Graduate Labor Economics: Paper Assignment

Spring 2020

Assignment

Over the semester you will conduct research related to some aspect of labor economics and present your results in the form of a 15–20 page paper and a conference-style presentation to your peers. You can pursue one of two tracks:

- Original Research

- Thorough Replication

Which you choose is up to you. However, I must approve a proposal for one of these two tracks by *January 31*. You should therefore be discussing your research projects with me and with your peers between now and then. In particular, it must be clear that your proposed project is *feasible* in the time available.

I will be evaluating your paper on several criteria including

- Clarity of exposition and use of discipline-appropriate propose

- Use of economic models or theory to develop and organize an argument

- Appropriate use of data and empirical methods to answer the research question

- Creativity and originality

- Feasibility and completeness

Basically, you should pursue a replication project if it becomes clear that you will not be able to complete an interesting original research project over the course of the semester.

I will assess your final paper out of 100 points. Below is a list of deadlines. Each deadline you miss will incur a penalty of 10 points that I will deduct after grading the paper.

Track 1: Original Research

You are relatively free in your choice of topic and method as long as it has some direct connection to labor economics. Your goal should be to develop a paper that could ultimately become the basis of a dissertation chapter, and I will evaluate your work with that goal in mind.

The paper must be typeset in LATEXand submitted in PDF format. It should be no longer than 20 pages at 1.5 spacing. The bibliography, tables, and figures will not count against the page limit.

Deadlines

- Jan. 12: Initial list of 3 topics due (1-2 pages each)

- Jan. 31: Research proposal due

- Feb. 28: Data description and draft methodology due

- Mar. 27: Rough draft due

- Apr. 17: Final draft due

- Final exam date: Revisions due and presentation

Track 2: Replication

Should you choose to conduct a replication exercise, you need to choose a paper that has been published in an academic journal on some topic of labor economics. Your selected paper should have the following properties:

- At least 250 citations according to Google Scholar

- Involves original empirical analysis of labor market data

- All the data are publicly available

- The code and data are not provided by the authors

To successfully complete the replication, you must do four things:

- Replicate (or attempt to replicate) **all** the results in the paper

- Conduct at least one extension or original analysis that the authors did not consider

- Write a clear and comprehensive description of the replication exercise. This should include a summary of the original paper.

- Generate a replicable archive of the data and code you prepared to reproduce the original results

The paper must be typeset in LaTeX and submitted in PDF format. It should be no longer than 20 pages at 1.5 spacing. The bibliography, tables, and figures will not count against the page limit.

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- Jan. 12: Initial list of 3 topics due (1-2 pages each)

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