How to write a paper?

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NYU

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Research is important

- We want to make informed choices.
- Knowledge is built from causal relationships.
- The more certain we are about a causal relationship, the more informed our choices are.
- We need to collect knowledge in a systematic way.
  - Effective.
  - Efficient.
  - Replicability.
- Then we need to document it... to accumulate evidence.
- We write a paper!

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Research design

$$D \longrightarrow Y?$$

We start with the question:

- Lay out a hypothesis: Define D and Y.
  - Why is it relevant?
  - Why should we care about it?
  - What are we learning from it?
  - What are the sources of bias?
- How are you going to test your hypothesis:
  - What data would you use?
  - What tool will you use to test this hypothesis?
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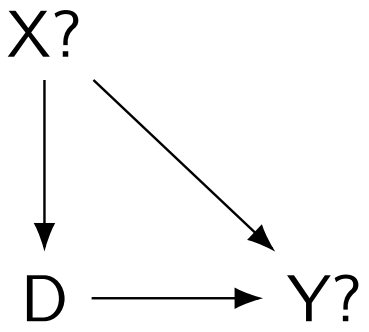

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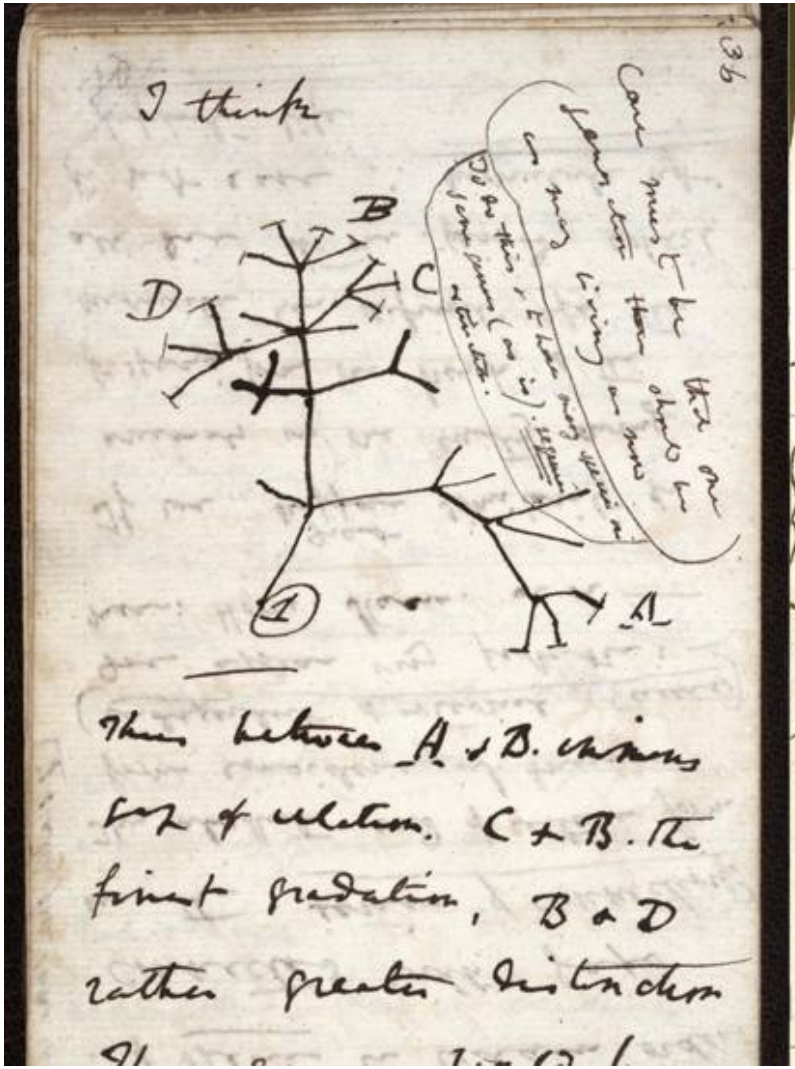

