

About the Term Paper

ADDITIONS ON 4/19/2013:

- [1] Please include a word count on the cover page as with the response papers.
- [2] It's the word count and not the # of pages that matters
- [3] Tables & references (works cited) list don't count against word limit
- [4] Turn the paper in via bspace by 2 p.m. on Thursday **AND ALSO** bring a hard copy to lecture on Thursday
- [5] Print out the first 2 pages of the article about the contemporary issue and attach that to the back of your paper. If the article is ≤ 2 pages, then you'd just print out the entire article.
- [6] Check piazza for further updates in response to student questions.

Also, I think the description I've been giving in class and office hours is more clear than what I wrote a few months ago (conversations help one to make expression of thoughts more clear). Your task in the paper is very similar to what you did in the essay question in each of the midterms, though not in the same order as the midterm essay question. Identify a contemporary issue; cite some economic historian's work on a historical episode; assert whether the economic history is relevant to understanding the contemporary issue; construct an argument that supports your assertion. Your argument will be based on the applicability of the assumptions in the historical analysis to the contemporary issue. It doesn't matter whether you are arguing that the historical analysis is relevant (because these assumptions are also satisfied in the analysis of the contemporary issue) or that the historical analysis is not relevant (because these assumptions are not satisfied in the analysis of the contemporary issue).

TERM PAPER: CONNECTING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT (60 POINTS POSSIBLE)

DUE DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2:00 P.M. BY BSPACE/ASSIGNMENTS TAB

For this assignment, you will write an essay in which you connect the past to the present: identify a contemporary issue that can be better understood if we know the historical background which you provide in your paper. Clearly explain the ways in which the historical background can – and importantly cannot – inform our understanding of the contemporary issue. The grading rubric for this assignment is on the course website; check it before writing your paper. More information about the term paper is on the course website. The paper is due Thursday, April 25, 2 p.m.

Term papers should be 1,000-1,500 words (4-6 pages typed) with 1"-1.25" margins on all sides, double-spaced, with nothing smaller than an 11 pt font. The paper must be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Other formats are not acceptable. Put your name, your GSI's name, the date, and your section number at the top of the first page. **Submit papers electronically on bspace, assignments tab.** You are responsible for ensuring you have attached your paper properly and completed the bspace submission process.

Late penalty: Late papers lose 5 points for every day (or partial day) they are late. Submit 0-24 hours late,

and you lose 5 points; submit 24-48 hours late, you lose 10 points; and so on.

The rubric for the paper is on the course website. It lists the various tasks you must accomplish in your paper. <http://emlab.berkeley.edu/~olney/spring13/econ113/grading-term-paper.pdf>. Be sure to print it out and use it as you plan your paper.

Your paper should start with a summary of some published article addressing a contemporary issue that will allow you to draw on what you've learned in Econ 113: what is the issue, what is the author's argument, what assumptions does the article's author invoke in the analysis. Then you should identify a relevant historical event(s) that sheds light on that issue: what is the historical event, why is it relevant (the right analogy)? Then you should include some critical analysis: what aspects of the historical event make the history a better (or worse) lesson for the contemporary issue, what additional evidence might you want in order to be confident your historical event is the proper analogy. Your analysis should be grounded in the published academic literature on the historical event. End with a conclusion that links your historical analysis back to the contemporary issue.

You want to demonstrate that you are learning some economic history (sodon't go far afield from the subjects we've studied). You want to demonstrate that you have learned how to identify critical assumptions in an argument, and understand the role of those assumptions in determining conclusions. You want to properly cite your sources.

A good paper will include some independent research. Are there articles beyond what we've read that help you to understand the historical event? At the end of each chapter you'll find a list of articles and books on that chapter's topics. You can start there, or start with searches of articles using econlit, google-scholar, or jstor. Remember that jstor includes articles with a 3-5 year lag so you will miss recently published work if you rely only on jstor.

Start now by keeping your eyes open for news articles or opinion pieces published online or in print that can be your starting point for your paper. You want your paper topic -- which starts from a published article about some contemporary issue -- to have a "what caused..." or "why is..." or "how come..." to it. If your topic is just a "what is" -- for example, what is the demographic mix of the population today versus the demographic mix in 1900 -- you'll get nowhere.

You want an argument. This article theorizes about the influence today of job opportunities on high school graduation rates. That's an argument: something causes something else, and here's why. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/22/graduation-rate-record-high-school-students_n_2522128.html

The issue to address in your paper, then, is what historical episode/event(s) shed light on that argument and how well do they shed light. To address this issue, you'll use a slight twist on the Olney Critique Method I taught you on January 24. Rather than identifying the critical assumptions in an argument, you'll be identifying the critical aspects of the historical episode that do -- and don't -- make the historical episode useful in thinking about the present-day argument.

I want you to locate and use at least one additional article, beyond what is in the reader, that addresses your historical episode. To do this, you need to use online databases. And to do that, you must have the proxy server installed if you are not using a UCB IP address. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/proxy.html>. Once you have done so, you will have at-home access to every library database.

There are several websites you can access to locate the articles you need for this paper. You need an article with an argument about a contemporary issue. There are several possible sources. This library page gives you a list of all the online news sources. (Note that anything that says "UCB Access only" can now be accessed by you at home, because you have installed the proxy server!)

<http://cluster4.lib.berkeley.edu:8080/ERF/servlet/ERFmain?cmd=searchSub&resTypeld=17&subjectId=53>

There are lots and lots and lots of options there! If you just want plain vanilla, page down to "Proquest Newspapers" and you can get to online versions of New York Times & Wall St Journal & LA Times.

Once you've identified a contemporary issue and related historical episode, you need to find at least one (preferably three) academic article on the historical episode. You must have installed the proxy server to use any of these resources from home.

There are several databases you can use, but I think the three most useful will be these:

JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org> They have a great search engine, and also browsing ability. The downside is that they don't have the most current issues of any journal (by agreement). The Journal of Economic History has a "5 year rolling window" which means that the last 5 years of JEH are not in jstor.

EconLit: <http://search.proquest.com/econlit/advanced?accountid=14496> You may have to access this resource by starting at <http://cluster4.lib.berkeley.edu:8080/ERF/servlet/ERFmain?cmd=searchSub&subjectId=36&resTypeld=12> and choosing "econlit." Be sure that your search is not too broad ("education") and not too narrow ("California high school graduation rates 1900"). It is *the* source for academic economics articles.

Journal of Economic History: <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b10275366~S58> and then click on the link to the online source. That way you can get the more recent issues that are not contained in jstor.

Citing sources: Economists use Chicago style. Check <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>. You can use embedded references (Olney, 1998, p. 232) or footnotes in the body of your paper. You must attach a bibliography (works cited) page, which does not count in your page limit or word count.

Questions? Post them to Piazza so that everyone can benefit.