

**Assignment Objective:**

The objective of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to:

1. Apply analytical and empirical skills and economic concepts to examine an interesting economic development issue.
2. Learn how to write a formal report underpinned by economic logic and data evidence.

**Expectations for the Assignment**

- ◆ Your report should include the economic analysis of a “development issue”, and your own insight into the factors involved. Survey or descriptive papers (reporting other people’s work/ideas on issues) or hypothetical scenarios are not acceptable. Your target audience for the report is educated college graduates.
- ◆ *The assignment has four parts; each part must be turned in on the due date. Late assignments will only be accepted under documented special circumstances.*
- ◆ We will use Moodle to organize all files related to this assignment. The assignments must be uploaded directly to Moodle.
- ◆ The only acceptable format is .pdf, we will use the Review options on PDF to provide comments and make corrections to your paper.
- ◆ If you have any problem understanding what is expected from you or how to go about completing this assignment successfully, please contact me or the writing assistant.

**Assignment Format**

The assignment has four parts, each nesting the preceding one

1. Topic
2. Outline
3. First Draft
4. Final Version

Please name the files you upload to the Moodle according to the titles above. Please include your name in the file name. For instance, I expect your topic to appear in folder as “Topic\_LastName,FirstName.pdf”.

**1. TOPIC of the Report- DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2018 5:00 PM**  
**TOPIC MUST BE ACCEPTED BY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2018 AT NOON**

- ◆ You must submit a one-page paper carefully explaining the chosen topic.
- ◆ Title (one sentence bold typed): Write down the *question you would like to answer*. This question must be related to a development issue and must be susceptible of being solved by the analysis you plan to undertake.
- ◆ First paragraph: Describe possible answers to this question and which one you believe to be the most plausible and why. Explain why it is an interesting question to think about.
- ◆ Second paragraph: Describe how you would go about finding the answer to this question. In particular, where you could find reliable *data* to help you with the analysis.

*Choosing a Topic*

- ◆ Be careful that your project is not too general or ambitious. If it is, narrow it to some specific aspect of a more general question. Remember that well-defined topics are easier to complete successfully.
- ◆ Your question must not be about one particular country or a small subset of countries. The group of countries your question is about must have at least 20 elements (the more the better). The unit of observation does not need to be countries; it could be states, regions or even municipalities. However, in these cases it is usually hard to find data, so make sure to check data availability beforehand. Make sure you can obtain at least 20 years of data for the countries you chose (the same 20 years for all countries).
- ◆ Do not pick illegal goods or countries which do not have reliable data.

*Examples of Possible Topics*

- ◆ Here are some examples of good topics:
  - What is the effect of some economic variable (e.g. college education) on the growth rates (or levels of GDP) of some group of countries (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa)?
  - What is the impact of a particular type of economic policy on the growth rates (or levels of GDP) of some group of countries. For topics of this type you need to have at least 15 countries that implemented the policy and 15 that did not.
  - How differently does some economic variable or policy affect the economic growth in different groups of countries (e.g. rich versus poor). For topics of this type you need to have at least 15 countries in each group.

- ◆ Below are examples of “UNACCEPTABLE” topics because they are either vague, not related to development, or too broad:
  - Asian Financial Crises.
  - How does fiscal policy affect European countries.
  - Hyperinflation.
  - How did a particular policy affect growth rates in Brazil.
  - Trade in Coffee between US and Columbia.
  - Any hypothetical scenario or a “development survey”
- ◆ Students are not allowed to choose the same topic. Even if it happens by chance we will need to deal with it.

**2. OUTLINE of the Report- DUE FRIDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2018 AT 5:00 PM**

You must submit a 3-5 page paper giving a clear outline of your project. It should contain:

- ◆ The title of the report and your name.
- ◆ A clear introduction describing the development issue you chose and the way you have decided to analyze it. The question that you are trying to answer should be included in your introduction.
- ◆ A literature review. You should read 2-3 papers related to your topic and give a brief summary of those papers. You should cite them properly using any standard citation method. You should also comment on how your analysis relates to theirs; the differences and similarities.
- ◆ A summary of your essential ideas or arguments you plan to elaborate on. Try to limit yourself to 3 main points. Feel free to make subsections where needed. Try to base your arguments on the theoretical analysis you learned in class.
- ◆ A clear plan of how you are going to answer the question you have proposed. The plan should include a description of where you can find the data you need and what you plan on doing with it.
- ◆ A conclusion in which you summarize the main points you have developed so far.
- ◆ A bibliography where you list the references and data used. You may add an appendix for graphs, data, or mathematical derivations.

NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE DATA BY THE TIME YOU SUBMIT THE OUTLINE. YOUR IDEAS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED ENOUGH THAT YOU KNOW WHAT VARIABLES YOU WILL NEED. HAVE THESE VARIABLES DOWNLOADED AT THIS POINT.

**3. FIRST DRAFT- DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2018 AT 5:00 PM**

- ◆ You should submit a 10-20 page version of your paper containing all your main ideas/points. The paragraphs should be double spaced and the font Times New Roman size 12.
- ◆ If your first draft is good, you will only have to make minor revisions before turning it in as your final report and will not need to include new material.
- ◆ In the first paragraph of your introduction you must include a thesis statement<sup>1</sup>, one sentence (bold type). The thesis statement should convey your main idea to the reader; it should be an answer to the question you put forward in your outline. The introduction should also explain why you selected the development issue and the set of countries (or units of observation) you did; why are they interesting?
- ◆ The first draft should contain the same elements as the outline, but each point should be fully developed and articulated and the data analysis should be complete. See the file “Paper Structure.pdf” for more information on how to structure your paper.
- ◆ You need to provide a complete list of references in your bibliography. Include only the sources you actually used in your paper and make sure your sources are credible.

