Labor Economics – Econ 4311  
Fall 2009  
Term Paper Information

Below is a list of topics for the term paper. You can also choose your own topic. If you would like to choose your own topic, please get it approved by me in office hours before you submit your paper proposal.

Note that I have provided at least three resources to guide your research for each suggested topic below. Any opinions of the authors of the listed resources do not necessarily reflect my own opinions; these resources are simply provided to get you started in your work. One way to find additional resources on your topic is to review the bibliographies of the listed resources.

**Term Paper Requirements**

1) Paper Proposal  
Your paper proposal should be two pages in length and, in addition, include a list of references that you plan to use for your paper. You must use at least three references for your paper and at least two references must be from refereed journal articles. You may add references later if you find additional material on your topic after the paper proposal is due. This proposal should motivate your paper (i.e. why did you choose your topic, what is interesting/important about it). A good proposal can be incorporated into your paper in the introduction.

2) Term Paper (2 drafts)  
Your term paper should be at least 5 pages long and no more than 8 pages long. Concise presentation will be an important part of your grade (i.e., don’t ramble or “waste” sentences).

**General Rules**

1) Use 12-point font and 1-inch margins and double-space everything.  
2) Be sure to address the topic you choose thoroughly and concisely. Your grade will depend on your ability to stay focused on the topic and provide a relevant discussion.  
3) When referencing other work in the text, do so with the author(s) last name and year of the paper/book. For example, Johnson (1997) provides evidence of customer-based discrimination in automobile markets. Be sure that all cited work is listed in your bibliography.  
4) Your paper should be formal and scientific. Avoid using the pronoun “I” whenever possible and be sure not to include unsupported opinions. That is, if your research leads you to believe that teachers’ levels of education raise student performance, do not write “I think teachers’ levels of education raise student performance.” Instead,
Evidence from Author (year) indicates that teachers’ levels of education improve student performance."

5) Do not plagiarize. It is not worth it.

6) Include page numbers on each page and be sure to write your name on the first page.

7) Sample bibliography entries:

**Journal Article**


**Book**


**Topics List (References generally available from JSTOR.org)**

1) What are the sources of racial discrimination in society? What are some of the economic consequences of discrimination?


2) Schooling inputs do not affect student performance. Argue for or against this statement.


3) What is the source of returns to schooling - signaling or human capital formation?


4) Discuss the persistence of wage gaps by race.

5) **Discuss the persistence of wage gaps by gender.**

6) **How does the labor supply of single mothers respond to changes in welfare policy? What types of welfare reform does research suggest that we should consider in the future?**

7) **Immigration lowers wages for workers in the destination nation but is efficiency enhancing. Argue for or against this statement.**

8) **How do modern labor unions affect workers and labor markets?**