

Term paper assignment

Econ 244, Spring 2021

General details

Purpose: To explore applications of microeconomic theory to policy questions and to develop the ability to analyze policy questions using economic reasoning and theory.

In this assignment, you will:

- Critically read and evaluate academic papers on economic topics;
- Develop a research question informed by economic theory and academic sources;
- Develop a compelling and organized answer to your research question using academic research on the topic;
- Organize your paper according to field-appropriate formatting and style, including an abstract, an introduction and conclusion, labeled sections, and properly-cited references;
- Edit writing and respond to peer and instructor feedback on organization, use of sources, citations, and writing style;
- Appropriately cite and give credit for others' words, ideas, and research.

Format: The final product of this assignment will be a typed, 5-7 page paper on one of the topics listed below. There will be several intermediate steps that you are required to submit throughout the semester, including:

General topic submission —2%
Initial reaction to assigned readings —7%
Annotated bibliography —8%
Outline —10%
Thesis statement and abstract—8%
First draft-- **submit for peer review**—15%
Final term paper—50%

Due dates for each of these steps can be found in the course schedule (linked in the Course orientation menu tab) or the course calendar (Course calendar menu tab).

These steps will give you the chance to receive feedback on your work and guide you through the process. **The more effort you put into the intermediate steps, the easier you will find writing your final paper.** Guidelines on length are given after each description below; you may deviate from these a little, but they are good indicators of how much you should be writing for each assignment. Feedback on each intermediate step will be given via Blackboard within three days, based on the provided rubric for that step. Rubrics for each step can be accessed on Blackboard by clicking on the assignment, then clicking “View Rubric” in the grey box near the top. After you submit your assignment, you can access my feedback on the rubric by viewing your submission through the Grade Center and clicking the rubric icon in the menu on the right.

Your final grade is contingent on incorporating my feedback on previous steps of the assignment.

All submissions should be neatly typed according to the requirements listed in the Style section below and submitted as a PDF or .docx file to Blackboard. The intermediate steps are subject to the same late work policy as homework (10% off per day late, with no late assignments accepted more than three days after the due date). **No final term papers will be accepted as late assignments.** Instead, late final submissions will be awarded the same grade as the draft.

Topics

1. Water or air pollution
2. Minimum wage legislation
3. Gender discrimination in the labor market
4. US immigration and/or immigration policy
5. Internet commerce

Intermediate steps

General topic submission

Submit a few paragraphs explaining the economic significance of your chosen topic, as well as why you personally chose it. Propose a preliminary research question; it should be (i) economically interesting and (ii) feasible to fully answer within 5-7 pages. List and explain 2-3 economic theories or concepts that apply to this question. Finally, discuss what sub-questions you will need to answer in order to answer your main question.

Length: 1-2 pages

Resources:

- [How to write a research question](#)

Initial reaction to assigned readings

Revise your preliminary research question based on my feedback and put it at the top of your assignment.

For at least two assigned readings:

- Briefly summarize the main points of the reading
- Explain how this reading might contribute to your final term paper. Simply saying 'it will not contribute' or 'it will be very helpful' are not complete responses-- include specific pieces of evidence or conclusions that inform your paper or provide a partial answer to your research question.
- Briefly critique the reading-- is it out of date? Can you think of logical flaws or concerns you have about the data or analysis?
- Write down further questions you still have on your research question after completing this reading.

This can be fairly informal-- you may use bullet points and lists, but make sure that your submission is understandable. **You must quote and cite page numbers for phrases and sentences taken directly from sources.**

Length: 2-3 pages

Research question and annotated bibliography

Based on previous work and my feedback, revise your research question. This should be a short, clear question that you think you can adequately answer in 5-7 pages. See the resources below for help. Put the research question at the top of the page.

Next, follow up on the types of sources you listed in your initial reaction to the readings. Build a short bibliography of at least five academic sources that contribute arguments or evidence to your paper. Sources should be academic articles or books, preferably peer-reviewed-- see resources below for how to conduct searches in academic databases. The two papers you have already analyzed in the assigned readings do not count towards the five papers.

