

### **GUIDELINES FOR THREE PAGE OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROJECT**

This assignment is due on Monday, March 30. It has two purposes. The first is to let your classmates and me know the background literature for your topic, and how your own project fits into that literature. The second is to keep you on track to have a 10-12 page draft by April 13, and a 10-12 page final copy by May 6.

Your written overview should be about three pages long (word processed, double spaced, one inch margins, 10 or 12 point font). Typically, half or more (1½-2 pages) will summarize the background literature. What is conventional wisdom on your topic? What are some open, debated questions? The remainder will outline how you plan to complete research that will add to what we think we know about your topic.

Your one page of basic statistics or graph should illustrate some important characteristic of some relevant data, in an unstructured way. “Unstructured” means that detailed knowledge of the relevant economic model is not required to understand and interpret the statistics or graph. This specifically means that multiple regression output is excluded. Basic statistics can include means, standard deviations, correlations, or quantiles. Graphs can include time series plots, scatter plots of one variable versus another, or histograms. In a calibration or simulation study, the statistics or plots might be ones that summarize real data. Or they could summarize or present simulation results in existing papers, rather than characteristics of actual data.

Ideally, the data displayed should be central to your study. If, for example, you are planning to analyze the effect of a variable  $x$  on a variable  $y$ , a scatter plot of  $x$  versus  $y$  is natural. It may not, however, be possible, to have gathered all your data, or even your central data series, by the time of your critique. You are required, however, to have *some* set of basic statistics, or a graph. You are free to present more than one graph, if you can do so within your allotted time.

Your oral presentation should follow the lines of your overview. Since 4 people will present per class period, you will have about 17-18 minutes. Bear in mind that any given topic will often involve material unfamiliar to some of your classmates. So try to present at a leisurely pace, and use economic concepts familiar to everyone who has taken Economics 301/311 and 302/312.