

Econ 431-01: Public Finance
Prof. Sarah West

Reading Summaries

For 12 of the 16 readings indicated with an *, write a summary using the following questions as a guideline. They are due via email before the class period for which the reading is assigned, graded on a pass/fail basis, and count toward 10 percent of the final grade. **Please put the summary in the body of the email (not as an attachment), and the summary number in the subject line (that is, if it is the 5th summary you have sent me, your subject line should read Summary 5).**

These summaries will help you contribute to discussion of the readings and will provide a study-resource with which to prepare for exams.

Author(s):

Title:

Journal Name, Volume, Date (if applicable):

1. What hypothesis does the author make or test? Or, what question is the author attempting to answer?
2. What are the relevant economic theories or concepts used? In this section, you might find it useful to outline the economic model, particularly if this is a theoretical paper. Interpret the main first-order conditions and conclusions drawn using the model.
3. What data are used, if any? Is this the ideal data with which to answer the question posed by the paper? Explain.
4. If the paper is an empirical one, how does the author go about testing the hypothesis (or answering the question) using the data? Be sure to explain the author's empirical technique here, detailing the main equation or equations that are estimated. How does the author identify the effect(s) of the variable(s) of interest on the dependent variable? That is, how does the author isolate the effects to ensure that no other contributing variable is confounding the results?

If the paper is a review article, how does the author categorize the main papers under review? What is useful about this categorization technique (what do we learn from the comparisons made between the various bodies of literature)?

5. What are the paper's main findings? How do these findings differ from those found in related literature? That is, what does this paper contribute to the literature?
6. What are the paper's weaknesses?