

Economics 323 (Spring 2010)

Writing Assignment 2 (8-10 pages)

Due February 28, 11 pm on Moodle: Topic submission

Due March 3, in class: Research reflection, 1 hard copy of an academic article that you have read, plus 2 additional citations

Due March 12, in class: Annotated bibliography

Due April 2, in class: 1st draft

Due April 16, 5 pm: Final paper

Write a literature review on a topic related to the course material. You may use the topic in the article that you summarized for the first writing assignment or you may examine the abstracts your classmates posted on Moodle to find other acceptable ideas. If you have any question about whether your topic is acceptable, please contact me.

What is a literature review?

A literature review is an organized and synthesized summary of a number of academic articles (5 to 10) related to a chosen topic. A literature review should not summarize each article separately but find common themes throughout the articles, identify areas of controversy, and possibly, formulate questions that need further research. You are building an account of what has been published by researchers. For example, suppose your topic is the pros and cons of inflation targeting. You might find several articles on the success/failure of inflation targeting, some on the prospects of inflation targeting in the U.S., and a few theoretical papers on the optimality of inflation targeting as a monetary policy regime. The literature review might be divided into these sections with the use of sub-headings.

What is a research reflection?

A research reflection is essentially a diary of your research process. Write up to one page documenting and reflecting on the research strategies you employed in finding your articles. In particular, you will want to include: which database(s) and/or search engine(s) you tried; what keywords or other search terms you entered; what your initial impressions were of your results; an evaluation of what worked and did not work; and if and how you modified (or think you will need to modify) your search strategies to retrieve better results.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of resources on a certain topic with a description of each resource. Each entry in an annotated bibliography should include all the information you would normally include in a list of works cited. The bibliographic information is followed by an annotation, which can be just a few sentences and both describes and evaluates the contents of the item.

For your annotated bibliography, you should group your references by which sub-heading it would appear under. An academic article may appear under more than one sub-heading and the annotation would be slightly different when it appears under two distinct sub-headings.

What is an academic article?

An academic article is written by a trained research economist, not a newspaper or magazine reporter. Although many academic articles are too technical for undergraduates, most articles written for Federal Reserve publications are accessible. In addition to the Federal Reserve, there are several other sources (Journal of Economic Perspectives, The American Economist, The Economists' Voice, and World Economics) of less technical articles. I encourage you to explore other journals such as the American Economic Review and the Journal of Money, Credit and Banking that, on occasion, have less technical articles.

Bibliography, reference format and use of footnotes.

You may use any citation style (MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.) that you choose. Reference articles by author's name and date of publication when discussing the author's ideas in your paper. Use footnotes to elaborate a point, not to cite articles. Two examples of referencing are:

- Julie Smith (2004) finds that the weighted median inflation rate is a good forecaster of headline inflation.
- The weighted median is found to be a good forecaster of headline inflation (Smith, 2004).

In both cases, you cite the Smith publication in the works cited or bibliography at the end of the paper.