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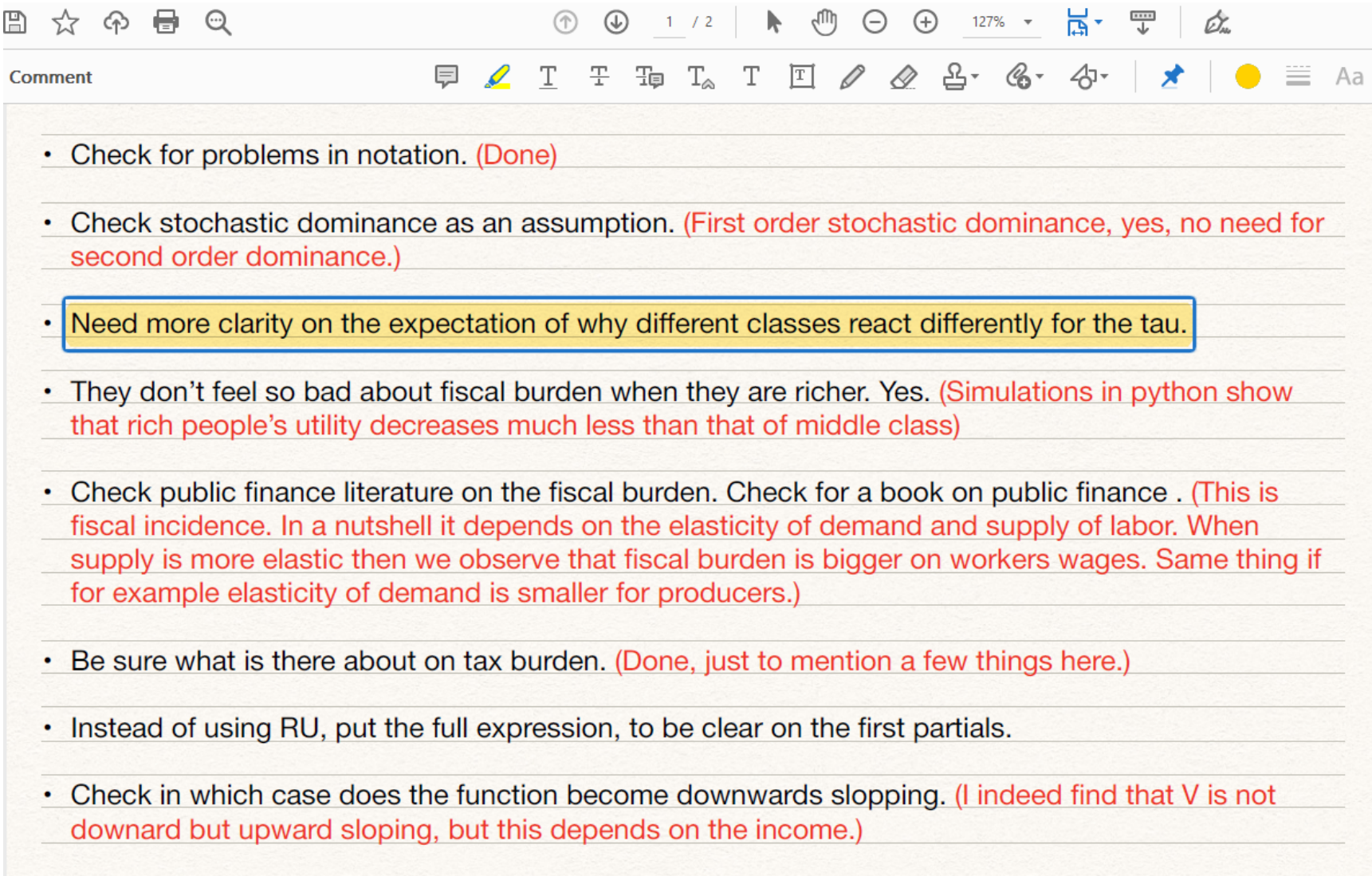

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1. You are probably not going to solve a world problem.
2. Think about something doable for the time frame you have.
3. Even if the contribution is small, that is ok.
4. It is better to be a bit narrow than too broad.
5. It is better to answer a smaller question, and do it well.
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2. Do your research, but start with any aspect that makes or breaks your paper. (E.g., data.)
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   - Be linear: It breaks if it finds undefined concepts.
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The elements of a research paper

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2. Abstract.
3. Introduction.
4. Literature review.
5. Data.
6. Methods.
7. Results.
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A good rule of thumb is to try keeping the main text below 11 thousand words not counting the appendix.

Title

- Make it short and descriptive.
- A little bit of creativity is welcomed, but don't over do it.

Example:

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  - Cryptic: "The house always wins: Ruling elites offset loses with eligibility restrictions."
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- Better
  - "The Political Class and Redistributive Policies: Eligibility restrictions reduce government spending"
  - But the paper is more general than that.
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  - Discuss your contribution in the first 2 or 3 paragraphs (in the first page).
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- Longer derivations of analytical results, like robustness tests.
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A data set

X	D	Y
1	108.9023	0.0392
0	133.8422	0.0389
1	132.7332	0.0898
1	115.3804	0.0433
0	124.9855	0.0527
1	113.442	0.0521
⋮	⋮	⋮
0	156.417	0.0576
0	151.0074	0.0662
0	127.6326	0.0568
0	87.89731	0.0418
1	107.6456	0.0727
0	123.0928	0.0598

A data set

Exporter ($)	Lobby	Tariff
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Import competing	133.8422	0.0389
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⋮	⋮	⋮
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Import competing	127.6326	0.0568
Import competing	87.89731	0.0418
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Recall: Statistical softwares

- If you are going to work with data, you will need an statistical/econometric software.
- Stata, Python, R are popular; there are other of course.
- Use the one you feel most comfy with.
- If you do not know any, I recommend to learn R.
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Statistical softwares: looking at searches