

Econ 50: Urban Economics
Prof. Sarah West

Research Paper Guidelines

I will go over these stages in more detail during class. You should talk with me about each of the paper stages described below *before* you hand in the each stage.

I. Project Proposal (1-2 pages): **Due February 13**

- (1) State the question that you would like to answer or the hypothesis that you would like to test.
- (2) Provide motivation for this study. What will economists and policymakers learn from your research?
- (3) Outline your research strategy.
- (4) List possible data sources.
- (5) Include a bibliography.

II. Literature Review (3-4 pages): **Due March 15**

- (1) Summarize the papers that relate directly to your research, and explain exactly how each paper relates to your hypothesis or question.
- (2) Identify the gaps in the literature that your research fills, or how your research challenges previous results.

III. Theory Model (2-3 pages): **Due April 5**

- (1) Explain your hypothesis or problem in terms of an optimization problem. For example, if your paper considers the effect of policy on behavior, what is the goal of the policymaker, the firm, and/or the household? If you are testing an hypothesis using data, explain the underlying economic behavior that serves as the basis for your hypothesis.
- (2) Use graphical analysis to explain the current equilibrium and/or optimal equilibrium, or to explain the relationship between the underlying economic behavior and empirical data.

IV. Final Paper (10-12 pages): **Due May 6**

- (1) Describe the data that you would use to test your hypothesis or answer your question.
- (2) If possible, calculate summary statistics using the “closest to ideal” data. Otherwise, use more-available data to explore your hypothesis or question.

Then,

- (3) Combine all of the steps above into a cohesive research paper. Make sure that you explain how your research contributes to the literature on your topic, list any caveats to your preliminary conclusions, and describe directions for future research.