

Economics 548 International Economic Relations
Summer 2007
Paper Assignment

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Due date: Wednesday, July 25, 2007

The purpose of the paper is to get you to think critically and in depth about a specific international economic question. The format is that of a research paper, however you have some freedom to argue a policy position as long as your argument is well-documented.

The first question everyone asks is how long the essay has to be. The absolute minimum is 8 pages (double-spaced). That is, the highest grade you can get with less than 8 pages is a C. The target is 10 pages. As a reference point, note that a typical newspaper op-ed is the equivalent of around 2 to 3 pages, and we all know how limiting that format can be and how difficult it can be to bring in sources and documentation into such a short paper. Thus, you might want to think of this paper as being the expansion of something you might see in a shorter essay. Take a topic that is appropriate for a short op-ed (perhaps one that you have seen) and back it up with facts, evidence, and economic models or theories. If you follow this strategy, you may indeed find that 10 pages is not enough. If that is the case, feel free to go long. However, let's try for 15 to 20 pages as an upper limit. Anything longer than that can tend to be rambling and unfocused. So please try to keep it concise. Your future employers will demand concise, insightful analyses. This is a good assignment to sharpen your writing skills. Use the skills you have learned in other courses. Employers are always telling college professors that writing skills are essential for success in the workplace. Write so that you will be understood. 25% of this assignment is based on the clarity of your writing. 60% is based on the economic content. 10% is based on grammar and spelling. 5% is based on following all of the formatting directions below.

Your paper should consist of the following:

- A statement of the problem or issue and why it is of importance. (Introduction—make a good first impression on the reader)
- Any necessary background information.
- An economic analysis of the problem: be sure to include any marginal analysis that is appropriate. Are there trade-offs? The use of graphs or tables may strengthen your analysis. (This analysis should lead you to your conclusion.)
- If your essay is meant to persuade the reader, the persuasive part should come at this point, after background and analysis.

- A concluding summary paragraph at the end. (Don't end suddenly. The conclusion is important.)

As long as you include these elements, you may add other relevant items if you wish. You may organize your paper as you see fit for your topic. (Some projects will make more use of data than others will, so the analysis portion may have greater importance. Other projects will consider a host of policy options, so a discussion of the effects of the options may be of greater importance.)

You should feel free to ask me about your topic and your paper at any time.

Format

Include a title page with your name, the title of your essay, your section number, and the date. On your title page, please include this statement:

By signing this page, I represent that this work is my own. I have read and am familiar with the University's policy on Academic Integrity (<http://www.wiu.edu/VPAS/handbook/policies/acintegrity.shtml>). I understand the consequences of violating this policy.

Sign your name below the statement.

The essay should begin on the next page. Follow these guidelines:

- 12 point font
- Double Spaced
- Any data you use should be in an appendix at the end. Charts and graphs (if you use them) should also come at the end.
- About a 1 inch margin on all sides (this is the default in Microsoft Word, so if that's what you use, you don't need to change anything)
- Headings on different sections are optional, but they might help you keep organized
- Any direct quotes from your sources must be cited either in a footnote or in the text. For example,

According to the *Wall St. Journal*, "U.S. personal income grew more than expected in September, reflecting insurance payments and other effects from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita" (accessed on-line 31 October 2005)

or...

John Taylor defines capital income as “the sum of profits, rental payments, and interest payments” (p. 115).

- All works referenced in the body of the essay must also be listed in the bibliography. There are different styles used in bibliographies. Pick one (e.g. MLA) and be consistent. For example, the two works cited above would be listed as follows.

Walsh, Campion and Boessenkool, Antonie. “Spending Rises 0.5% Incomes Jump 1.7%” *Wall Street Journal*, 31 October 2005,

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB113076476516784126.html?mod=economy_lead_story_lsc, (accessed on 31 October 2005).

Taylor, John. *Principles of Macroeconomics* (4th edition). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

- Web based sources are fine as long as they are reputable. Part of this assignment involves being able to make that distinction. Please ask if you have any questions about the reliability of a web site. Generally sites that are operated by major media are fine (e.g. Wall St. Journal, Washington Post, etc.). In your bibliography, you should list a permanent link to the article you are citing. Do not list the link of an index page. You should be able to paste the link into a browser and go right back to the article you cite. Again, this is usually not a problem for major media web sites.
- In all cases, the usual standards of citing your sources apply. If it is a direct quote, put it in quotes and cite it. If you are paraphrasing or obtaining background information, cite the source. I spot check your sources. Everyone is entitled one honest mistake, but if I find a direct quote that is not in quotes or a paraphrase that is not cited, I will check every source in your essay. If the problems are widespread in your essay, it is evidence of plagiarism.
- You must also turn in an electronic copy of your essay by e-mail. If you use Microsoft Word, you may send the “.doc” file. If you use another word processor, please save it as a text file “.txt” (most word processors have this option) and send that. Follow these instructions:
- In the subject line of your e-mail, write: “econ 548 essay” just like it is here, lowercase, without the quotes (so I can route it to a specific folder in my e-mail).