

Examples of Benefit-Cost Analysis Term Papers

- Effect of state-level alcohol taxes on X, Y, Z
- Effects of state-level marijuana laws on X, Y, Z (e.g. on health outcomes, effects on academic outcomes, effects on prescription painkiller abuse, etc.)
- Location of medical marijuana dispensaries and crime
- California's Three Strike Policy and the illegal drug market
- WTP among students for the MSU "drunk" bus
- Effects of cigarette taxes on X, Y, Z
- Returns to higher education policies
- Use of speed cameras and traffic accidents
- Taxes on unhealthy foods
- Valuation of wilderness areas (e.g., demand for access to rock climbing areas)
- Snow days and student academic performance
- Four-day school week and student academic performance
- Cell phone bans and traffic accidents
- Paid maternity leave and female labor market outcomes
- Compulsory schooling laws and risky sexual behavior among teens
- Emergency contraceptive access and abortion

Note: Cost-benefit analysis focuses on public policy analysis, not how to make money. Because this course is intended for advanced undergraduates, the term paper objectives are substantial: At the end of the semester, each student should be able to undertake a real research project and the ability to determine whether someone else's research is done well or poorly. With that being said, the topic you may choose to write on is fairly wide open. But, given a topic, I encourage you to focus on a fairly specific question. For example, it would be difficult to write a clear and concise paper on cigarette taxes in general. A more reasonable research paper would focus on testing a specific hypothesis. For example, does an increase in the cigarette tax at the state level encourage alcohol consumption?