

Assignment #3: Literature Review

To write a successful literature review, you need to dedicate a significant amount of time to search for research articles AND in writing a concise survey of the literature related to your topic. You should be working on this over the next few weeks, as the search process often takes time. Critically reading and evaluating research on your topic will take a significant amount of time as well.

- In order for you to conduct research, you must have a sense of where your topic and research question fit into the larger literature on the topic. This is really the first step you will take in completing any research project.
- There are two sources of information on a topic: popular and scholarly. Only the latter is considered part of the literature review. It is acceptable to cite popular work, but you must have at least five economics research articles (by different authors over a reasonable time frame) included in your literature review.
- Steps you can take to complete an effective search of the literature:
 1. Start with secondary sources in the general topic area.
A good starting point would be the *New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics* and the *Encyclopedia of Economics*. These very general references cite the seminal research articles on a specific topic.
 2. Search for survey articles on the topic.
These are found in journals like the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* and the *Journal of Economic Literature*. This will help you to get familiar with how different research articles are related to one another, as well as highlight general themes in the literature on your subject.
 3. Move to primary sources specific topic.
This is the general search on your topic. You should make use of EconLit. You can use the other search engines, but most of the work from EconLit will be appropriate (e.g., published economics research).
 4. Use a combination of keyword searching and browsing from the references of useful sources you've located. Also, you'll often find good references listed in the citations for an article you've already read.

Rough Draft

You should hand in the following with your rough draft (put these in one file):

- An annotated bibliography that uses the proper APA style format.
- A critical review of the papers you intend to cite in your bibliography – no fewer than five research articles (only one can be a survey article). Your critical review of each paper should
 - Include an abstract of the paper – DO NOT PARAPHRASE THE ABSTRACT PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR. You are expected to write your own abstract in the context of your research project.
 - Evaluate the research (theory and empirical analysis) conducted by the author and identify at least one shortcoming (this may be something the author points out himself/herself) OR a shortcoming point out by another researcher.
 - Include two to three sentences explaining how this research answers (or begins to answer) your specific research question.

Final Draft

Incorporate comments and feedback on your rough draft to tie the critical reviews you wrote into a literature review. Please look over the handout on literature review pointers and the class notes before turning in your literature review.