

ECON 681

Contract Theory

Term paper

The purpose of the term paper is to develop some skills that are relevant to write articles in economic theory. In particular, we will focus on the first crucial step: determine a research question given the state of the art. Part of this exercise is also relevant in other fields, but some aspects are specific to theory.

The term paper consists in

- a literature review of the selected topic:

You will be provided with a topic and a leading article for that topic. You will have to present that paper in class at some point.

To make your review, you will need to search for related articles, read them and summarize them. You can start from the literature cited in the leading article. Use Econlit and Google to find further articles.

The review does not need to be exhaustive but, still you must choose a representative sample of articles.

Prepare an articulated and well-organized literature review as well as a bibliography of the articles you cite.

- an original research proposal

Determine a relevant question that fits in that literature and motivate your choice: why is this interesting? How does it relate to the existing literature?

The question must be relevant to the topic of the course (contract theory) but you can propose for instance to build a model that could be tested empirically, or for which you could run an experiment.

Detail the model you would use.

Detail expected results.

Explain why you think your analysis is tractable, and mention which technical problems you expect to encounter.

You can use in-class discussions on your leading article to shape your proposal.

Organize your term paper around these two items. It must be a readable text, self-contained and organized. Use all the articles reviewed in this class as examples for writing. This will serve as extra training for writing your dissertation.