research prospectus that you will work up over the remainder of the semester. It should comprise the following elements:

1. **Problem statement**: a clear account of what it is you plan to investigate, and why it is interesting and/or important.

2. A section on the **methodology** you propose to follow. This is most relevant for projects that have a statistical component, but is also pertinent for theoretical or historical papers: How exactly do you plan to go about the work, in what stages, and using what methods?

3. **Review of the literature**. For the Honors paper itself this should be quite thorough. For the prospectus it can be briefer. I expect to see you citing, and offering some discussion of, three or more (highly) relevant sources.

4. **Data sources**. If the project involves empirical data, you should give a preliminary account of your sources. You may not have your full dataset—that’s work for the Spring—but at this point we’re looking for a sort of “proof of concept.” If possible, some tables and graphs (an indication that you have begun to explore the data) would be good.

5. **References**. A meticulous listing of all sources cited.

Good prospectuses in the past have typically run to about 5 or 6 pages. The prospectus is not exactly a “contract” to pursue a particular line of research in the Spring. Nonetheless, it presents a useful opportunity to get started, and to get some practice in presenting ideas clearly and carefully.

First draft due: Friday, November 20. Final copy due: Friday, December 4.