

Overall comments on term papers

(citations from actual papers are from Fall 2013)

Strengths of your papers:

- mostly, well defended position papers: position – arguments in favor (or against) – conclusion.
- good use of literature in the good papers: a critical analysis, comparative critique, outlining a gap
- some papers well on their way to making a contribution to the existing current literature – an excellent achievement!
- an abstract helps the reader, and some papers have them
- generally, empirical papers have the desired and the most appropriate structure $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ essays have more problems
- good conclusions

Weaknesses:

- you do not run spellchecks: The more typos there are, the less I can focus on the actual content of the paper.
- numerous occasions when sources are cited without reference throughout the paper; claims are made without references: “According to theory, such monetary policies are beneficial for the economy”; “Americans believe that their nation would be immune to the effects of the depression which raged in Europe”
- some papers use mostly newspaper references: inappropriate in research
- some vague comments, not very relevant to the topic – imagine a referee’s goal
- at times, arguments are too verbose, with redundant phrasing: “The bull of the market started collapsing, panic in consumers positions started since soon the stock price fell”; “What if there are any stanzas, which had been mistakenly thrown out into the trash by Providence, and the envoy of the whole story could differ from the life as we know it?”
- poor motivation (“It was very interesting during the class”)
- exaggeration and overstatement (“the Dutch disease will destroy the economy”, “the outrageous increase in tuitions should be stopped”, “the Great Depression is often seen by many historians and economists as one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of the previous century”)
- no hypothesis or a position stated in the intro to be subsequently defended – on and on and on....
- redundant points: learn to discriminate between a point that will contribute to your thesis/hypothesis, and a redundant point which leads nowhere. If something is not contributing to your hypothesis or position, don’t mention it. If it does, tell me how is that relevant: “Atlantic City is

an interesting case. It was called "Boardwalk Empire". Nowadays there even is a TV Series with the same name. "

-- references in main body not listed in the bibliography, and references from the bibliography not cited: *How do you know?*

-- direct citations from texts need to have a page reference: "...the only way to reduce prices is to reduce costs of production, and the largest of these costs is labor. (Eichengreen)"

-- very few of you specify an actual model to estimate. You should not be afraid of specifying the model explicitly: that is how your reader can provide deeper comments to you

-- weak critical lit. reviews

-- some methodology sections continue describing the literature. Wrong: The methodology studies how YOU are going to approach your research question, not how other people have done it in the past. Reviewing others' work is part of the lit. review.

-- no methodology: data description, regression modelling; logical argumentation, deduction, induction

-- no independent data search exercise: mostly using already published and digested data for the purposes of other researchers' work.

-- well presented model and results but NO data description??? How do I know you are running your own regression and not using somebody else's work?

-- The results section needs to present the results from YOUR work, not from the work of others. It can compare YOUR results with results by others but the bulk should go to presenting your own work.

-- structurally indistinguishable parts: important to distinguish parts

Overall:

You write good position papers but those are still far from an independent research output.