

PSCI 4012 Final Research Paper Guidelines

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In this assignment you are going to analyze a research question about an economic development related outcome. Your outcome of interest can be as general as economic development, or it can be a more specific outcome related to a more general outcome such as mean years of schooling. To complete this assignment you must follow the steps below.

Step 1: Choose your topic and formulate your research question.

Academic research begins with a well formulated research question. In the development studies we deal with a big research question: Why are some countries more economically developed than others? An efficient strategy to deal with the complexity of academic research is choosing a research topic that is as specific as possible. You are strongly advised to focus on a specific aspect of a development related problem and formulate a research question about it.

At the beginning of your research paper you should explicitly state your research question and also your main thesis/argument about the question.

Step 2: Discuss existing arguments about your question.

Our main goal in academic research is to expand our knowledge on a subject. In development studies, there is a large volume of existing research. If you are studying a research question that has already been studied by others in the past, you should briefly discuss their answers to the same question. You should also discuss what is the contribution of your research to the existing body of research on the same subject.

Step 3: Research Design

In this part of the assignment, you should discuss how you are going to analyze your research question. For research design, you have three options. You can propose a (1) randomized controlled trial (RCT), you can propose a (2) case study analysis, or you can propose a (3) regression analysis.

Step 4: Analysis

What you need to do in this step will be determined by what you chose in the previous step. If you chose the first option, then you need to explain in detail how you would design an experiment to test your argument. In particular, you should discuss your treatment variable, your randomization strategy, the setting you would conduct your experiment (i.e. computer vs field experiment), and how you would use the data from the experiment. If you choose the second option, then you need to select at least two

cases. Your cases should preferably be countries. You should discuss your selection strategy, and how your cases support your argument. If you choose the last option, you should find cross-national quantitative data on your outcome variable, and independent variables. You should present a scatter plot and regression results in the analysis section. Along with presenting the results, you should interpret the results and discuss to what extent your results support your argument.

Step 5: Conclusion

In this last step, you should provide a very short summary of the rest of your final research paper and very briefly discuss what future research on your question should focus on.

Additional Guidelines:

This assignment is **due on Wednesday, August 7 at 11:00 AM**. You must submit an electronic copy on Canvas, and bring a print copy to the class. Your essay needs to be written in Microsoft Word, with "Times New Roman" font, 12 font-size and double-spaced. The word count must be between 1500 and 2000 words. In terms of your page margins, you should leave 1 inch from top, bottom, right and left of the page. You also need to insert page numbers.