Econ 313: The Great Recesssion

Fall 2020, Module A

Bates College

Paper Assignment

This assignment constitutes 35% of your course grade.

Topic: You are to choose your own topic. While you are not required to inform me of your topic before submitting your paper, please feel free to discuss it with me beforehand. Your paper should either examine a topic related to course material that we did not discuss in class, or it should explore a topic in significantly greater detail. Papers that simply rehash class material will receive poor grades. Good papers will apply the theoretical and empirical tools from class to their topic. You are not expected to develop original theories or perform original empirical estimation (although feel free to do so if you are ambitious). Some things to keep in mind:

1. When in doubt, narrow your topic. It is far easier to extend a seemingly small subject than to adequately summarize a vast subject in a short paper.

2. Good papers may be either normative (advocating a particular position/policy) or positive (describing an issue).

3. Your grade will largely depend on the contribution that your paper makes beyond what was discussed in class.

4. Don't neglect your other coursework. If your training in other economics courses, or other disciplines provides insight to your topic, then include it in your paper.

5. Expect that the quality of your writing may affect your paper grade. Keep in mind that this assignment is due during a very busy time of the year. I make no apologies for the fact that a clearly presented paper is likely to score better than a poorly written paper, even if the underlying quality of the economic analysis is the same. Don't hesitate to take advantage of the writing resources available at Bates.

Deadlines and Submission:

The schedule for the final paper is condensed due to the modular schedule. The due dates are as follows:

1. By Sunday, September 27, students must submit their paper topic. This document may be of any form but should 1) clearly state the central question that you wish to study and 2) describe potential sources that you might use.

Because this deadline is fairly early in the semester, much of the course content will not have yet been covered in class. This should not deter you from choosing a topic most closely related to a topic that we will cover after this due date. If you choose such a topic, I suggest that you briefly discuss it with me to get a better idea of what we will cover in class.

2. The deadline to submit a rough draft is Sunday, October 4. While you are not required to submit a first draft, I guarantee that you will have at least five days to incorporate my suggestions, even if that entails extending your final due date.

The due date for the final paper is Friday, October 16. Your completed paper must meet the following requirements or I will not accept it:

1. It must be submitted as a pdf by e-mail prior to the deadline. A hard copy is also appreciated.

2. 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, 1.5 or double spaced.

3. The maximum page limit is 15 pages, which does not include references, figures and tables in a separate appendix, or a title page.

Plagiarism and Unpleasantries: All papers will be electronically analyzed to verify that they constitute original work. I reserve the right to submit your paper to electronic databases that will check for academic misconduct both during this term and in the future.

You are required to properly cite others' work. This includes giving credit whenever you quote or paraphrase another person's work, or when you borrow their ideas. Restating a sentence does

not absolve you of your obligation to give credit. If you need help or have questions, then ask. Failing to properly cite is a common form of unintentional plagiarism and will adversely affect your grade.

Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate or unreasonably careless representation of another's work as your own, either as a portion of your paper or as its entirety. This includes, but is not limited to, purchasing a paper that someone else wrote, using a friend's paper, downloading a paper from the internet, or knowingly aiding in another student's intentional plagiarism. Intentional plagiarism represents academic misconduct and I intend to fully pursue all instances. Although all cases are judged individually, previous penalties for intentional plagiarism in this course have included a failing grade for the entire class. In one egregious case, this failure was listed on the student's transcript as "failure due to academic misconduct."

If you are planning on using a paper from another class as the basis for this assignment, you must clear it with me beforehand. I am not entirely opposed to your doing this, provided that there is a substantial and new contribution to the paper that is related to this course. Failing to clear this with me, however, may adversely affect your grade. Extreme cases (e.g. handing in exactly the same paper from another class) may be treated as intentional plagiarism.