

## Preliminary Term Paper Guidelines and Structure of the Research Proposal ECNS 432

**Paper:** The paper should address a real-world policy issue (e.g., some aspect of regulation, a proposed policy change, or a public construction project). Given the time frame we have (i.e., one semester), I do not necessarily expect that you will actually do a complete cost-benefit analysis. Rather, I expect you to explain clearly the problem you are addressing, and then explain how you would do a cost-benefit analysis (if it is not feasible within our time frame). Naturally, I expect the analysis and writing to be of very high quality (and yes, things like grammar and spelling matter!). Although there is no formal page requirement, I expect that most students will write papers that are roughly 15 double-spaced pages in length (not including tables and figures). We will discuss the exact details of the paper structure later in the semester (e.g., introduction, literature review, potential data sources, proposed methodology, etc.). As noted in your syllabus, some of the important dates are the following:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Feb. 7th                 | One to two page research proposal due. Around this time, I will also have students explain their proposed projects briefly to the class. |
| April 4th                | First draft of term paper due to your reviewer.  |
| April 11th               | Reviewer reports due (2 copies)  |
| Last 2 weeks of semester | Student presentations of papers.   |
| April 25th               | Term papers due.   |

I expect the student presentations will be interesting for all of us. When you make your presentation, I expect you to come well prepared to explain your project. When other students are presenting, I expect you to be a good member of the audience. I do not expect problems with attendance, but I am quite serious about it. I reserve the right to reduce your paper grade if you fail to attend other students' presentations, and I can also ask final exam questions related to students' presentations. More details will be given regarding the exact format I will require of the presentations. But, I am guessing that most will find it useful to use PowerPoint.

### **Research Proposal Template**

**I. Introduction.** A clear, concise statement of the problem you are addressing. In a paragraph (or two), convince the reader why your question is interesting and important.

**II. Very brief literature review.** Provide and briefly discuss relevant research to your proposed project (try to find peer-reviewed academic journal articles related to your topic).

**III. Proposed methods.** How do you plan on addressing the issue? Remember, I do not expect you to do a complete cost-benefit analysis for the course. But, briefly explain how you would plan on going about conducting a cost-benefit analysis for the proposed topic.

**IV. Implications.** Briefly explain what you expect the completed research will add to our understanding of some broader set of issues in cost-benefit analysis (or, more generally, in economics).