EconS 305: Intermediate Microeconomics without Calculus

Grading Rubric for Research Project Proposal

This rubric is intended to guide you on your project proposal, and to give you an idea of how each section will be weighted when grading. The research proposal needs to be **double spaced and at least 6 pages long**, not including references.

Spelling and Grammar [10%]

1. Introduction [10%]

- This section should summarize your project proposal. It should include a short paragraph on what it is you intend to research on, and why it is important. The introduction is meant to spark the interest of the reader and to keep them reading. A lot of the time, I actually write the introduction last as it is something that should summarize the paper.

2. Background and Motivation [15%]

- This section summarizes the previous literature on the topic you are choosing. You need to read some papers/articles about the topic you are choosing, and site them in the References section. Reviewing the literature should expose some gaps in the research that you intend to fill. Finding these gaps are important as that is the motivation of the research proposal. I do not expect you to have some ground breaking research, but a novel idea, perhaps using a novel data set, is what is expected. Filling the research gaps with this novel idea is the motivation for doing this proposed research project.

3. Research Question [15%]

- You need to define a question you want to answer with microeconomic theory. This question should directly relate to how you intend to fill the research gaps in the literature. Please feel free to define multiple research questions if you intend to try to answer multiple questions within that research gap.

4. Methodology [20%]

- This section needs to talk about how you are going to answer your question using microeconomic theory. Please talk about if the problem is on the consumer or producer side (or both), and how you intend to answer this question. I would recommend proposing a model you wish to use to answer the question, and then talk about what types of question you can answer using this proposed model. For example, if you are trying to answer the question of "why do consumers prefer red grapes to green grapes," perhaps use a Cobb-Douglas utility function where you can derive substitution and income effects. With this utility function, perhaps you define your preference parameter for red grapes (α) to be greater than the green grapes preference parameter (β). Why is this important? What other questions can you answer making this assumption?

Please note you are not required to do any calculations, but you will be graded on your ability to think like an economist. With that said, using or re-working a model from the homework will enable you to talk about your project proposal much easier.

5. Data Needed [10%]

- What data do you need to answer your research question? In order to use your proposed methodology, how would you go about collecting the data? Collecting this data does not have to be feasible, but the data you intend to collect should help you answer your research question by carrying out your analysis. In the grapes example, one would think they need data on consumer income, the consumers preference parameters, and prices. Income and prices are easy to get, but how do you think you would obtain data on consumer preferences?

6. Expected Results [10%]

- Describe your expected results. What answers do you think you will get from conducting your analysis? What answers do you think you might get, that might not be expected? Perhaps red grapes and green grapes are not substitutes, why might this happen?

7. Conclusions and Potential Criticisms [10%]

- What conclusions would you draw from your expected results? Do they have policy implications? Example: Should we tax red grapes to help increases green grape producer surplus? After you interpret your results, where do you see the future research in this subject?

- Finally, what are the potential criticisms of this analysis? Where might you be constrained, and what other analysis could you employ in order to answer the same research question?