Economics

Description

Length: approximately 2000 words (maximum 2200) Objectives: The purpose of this assignment is for you to learn about a relevant substantive area of the economic analysis of pandemics in more depth than the basic material allows; to develop your independent thinking and background research capacity (including data comprehension); to structure a rigorous analytic argument, and to exhibit your writing skills. You are not required to perform the direct empirical analysis yourself (although you may choose to do so), but you are required to include empirical support for your conclusions. The main point is less about finding something truly unique and more about drawing your own conclusions rather than summarizing the work of others. Topics: You should choose your own topic and motivating research question. Pick something that is interesting to you and/or pertinent for your overall education/career goals. Any of the topics from the course syllabus are fine, but so are other topics for which there wasn’t as much time to cover in detail (e.g. macroeconomic implications). If you would like feedback or guidance on your idea, feel free to reach out to me. If you’re having trouble coming up with a topic by looking through some of the supplementary readings from the syllabus, as well as all the amazing material that is appearing every day on social science aspects of COVID-19. Once you choose a topic, focus on background reading (google scholar is always helpful, as well as the bibliographies of the sources on the syllabus) and looking for a gap in the existing literature. It will likely be optimal to iterate between your research question and your background research & data sources until you converge on something where you can feasibly make a novel contribution. Keep in mind that specificity is your friend: don’t be too broad (e.g. in terms of geographic focus) or ambitious. Finally feel free to use APA or any other referencing style, as long as it is complete and consistent; always reference your sources! Marking: You will be assessed on the basis of • description – what is the problem being addressed (in economic terms)? • motivation – why is the answer to your question important for development? • background – succinctly describe the current state of knowledge • analysis – clear and rigorous exposition of your argument, with empirical support • conclusions – what new knowledge has been gained? (include caveats, if any) • next steps – are there policy implications? areas for further research?

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