

Econ 312: Midterm

Professor Magne Mogstad

Due Thursday, April 28 before the lecture

Choose one of 3 papers (see pdf files and data archives in the modules section on Canvas):

- The Effects of Rural Electrification on Employment: New Evidence from South Africa (Dinkelman, 2011)
- Forced Coexistence and Economic Development: Evidence from Native American Reservations (Dippel, 2014)
- The Demand for, and Impact of, Learning HIV Status (Thornton, 2008)

1. **Write a referee report on the paper (40 points):**

This is a critical assessment. You should first write a brief and relatively self-contained summary of the paper, after which you discuss the paper and its analysis in detail. Focus on econometric analyses, where you should highlight weaknesses and strong points. What are the important assumptions and modeling decisions? Are there data limitations? Perhaps you would like to suggest alternative checks and analyses? Always rely on economic and econometric (statistical) arguments, and use what you have learned in the course.

You can find general guidelines on the content of referee report here and on the last two pages here.

The report can be less, but should be no longer than 4 pages (12pt, double spaced).

2. **Replicate main tables and figures (40 points):**

Document your replication and results, but it is not necessary to write a lot here if things are explained in the original paper. Explain the steps in your econometric analysis. Even if you do not manage to replicate everything¹, good steps and insights will give you credit.

3. **Extend/complement the analyses in the paper (20 points):**

The methods taught in this course should allow you to expand this analysis in terms of specification and/or method. You can also think of expanding the analysis in other directions: complementary descriptive analysis, or looking at subpopulations, etc. Always motivate your analyses, make clear why you perform them. Emphasize limitations and strengths of the econometric methods you use. Interpret your results and relate them to the original paper.

¹A big part of this assignment is distilling what constitutes the main results of the paper.

Original and insightful contributions are rewarded.

The entire text of the assignment should be no longer than 10 pages (12pt, double spaced) including all the tables and figures that you replicated². Your code should be added as a readable appendix. It should be clean, well-commented³ and ready-to-run with only change of working directory required. Finally, make a minimal effort to present your results in tables or graphs: No Stata output! Look here for reference

²Think hard how to present your results efficiently. Note, this does not imply making your tables and figures small and unreadable.

³The names of variables should be intuitive where possible and all the major steps should be explained.