

ECON 435/835: Term Paper

For this course, you are required to write a term paper. It will involve three stages:

(i) **Proposal:** You are required to submit a written proposal (1-2 pages) of what you intend to write your paper about. This should involve a summary of what you plan to write about, how you plan to go about it and a bibliography of some of the articles you are likely to use. The summary should outline some of the key issues you wish to study, why they are important, what theoretical/empirical methodology you anticipate employing and data sources (if applicable). The proposal is due by **Wednesday, October 23**.

(ii) **Presentation:** In the last 2-3 classes of the term, we will have a mini-conference where you will be required to make a 20-25 minute presentation of your paper. Tentative dates for the presentations are **November 25, 27 and 29**. You should aim to incorporate comments and discussion generated during your presentation into the final version of the paper.

(iii) **Paper:** Your paper should have (i) Background and Motivation: This section should briefly explain the problem you are studying, what motivated you to study it and a synopsis of your results. It should also have a summary of the literature to which your study contributes. (ii) Main Results: This section should be the "meat" of the paper, describing your model or empirical methodology, your data, your theoretical or empirical analysis and a discussion of your results and their implications. (iii) Conclusion: This section should summarize the main contributions of the paper, any shortcomings and some ideas for future research.

The term paper could also discuss and critique a particular area or a recent (within the past 10 years) journal article or working paper in development economics. The article(s) can be on any topic within the field of development economics (macro or micro, theoretical or applied, etc.), but must involve a significant amount of formal analysis, whether theoretical or empirical. One possible source could be some of the working papers and articles listed in the course outline or from the list of assorted topics and papers on the ECON 435/835 web page. But you need not limit yourself to only these two sources. Feel free to refer to reading lists in development economics courses in other universities as possible sources too.

In this case, your paper should have (i) a Background: This section should give a summary of the literature to which your study contributes. In particular, you should explain what motivated you to study and the authors to write the paper(s) and what is the value added by it. You should try to go beyond what's provided by the author(s). (ii) Main Results: This section should provide a concise description of the approach taken and the main results (theoretical or empirical). Try to explain things in your own words and be careful to explain the intuition. (iii) Critique: This should be the "meat" of your paper and should point out any problems with this paper. Are the assumptions made reasonable (this could mean theoretical assumptions or identifying assumptions or data issues)? How may the results change if alternative assumptions were made? Could the exposition be improved? Are there any other (more recent) papers that have questioned these results?

A good paper should also include some of your own contributions, for example, replicating the results and then checking them for another sample or time period, or extending the analysis to address some issues you feel the study ignored/missed. For theoretical papers/sections, you might try to actually start developing an extended/alternative version of the model, or considering how it maybe empirically tested (what data are required; is it available?). Point out any difficulties or issues that must be resolved in solving this extended/alternate version.

Overall, you will need to demonstrate a sound understanding and thought of the issue you are studying. Novelty in approach and analysis and originality in critique will be well-rewarded (this is even more important for the MA students). Sloppiness in the work and in the writing will be highly frowned upon.

The paper is due by **5 pm on Tuesday, December 10th**. You are required to submit it to the following e-mail address: econ435papers@econ.queensu.ca where it will be run through the *turnitin* system as per our departmental guidelines.