**Policy Paper Project Description (Economics)**

Due date 11/4

Final Paper is formal 100 points + 25 points for drafts

Paper drafts are due via Google Docs

Policy paper Requirements[[1]](#footnote-1)

* 2 paragraphs defining an economic problem that falls into one of the following categories:
  + Externality (positive or negative
  + A free rider problem
  + An information problem (principle- agent, prisoner’s dilemma, asymmetric information, moral hazard)
* The first two paragraphs must have least 5 parenthetical citations and one graph/chart)
* 3 paragraphs constructing possible policy options confronting tradeoffs and predicting outcomes. At least 1 parenthetical citation per paragraph
* 1 paragraph confronting tradeoffs (opportunity costs) and decide on the appropriate option

**Due dates**

* 10/23 *By the end of class* one paragraph describing an economic problem in the United States and at least two sources (5 points)
* 10/26: *By the end of class.* Two paragraph description of problem and 5 sources via Google Docs (10 points)
* 11/2 *Due before class.* Draft that meets all min. requirements due via Google docs.
* 11/4 *By class.* Final paper due via Word Document attachment

Requirements

* MLA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
* At least six paragraphs and 750 words (about 3 pages)
* Works cited page with at least 5 sources
* 8 parenthetical citations using MLA
* 1 graph or chart that helps explain your problem

**Where do I start?**

**Defining the problem**

* Think of deficit and excess
  1. *There are too many homeless people in the United States*
  2. *There are too many plastic bags in the Pacific Ocean*
* Be objective
* Quantify if possible
  + *There are 140,000 homeless people in the United States*
* What are your geographic limits of study?
* *United States*
* *State*
* *County*
* *City*

**Where can I find good evidence?**

* Pew Research: <http://www.pewresearch.org>
* New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>
* Bureau of labor statistics: <http://www.bls.gov>
* US Census: <http://www.census.gov>
* Brookings institution: <http://www.brookings.edu>
* Center for American Progress (liberal): <https://www.americanprogress.org>
* Heritage Foundation (Conservative): <http://www.heritage.org>
* CATO Institute (libertarian): <http://www.cato.org>
* Rand Corporation: <http://www.rand.org>
* Open Government: <https://www.data.gov/open-gov/>

**Policy options**

* What could go wrong? Think about the free rider problem and perverse incentives
* Look for similar problems that have been solved.
  + *How did the United States government reduce smoking rates?*
  + *Why does Europe have lower homeless rates than the US?*
* What can Government do?
* Taxes can go up or down
* Subsidies and grants can be given or taken away
* Regulate
* Distribute information

Rubric for Economics policy paper:

* 6 paragraphs and 750 words. **If you do not meet the minimum requirement your grade is 0%. I will not read it.**
* 8 parenthetical citations one of which is a chart

\_\_\_\_\_ Introduction (first two paragraphs) **20 Points (10 points each)**

* 9-10 Each paragraph skillfully covers the topic explaining why it is an economic issue and contains ALL of the following: a clear and engaging topic sentence at least two academic citations offering relevant evidence, author commentary on all evidence making a clear link to your problem. One paragraph must cite a chart or graph. You must have 5 citations over all. NO factual errors/inaccuracies.
* 7-8: Each paragraph adequately covers the topic and contains ALL of the following: a clear and engaging topic sentence at least two academic citations offering relevant evidence, author commentary on all evidence making a clear link to your problem. One paragraph must cite a chart or graph. The paper may have a few minor factual errors/inaccuracies.
* 5-6: Each paragraph adequately covers the topic and contains ALL of the following: a clear and engaging topic sentence at least two academic citations offering relevant evidence, author commentary on all evidence making a clear link to your problem. One paragraph must cite a chart or graph. The paragraph contains one or more major factual error
* 5 or below: The content and accuracy is unacceptable. Or less than two citations are provided

\_\_\_\_\_Solutions: **30 points: 10 points each**

* 9-10 Each paragraph offers a different well thought out solution to the problem. The solution should demonstrate your excellent understanding of economic theory. Each paragraph addresses both the potential positive and potential negative aspects of the solution. Each paragraph needs one academic citation
* 7-8: Each paragraph offers a different well thought out solution to the problem. The solution demonstrates your understanding of economic theory. Each paragraph addresses both the potential positive and potential negative aspects of the solution. *There may be minor factual errors or the solution demonstrates a lack of comprehension of key issues.*
* 5-6: Each paragraph offers a different well thought out solution to the problem. The solution demonstrates your understanding of economic theory. Paragraph addresses only the positive or negative aspects of the solution. *There may be minor factual errors or the solution demonstrates a lack of comprehension of key issues.*
* 5 or below: The content and accuracy is unacceptable. Or no citation provided

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommendation paragraph: **20 Points**

* 16-20 points: Paragraph decides which solution is best by briefly restating the problem, addressing the opportunity cost and tradeoffs of each solution and deciding which is the best option
* 12-15 points: Paragraph addresses which solution is best but does not address opportunity costs and tradeoff’s
* 10-11 point: Paragraph is confusing and does not seem to clearly propose a best option
* 0-10: The content and accuracy is unacceptable

\_\_\_\_\_ Bibliography: **20 Points**

* 20 points: Bibliography (works cited) provides 5 academic sources in MLA format
* 10-19 points: Bibliography (works cited) provides 5 academic sources but MLA format is incorrect or one or more source is not academic
* 0-9: less then five academic sources provided.

\_\_\_\_\_ Grammar, Mechanics and syntax : **10 Points**

* 10 points: Paper is flawless. There are no grammatical, syntax or mechanical errors
* 5-9 points: There may be a few grammatical, syntax or mechanical errors but they do not detract from the overall argument
* 0-5: A lack of proofreading is evident

\_\_\_\_\_/100 **Total points**

1. Adapted from A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis (Bardach) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)