---

<sup>1</sup> Some helpful suggestions on thesis statements can be found on the websites below:

- Definition and examples of thesis statements (St. Cloud State University):  
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/thesistatement.html>
- How to write a thesis statement (Indiana University):  
[http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis\\_statement.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml)
- A website that helps you develop a thesis statement:  
<http://www.ozline.com/electraguide/thesis.html>
- Developing a thesis statement (University of Wisconsin)  
[http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis\\_complete.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis_complete.html)
- Thesis Statements (University of North Carolina)  
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html>

**4. FINAL REPORT- DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2018 AT 5:00 PM**

- ◆ You should submit a final (10 to 20 pages), polished version of your paper, taking into account the comments made on previous assignments. You should not need to add new material at this stage; although you are allowed to if you have discovered elements that would substantially alter the logic or the conclusions of your paper.
  
- ◆ *Remember to keep a copy of the final paper for your records.*

**GRADING CRITERIA**

- ◆ Each part of the assignment (Outline, First Draft, and Final Report) will receive an individual grade.
- ◆ Your grade will be divided in the following way:

Topic:	00 %
Outline:	15 %
First Draft:	35 %
Final Report:	50 %
- ◆ Grading of all parts of the assignment - the Outline, First Draft, and Final Report - will be based on:
  1. The level of analytical skill and intuition demonstrated in the report (e.g. whether you can analyze the issue critically, whether you can argue logically, originality of your ideas, etc.); AND
  2. The presentation of the report (e.g. how well you explain difficult concepts and arguments, the coherence and clarity of the presentation, the amount of spelling and grammatical errors, etc.).
- ◆ Only reports that demonstrate outstanding qualities in both criteria will be awarded the highest grade. Reports that are unsatisfactory in any of the criteria will result in a grade of "F".

**APPENDIX***Writing Center*

Proper grammar is required. If you feel you need help with your English writing skills you are advised to use the University's Center for Writing. They provide free support for students who need help with writing. Go early and go often. Here is their web address: <http://writing.umn.edu>

*Writing techniques*

The following are some common problems of students' reports:

- ◆ The paper lacks focus and is not well organized. A major reason why this happens is that students cannot decide on THE most important message that they want the readers to get from the report. This leads to the importance of a thesis statement – make sure it is included in the introduction.
- ◆ There are not enough analyses and explanations in the report. Many times students state some ideas or conjectures without explaining step by step the logic behind these. Please guide the readers through your arguments carefully to make sure that they understand the arguments.
- ◆ The use of quotations to substitute for the explanations. A common mistake students make in their reports is that they use quotations from textbooks or articles as the arguments. It is acceptable for students to use some ideas suggested by others, yet students should try to explain the ideas in their own words and should not simply copy the quotations without their own explanations. The total number of quotations in a paper should be limited; they should be used to highlight a particular idea or show its importance.
- ◆ A lot of grammatical and spelling errors in the report. To avoid these errors, students should ask someone who is good in composition to proofread their reports. Students should also use the many writing services available on campus to get advice on correct grammar usage.
- ◆ Confusing cause with effect. Another common mistake is not recognizing that an apparent cause of something might instead be an effect of that something. You should give evidence of the cause or effect or acknowledge that the evidence of causality here is not clear.
- ◆ Many students run into trouble realizing late in the semester that they don't have enough data to support their thesis, at which point it is too late to change the topic. Make sure you plan ahead to avoid this situation.



*Bibliography*

- ◆ You should use various resources and *cite them properly*.
- ◆ You can use academic journals, popular newspapers (e.g., Wall Street Journal), magazines (e.g. The Economist), and/or reports from various institutions.
- ◆ Please make sure you have a mix of internet and other sources; make sure the sources are well-reputed and credible; that is, do not chose all references from news magazines or obscure internet sources.
- ◆ You can check here for tips on citing:  
<https://www.lib.umn.edu/howto/citationguides>

*Data Sources*

- ◆ Penn World Table
- ◆ World Bank - World Development Indicators
- ◆ IMF - International Financial Statistics
- ◆ CIA - World Factbook
- ◆ WebEc: [www.helsinki.fi/WebEc](http://www.helsinki.fi/WebEc) (Click on Economics Data and go on from there)

*Useful Reading*

1. "So You Have To Write an Economics Term Paper..." by L. Officer, D. Saks, and J. Saks.
2. "The Elements of Style" by W. Strunk Jr. and E. B. White.
3. "The Writer's Guide to College Economics" by T. L. Wyrich.
4. "Economical Writing" by Deirdre McCloskey.

*Scholastic Dishonesty*

- ◆ Students must work on their reports individually.
- ◆ The College of Liberal Arts defines scholastic dishonesty as "any act that violates the right of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student's own academic work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or exams; plagiarizing (misrepresenting as one's own anything done by another); submitting the same or substantially similar papers for more than one course without the consent of all instructors concerned; depriving

another of necessary course materials; or sabotaging another's work.”

- ◆ Students who commit any form of the scholastic dishonesty described above will receive a grade "F" for their Writing Assignment.
- ◆ *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. *It also includes turning in your own same or essentially similar paper for two or more courses.* The University has very strict rules concerning plagiarism. If you use any other person's work, words, or ideas, please 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. We will use this program (Turnitin.com) to check for plagiarism. Please check the following website for more details on plagiarism:

[http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/plagarism\\_index.html](http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/plagarism_index.html)