

ECN 1A: Econ IRL Project

Summer Session 2, 2023

Overview

This is a project that recruits your critical thinking and economic analysis skills and applies them to real world issues. Here we go beyond solving problems on paper and attempt to think about and analyze real events and policies like an economist. Let's dive into the details!

This project includes 2 parts:

1. A short written assignment to help you practice economic analysis on one specific event, chosen by me
2. A self-contained policy analysis report at the end of the course where you will play the role of an economist advising policy makers. For this report you can choose any event or policy that piques your interest, provided they come from a reputable source.

Both parts will contribute to half of your overall grade for the Econ IRL Project. Please feel free to talk to me if you have any questions regarding anything in the project.

Part 1: Short Analysis

Event for Analysis

We will look at a quite significant event that happened close to home: the UC academic worker strike and subsequent union wage deal in 2022. Please read [this NPR article](#) for an overview of what happened. Feel free to look at other reputable sources if you want more details on it as long as you cite them. You can use any citation style you like.

Content of Analysis

Please write a coherent discussion of the aforementioned event, analyzing it through the

economic way of thinking and incorporating what we have learned so far in the class. Please include the following key points:

1. What is the economic setting and what are its characteristics? For example:
 - What is the market?
 - Who are involved?
 - What roles do they play in this market?
 - What are the characteristics of this market?
2. What specific economic concepts or principles are involved
3. Using economic knowledge from our course, discuss
 - What are the possible outcomes from this event?
 - Are there any unintended consequences?
 - What are the monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits?
 - Who benefit from it? Who are hurt?
4. Does our economic model from this course work well in this situation? Why or why not?
5. What are the implications for efficiency?
6. Is the outcome fair? Why or why not?

Format

Please write a few paragraphs discussing the above points, and feel free to include any additional economic analysis you see fit. Please type it out and submit on Canvas as a Microsoft Word or PDF document. Minimum 200 words, maximum 1 page, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt font. Please name the document `lastname_firstname_econirl_part1`.

Please feel free to discuss with other students (remember our course agreements!), but please formulate your own thoughts and submit your own work.

Grading Rubric

Part 1 of the project will be graded on how well you accomplish the following:

Component	Percentage
Correct formatting and citations	5%
Correctly identify economic concepts that apply to the topic	10%
Include a discussion of the key points from above	15%
Demonstrate understanding of knowledge from our course and appropriate application of said knowledge	25%
Demonstrate critical thinking and provide a thorough examination of the consequences of the event, and its implications for efficiency and fairness	25%
Clear, coherent, and concise writing	20%

Due Date for Part 1

Part 1 of the project will be due on September 3, 2023.

Part 2: Policy Report

Overview

Congratulations! After demonstrating your economic thinking and analytic skills in your previous analysis, you have been promoted as an economist on the President's Council of Economic Advisors. The first task for you is to prepare a policy report to the President on an event or policy that interest you. It can be local or national, and it does not have to be ostensibly economic in nature. Economic analysis can be applied to and offer insights for many social issues, even if they appear to be outside the realm of what is traditionally considered economics.

In the report, you will brief the President on the event/policy, using economic analysis to analyze its consequences, evaluate any policy response if there is any, and propose alternative solutions and argue for their merits.

Event for Analysis

You will choose a news article from a reputable source and write a policy report where you conduct economic analysis on the issues and events discussed in the article. A list of suggested reputable sources can be found at the end of this document.

Content of Analysis

Please include the following key points which are relevant to your specific article. You do not need to include all of the specific subpoints as long as you discuss the main points adequately.

1. Briefly summarize the topic at hand under the assumption that your audience is unaware of it
2. What is the setting? What are its characteristics? Who are involved and what are their roles?
3. What specific economic concepts or principles are involved? How do they apply to this situation?
4. Using economic knowledge from our course, discuss
 - What are the possible outcomes from this event?
 - Will there be any unintended consequences?
 - What are the monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits?
 - Who benefit from it? Who are hurt?
 - What are the implications for efficiency and fairness?
 - Where does economic theory fail to help us?
5. If the news article includes economic analysis, critically evaluate it and discuss whether the analysis is used correctly.
6. If there is a policy related to the topic, present an economic analysis of the policy:
 - Why was this particular policy chosen?
 - What are the assumptions behind this policy?
 - What are the intended consequences of the policy?
 - Are there any unintended consequences?
 - What are the costs and benefits of this policy?
 - Who is this policy intended to benefit?
 - Are there other people who benefit from this policy? Who are hurt?
 - How was economic analysis (mis)used by policy makers to formulate this policy?
 - Do you agree with the policy? Why or why not?
 - What are the implications for efficiency and fairness?
7. Do you think the government should implement a policy response? Why or why not?
Discuss:
 - Why do you think the government should (not) intervene?
 - If you think the government should intervene:
 - Propose an alternative policy solution that you think would work well
 - How did you utilize economic theory to formulate this policy?
 - What are the implications for efficiency and fairness for this policy?

8. Do personal beliefs and biases influence the authors of the news article or the policy makers?
 - Is the writing objective or opinionated?
 - Are the sources cited credible and factual?
 - Does the evidence support the conclusion? Why or why not?

9. Feel free to include anything else you think is interesting and relevant

Format

Please write policy report discussing the above points, and feel free to include any additional economic analysis you see fit. Please type it out and submit on Canvas as a Microsoft Word or PDF document. Minimum 400 words, maximum 2 pages, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt font. Please name the document `lastname_firstname_econirl_part2`. Please feel free to include multiple sources as long as you cite all sources used. Please use any citation style you like.

Please feel free to discuss with other students (remember our course agreements!), but please formulate your own thoughts and submit your own work.

Grading Rubric

Part 2 of the project will be graded on how well you accomplish the following:

Component	Percentage
Correct formatting and citations	5%
Correctly identify economic concepts that apply to the situation	15%
Include a discussion of the key main points from above	15%
Demonstrate understanding of knowledge from our course and appropriate application of said knowledge	15%
Demonstrate critical thinking and provide a thorough examination of the consequences of the issues/policies, and its implications for efficiency and fairness	20%
Correctly use economic analysis to formulate alternative policy solutions	15%
Clear, coherent, and concise writing	15%

Due Date for Part 1

Part 2 of the project will be due on September 14, 2023.

Suggested Reputable Sources

Reputable sources include but are not limited to:

- ABC News
- Associated Press
- Axios
- BBC
- Brookings Institute
- CBS News
- CNBC
- CNN
- FiveThirtyEight
- Foreign Policy
- LA Times
- National Geographic
- New Yorker Magazine
- NPR
- Politico
- ProPublica
- Reason Magazine
- Reuters
- The Atlantic
- The Boston Globe
- The Economist
- The Guardian
- The New York Times
- The National Interest
- The Wall Street Journal
- The Washington Examiner
- The Washington Post
- Vox

A source being reputable doesn't mean it's always right! Always critically examine the information you receive.