Briefly describe how the papers you've found contribute, the evidence they present, and evaluate their sources. Some questions to think about could be:

- Do you see holes in their logic?
- Is the information up-to-date?
- Do any of your sources disagree with one another?
- Does the source highlight any shortcomings in the economic theory or research related to this topic?

You can use bulleting and lists to help organize your thoughts, but try to mainly use complete sentences and explain your thoughts fully. Keep in mind that these sources are not the only ones you will use in your final paper; you will need to find sources to support each argument or

piece of evidence you present. You are welcome to submit more than five sources for this assignment. **You must quote and cite page numbers for phrases and sentences taken directly from sources.**

Length: 2-4 pages

Resources:

- [How to write a research question](#)
- [About annotated bibliographies](#)
- [Breakdown of writing an annotated bibliography](#)
- [How to write an annotated bibliography](#)
- [Using Google Scholar to find sources](#)
- [CUA library search](#)

Outline

Create an outline of your paper that presents all the key arguments necessary to answer your research question. Use all the sources you've identified to guide and support your arguments. Focus on creating a paper that flows logically from the question through arguments and counter-arguments until you reach your conclusion. Your outline should contain all major sections of the paper, as well as bullet points with a brief description or indication of what you will say in each section or paragraph. **You must cite the sources of ideas, arguments, statistics, quotes, etc. as necessary using Chicago author-date in-text notation.** Try to be as detailed as you can; this will help you as you write your final paper.

Length: 3-5 pages

Thesis statement and abstract

Based on your outline and research, draft a thesis statement for your paper. It should be a complete sentence that fully answers your research question and gives the reader an idea of the main points of your paper.

Draft an abstract for your paper. This should be a paragraph that describes the topic of the paper, the main points or pieces of evidence you will use, and then integrates your thesis to give the reader a complete roadmap to your paper. Look at the following resources for guidance, particularly if you have not written an abstract before.

Length: 1 page

Resources:

- [How to write an abstract](#)
- [Abstract examples](#)

First draft

Using your outline and your abstract, draft a first version of your final paper. Use complete sentences, correct grammar and citations, etc. in accordance with the style guidelines. This draft will be graded against the same rubric as the final paper, so your feedback will focus on the areas in which the paper needs most improvement.

We will do peer review with your first draft before you submit it for a grade; please check the course calendar for dates. I have included questions in the peer review submission that guide you through the rubric and ask you to reflect on what you have done and what you still need to work on. This is a helpful part of the writing process for you, and will also guide your reviewers to give you more helpful feedback. Please allow at least 30 minutes to answer these questions thoughtfully, and **note that Blackboard will not allow you to participate in peer review if you miss the deadline.**

Length: 5-7 pages

Final paper submission

Incorporate all classmate and professor feedback. Edit your paper so that it flows well and presents your evidence in an organized and easy-to-read way. Use complete sentences, correct grammar and citations, etc according to the style guidelines.

Length: 5-7 pages (please note that meeting this page limit is part of the grading rubric for your final paper)

Style guidelines

All submissions should be typed in 12-pt Times New Roman with 1.5 spacing, saved as a PDF or .docx file.

If you would like to receive comments via Google Docs, please submit a PDF to Blackboard, and add a Google Docs link to the comments section of the submission page. **I must be able to edit the Google Doc.**

You should use Chicago in-text author-date style for citations (not footnotes). An example would be:

According to Perloff (2017, 23), price theory is used as another name for microeconomics because prices are so fundamental in determining the outcomes of markets.

Or:

Price theory is sometimes used as another name for microeconomics because prices are so fundamental in determining the outcomes of markets (Perloff 2017, 23).

The subsequent bibliographic entry would then read:

Perloff, Jeffrey M. *Microeconomics : Theory and Applications with Calculus*. Fourth edition. Boston: Pearson, 2017.

I recommend using citation software such as Zotero or RefWorks, although it is not required. Such programs cite sources and provide a complete bibliography in the style of your choice. I am familiar and can help with Zotero, and the library can help with support for other programs.

Resources:

- [OWL guide to Chicago citations](#)
- [Zotero](#)
- [RefWorks info from CUA library](#)