

## **Econ 4432W Writing Assignment**

### **Objective**

The main objective of writing a term paper is giving you the opportunity to:

1. Apply the analytical skills and intuition obtained in the class to examine an issue in which you have special interest.
2. Induce critical thinking on your part, which involves integrating what you are learning and real-world economic issues.
3. Learn how to write a formal paper, to be read by other economists.

### **Instructions**

The topic you select for your paper must be related to the ones treated in the class. The best way to get started is to begin by choosing a topic that interests you. You should then try to focus on a particular aspect of the topic you are considering and must ask specific questions that you think are important. The next step is to find suitable evidence, ie. data and analytical tools, to explore the question at hand. Your work must clearly state the question/problem you are trying to explain/solve and the methods in which you plan to do this. Also note that mere reporting of fact is not enough, there must be some analytical/critical aspect in your paper, in which you give your own views and then validate them using logical and analytical tools.

The writing assignment includes revisions of drafts/proposals on which students receive feedback. The writing assignment will consist of four parts. The first is proposed topic, the second is an outline of the report, the third is a First Draft, and the fourth will be the Final Paper/Report.

#### **1. Submit Topic**

For this assignment, submit a thesis paragraph clearly describing your topic (be clear about what your question is) and how you intend to analyze it.

#### **2. Submit Outline**

You are required to submit a 2-3 page (that does not include the title page and the page on which you write your question) paper giving a clear outline of your project. Once you have submitted the draft you cannot change your topic. The outline must contain:

- A title page with your name
- A second page where you clearly write down your question(s) in 2-3 sentences.
- A preliminary introduction describing the question(s) you have chosen and your motivation for choosing it. Be brief. Also state the way(s) (e.g., by showing and

- interpreting data, by building a theoretical model, etc) you are going to employ to answer your question(s).
- A summary of the main points of your arguments. Each point must have its own section in the outline.
  - A conclusion in which you restate the initial problem you were analyzing and summarize the main points you developed in your paper.
  - A bibliography.
  - Each student is required to read at least one academic economic publication. The objective of this reading is for you to become familiar with the structure and format of writing in economics.

Note the use of the abstract, the introduction and conclusion, the use of side headings, and the general format and flow of ideas. Each student must submit the complete reference of the article read on a separate page. Suggested economic publications are: *Econometrica*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *American Economic Review*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Journal of International Economics*, *Journal of Monetary Economics* and *International Economic Review*. Other publications including *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, magazines and newspapers do not qualify as academic publication (though might be useful resources for information for your topic).

### **3. Submit first draft**

The next thing due is the first draft of your writing assignment. This must be at least 10 pages (plus graphs, charts, bibliography, etc), Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced. Please take into account the earlier suggestions given. You should treat this as your final work and should have to make only minor changes to this to submit your final version of the paper. This draft will be returned to you with comments, questions, and suggestions for improvement. This first draft must contain the same elements as the outline but they must be fully developed and articulated. Please remember to include your two previous graded assignments (the topic and outline) and the peer review sheet with this draft.

### **4. Submit final draft**

The final version is basically the polished version of your first version with all corrections and suggestions incorporated. It will not be necessary to add new material at this stage, unless it alters the conclusions of your paper substantially. The total length must be of at least 10 pages, plus additional charts, graphs, references and data. Please staple all the previous reports and drafts you have submitted (i.e. 1-3 above), with the final report on top. You must also send me your final report via e-mail.

## **Plagiarism**

This involves passing off anyone else's work as your own, and includes copying a whole paper or parts of it and claiming it as your own work. If you use any other persons work, words, or ideas, you must cite and acknowledge the sources. Note that the university has purchased a program that allows professors to check if any student paper, essay, or research paper has been copied or paraphrased from the internet. Please check the following web-site for more details on plagiarism <http://cisw.cla.umn.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. We intend to use the above mentioned anti-plagiarism program (called TurnItIn), if necessary, and ask you to cooperate by submitting all versions of your paper via e-mail.

## **Writing Assignment Grade**

Topic: 5/100

Outline of the paper: 15/100

First Draft: 30/100

Final Paper: 50 /100

## **Schedule for Writing Assignment**

February 12, Topic

March 4, Outline

April 10, First draft

May 8, Final draft

## **Criterion of a Successful Paper**

I will grade the paper according to:

1. Does the report ask a question about an economic mechanism or policy choice?
2. Does it provide an answer based on economic theory or economic principle?
3. Has enough data been provided?
4. Is it written in a clear, concise and grammatically correct style?
5. Are spelling and word usage correct?
6. What type of references and sources were used?
7. Has the student improved according to my previous suggestions?

## **Choosing a Topic**

You are encouraged to find your own topic and to choose something you have a strong interest in. Your topic must address some specific issue or question.

Here are some suggestions for topics that you can use.

1. Why has the U.S. current account deficit increased so much during the last decade?
2. Why are emerging countries accumulating so much foreign reserves during the last decade?
3. What role did international investors play in the 1997 Asian Crises (or Argentina 2001, Mexico 1995)?
4. What role did fiscal deficits (or fiscal policy) play in the 1997 Asian Crises? (or Argentina 2001, Mexico 1995)
5. Why are nominal (or real) exchange rates so volatile?