

Econ 373 Research Paper Assignment

Professor Taylor Jaworski

Fall 2023

Assignment. To investigate some event(s) in US economic history. Your paper should focus on an event before (approximately) the 1980s. You may use papers or books read in this class as sources, but you must cite at least **five** outside sources.

Expectations. The purpose of this exercise is to apply **economic logic** to some event in US economic history. An economic analysis is **mandatory**. A mere description of events will not suffice. Papers that simply review a period or event in economic history (without giving an economic analysis) will receive no better than a C.

Your paper should search for a causal link between two or more phenomena (e.g., “Did World War II lead to recovery from the Great Depression?”). That is, you should provide a clear economic hypothesis and argue its merits using historical information. Use of economic terminology is strongly encouraged, but do not go overboard.

To get an A, you will need to: i) construct a falsifiable hypothesis drawing on economic logic, ii) support your hypothesis with historical evidence, and iii) consider alternative hypotheses given in the literature (if applicable).

Length and structure. The text should be between seven to ten standard pages total. All papers should contain the following:

- Times New Roman, 12-point font
- Double-spacing (with no spacing between paragraphs)
- Page numbers
- Standard 1-inch margins

Points will be deducted if it is shorter than seven pages or does not follow any of these guidelines. There is no need for a title page. Your name should appear at the top of the first page and nowhere else. You should also include a references (bibliography) page. Your references page does not count as part of the seven to twelve pages. Your references should be in alphabetical order (by last name of the first author) and you should use the APA style. Use this [resource](#) for an overview of the APA style. If you find articles in JSTOR or online, do not include the website address where you found it—simply cite it as if you were reading it from a paper journal.

Sources. You should use the Chapman library, JSTOR, or Google Scholar to find sources to support your hypothesis. The library’s website has other scholarly databases as well. The five (or more) outside sources you cite should be either academic articles or books. You can use websites, magazine articles, or newspaper articles (and you should certainly cite them), but these do not count towards your five sources. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE note that Wikipedia is NOT a valid source. I encourage you to come to office hours to ask about literature or data sources.

Using artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT). In general, you should research and write your paper using standard methods and sources. You are responsible for providing citations for all relevant statements in your paper. You will lose credit to the extent the statements are not supported by proper evidence or citations. I strongly encourage you to treat this as an independent research project giving you the opportunity to develop skills or knowledge you do not currently have. To the extent that you rely on artificial intelligence to complete the assignment, you can expect to receive a lower grade and enter the real world less prepared to be successful.

Deadline. The paper must be submitted as a PDF file via email to me on **December 15 by 5pm**. I will only accept PDF. Any papers turned in after this time will be accepted, but they will carry a penalty of 10 points per 24-hour period.

Writing tips (from Naomi Lamoreaux, Yale University)

Most writing problems result either from thinking problems or failures to communicate.

- Thinking problems can be reduced by working out in advance what you want to argue and by developing an outline that indicates how you will demonstrate your argument—the order of the points you will make and the kinds of evidence you will muster in support of each point.
- Papers should go through at least two drafts. No matter how carefully you outline, you will most likely discover new ideas in the process of writing and may even change your argument. You must go back and revise your paper to make it intellectually coherent.
- Before you write your second draft, it is useful to make a reverse outline. That is, look at each paragraph, summarize the point that each paragraph actually makes, and lay out these summaries in outline form. Then revise the outline so that it fits what you now want to argue, and rewrite the paper accordingly.
- Always, when you are writing, put yourself in the reader's place. Ask yourself questions such as: Have I provided the reader with enough information to understand my point? Have I provided sufficient evidence to convince the reader of my argument? Are there objections that a reader might raise to the argument I am making? Revise your paper so as to provide sufficient information and evidence and to counter potential objections in advance.
- Make sure to write clear topic and transition sentences that guide the reader through your argument. Such sentences play a critical role in helping the reader follow the order of your points and understand how they build on one another.

Additional tips:

- Write in formal English. Do not use slang, contractions, abbreviations, or text-message acronyms.
- Write in complete sentences. Keep the structure of your sentences simple. Avoid overly long, complex sentences.
- Write in the active rather than the passive voice. (For example, write “Congress passed legislation...” instead of “Legislation was passed by Congress...”).
- When writing about the past, use the past tense.
- Check to make sure that pronouns have clear referents. Do not use plural pronouns such as “they” when referring to a singular noun such as a committee or a company. Avoid beginning sentences with the word “this” unless it is modifying a noun.
- Avoid turning nouns into adjectives. (For example, write “gains from internalization,” not “internalization gains.”)
- Avoid block quotes, especially from secondary sources. If you must include a block quote, it is important to interpret it in your own words in the body of the paper.
- Proofread your paper carefully. Review the paper on your computer, looking for words and phrases flagged by your programs that check spelling and grammar. Then print the paper out and read it through again.