

Research Paper for Econ. 1051

I want you to write a short review of some research or policy debates in an area of economics. I am quite flexible as to the topic. Here are the requirements.

1. This cannot be a paper you are writing, or have written, for another class.

This must be new work on your part. You may write on a related topic, or extend the survey you did in the earlier paper. However, this must be substantially new work on your part. If you have any questions about this make sure you discuss this with me.

2. The topic must be approved in advance.

By mid-semester you need to give me a one paragraph proposal that briefly describes the paper you propose to write and a list of the articles or reports you will be reviewing. The references are very important. No reference = no approval.

Use a standard MLA style for the bibliographic references.

3. Literature review and synthesis.

What I want you to do in this paper is to critically review some articles or research reports on a topic. One form this might take is a pro/con review. For example, you might take medical savings accounts and review some articles or policy reports that support or oppose the idea. Of course, articles that take no position are fine as well. Nor do you have to take a position.

4. What kind of articles?

The articles must be substantial and not just journalistic. Articles from economics or public policy journals are fine. So are articles from reputable economic or public policy “think tanks.” However, journalistic articles (e.g., WSJ, The Economist) are not.

Here are some potential sources:

NBER working papers. www.nber.org
(from an MU account you can download these without charge. Otherwise they are \$5)

Policy Institutes

Brookings Institution. Slightly liberal on most issues. Very high quality research.

American Enterprise Institute. Somewhat conservative.

Economic Policy Institute. Very liberal. Opposes free trade. Union-oriented.

Cato Institute. Libertarian.

Heritage Foundation. Conservative.

Of course there are many think tanks that focus on a narrower range of issues.

Urban Institute. Focuses on a variety of problems of cities.

Depending on your topic you will find that government agencies publish lots of articles and research papers (e.g., Commerce Dept., Environmental Protection Agency, International Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education).

One source for finding economics articles is

Econlit. You can get on this through the MU library. It the premier economic literature database.

Many economics articles (if older than a few years), can be downloaded from

JSTOR

also available through the MU library.

5. Paper Style

You should follow the scholarly style used in journal articles and policy briefs. This minimizes the use of footnotes in favor of citations in the text, e.g.,

“Podgursky (2004) argues that teacher salary schedules are very inefficient.”

First person is OK.

“I find the argument in Podgursky (2004) concerning teacher salary schedules unpersuasive for several reasons. First, he was never a school teacher.”

It’s OK to express an opinion. Just back up your opinions with analysis.

6. Paper Length

10-12 pages, typed, double-spaced, font = 12., normal (1”) L and R margins.

This includes a reference page.