

Law and Economics

ECON 3231/5231

(formerly 920:128(g))

Prof. Jepsen

Spring 2012

Paper Assignment:

Write a position paper on one of two topics: legalization of marijuana (pp. 552-556) or the death penalty (pp. 542-551).

Begin your paper with a general analysis of the topic. In your introduction, state the position that you will argue. Discuss the economic implications of BOTH sides of your issue. Make the most important points – because of the page limitations, you are not expected to discuss all possible points. In your conclusion, briefly summarize the position that you have argued.

Remember, you need to read the section(s) in your textbook that discuss your topic. However, you do not need to do any supplemental research. In fact, no additional credit will be awarded for outside research. The purpose of this paper is for you to practice expressing a position clearly, arguing both sides of a controversial issue. Emphasize rational rather than emotional arguments.

Format:

Maximum Length: 2 pages

Text: Double-spaced

12-point font

1-inch margins top, bottom, left, and right

Due Dates:

Rough Draft Friday, April 13, 2012, at 3 p.m.

Final Draft Tuesday, May 1, 2012, at 3 p.m.

You **must** turn in your rough draft with your final draft.

Grading:

Rough Draft 14 points; 7 points on content and 7 points on clarity of writing
(includes spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

Final Draft 6 points

Suggested Reference: *Economical Writing* by Deirdre N. McCloskey. Second Edition. Waveland Press, Inc. 2000.

Required Citation Method

Because all the information in your paper will come from either general knowledge (such as “drug interdiction reduces supply and increases price”) or your textbook (such as “the death penalty is legal in 38 states and in federal cases”), we will use a modified version of a proper citation method. A typical citation *within* a paper includes the author’s last name, the year of the publication, and the page number(s).

Example: Currently 65 percent of Americans support the death penalty (Cooter and Ulen, 2008, 543).

Because the authors’ last names and the year of publication will not vary, you may omit them. You **MUST**, however, provide page numbers for all citations of 1) direct quotes, 2) claims made about other people’s views, 3) close paraphrases, and 4) statistics. You are required to provide proper citations *within* the paper. You are not required to provide a reference list at the end of the paper. You may use parentheses () or square brackets [].

Here are examples of the four types of citations as they apply to your paper:

1. Direct quote

“These dubious policies against drugs are very expensive” (555).

Please note that using a direct quote from a textbook is rare. You should reserve the use of direct quotes for unique statements, not to convey information that is easy to paraphrase.

2. Claims made about other people’s views

Critics of the death penalty argue that the use of executions may actually decrease the number of convictions (548).

3. Close paraphrases

Government policies that attempt to restrict the importation of illegal drugs have failed (554).

4. Statistics

Currently 65 percent of Americans support the death penalty (543).

Please see me if you have any questions regarding proper citation methods. Please be aware that improper citations or lack of citations may constitute plagiarism. Students who do not provide proper citations may fail the assignment and may be subject to additional consequences.

Writing Suggestions

Here are some hints regarding commonly-made mistakes in student papers:

Grammar and punctuation tips:

Know the difference between commas and semi-colons.

Place the period after the reference year.

Example: Sales revenues exceeded two million dollars in 2004 (Smith, 2005).

Place the period within quotation marks, unless a citation immediately follows a quote.

Example: Jones (2004) states, "Company leadership was pathetic."

Example: The CEO said, "We underestimated Mr. Trump" (Harris, 2005).

Write out the numbers one through ten.

Write out the word percent.

Writing tips:

Do not use "these," "those," and "this" excessively.

Do not use the word "this" or "it" without a specific reference.

Example: do NOT say ... "It is important to note _____."

Do not write in second person (using the word "you").

Do not use contractions in a formal paper.

Do not use passive voice.

Example: do NOT say ... "Record profits were earned by the company in 2005."

Instead, say ... "The company earned record profits in 2005."

Each paragraph should focus on one (and only one) idea. Do not repeat the same idea in multiple sentences.

Do not use direct quotes excessively. Save direct quotes for unique material. Do not use direct quotes to convey statistics. If in doubt, paraphrase and properly cite.

Make sure you proofread your work. I encourage you to read your paper out loud.