

The paper for 14.05

This paper should be a research paper that is about 20 pages long, double-spaced (on numbered pages), with a bibliography of works consulted. It should demonstrate both your understanding of the subject and your ability to write in English. An outline or even a rough draft is due by November 7. The outline will count toward your grade, about 10% of the grade, leaving the other 15% for the final draft. The outline also will be the basis on which you can get feedback from a TA. A rough draft is helpful both in writing and getting feedback; a second draft always beats a first draft. You also may want to consult the Writing Center at MIT, if you are writing an essay in English for the first time.

You should bring your outline with you when you discuss your paper with a TA. A first draft of the paper also should be written soon after November 7 if a second draft is to be turned in on November 21. Late papers will be penalized on a steep sliding scale that makes it worth your while to submit the paper on time rather than trying to wait a week to improve it.

The paper should be a comparison of economic conditions in two countries. One country should be the country you live in, or from which your parents came, or with which you have other strong attachments. The other country should be chosen to provide a good contrast with this one. Feel free to discuss the choice of country with your instructors. You have a choice of two topics to discuss, the first two topics of 14.05. You can describe and analyze the behavior of the two countries in the Great Depression, or you can describe and analyze economic growth in the two countries in the last half of the 20th century. The aim of the paper should be to use the theories learned in 14.05 to explain the events you choose. Comparing and contrasting two countries should provide enough movements of interest for our theories to explain.

Like any good paper, this one should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning should state clearly the topic of the paper and what you are planning to do. It should be rewritten after the rest of the paper is finished to make sure it fits the paper as written and presents a good case for someone to read the paper. In particular, the beginning should explain what theories you are employing in your analysis. The middle of the paper should contain your description of events in the two countries and your analysis of them. This part can contain diagrams and data as needed to show what you are explaining or how you are explaining it. It is the longest and most substantial part of the paper. The end of the paper should summarize your argument, state your conclusions, and draw any implications of your analysis that you think warranted.

Plagiarism is a major problem when writing research papers under time pressure. You should avoid plagiarism at all costs. If you are in doubt about whether you are over the line of acceptable behavior, you are too close to the edge. Omit the questionable passage and draw back from the edge. Provide full citations for all sources you consult in your work. Feel free to quote from them, but indicate clearly when you are quoting.

If you write on economic growth, the following two books may be useful in addition to the material on the syllabus.

Ha-Joon Chang, Kicking Away the Ladder—Development Strategy in Historical Perspective (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

William Easterly, The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

Data for a wide variety of countries are available from the Penn World Tables, available on the web at <http://datacentre2.chass.utoronto.ca/pwt/> or <http://www.bized.ac.uk/dataserv/pennhome.htm>.

If you write on the Great Depression, the following books (which are less fun than the previous two) may be useful:

Charles Feinstein, Peter Temin, and Gianni Toniolo, The European Economy Between the Wars (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Michael D. Bordo, Claudia Goldin, and Eugene N. White, The Defining Moment: The Great Depression and the American Economy in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Dietmar Rothermund, The Global Impact of the Great Depression, 1929-1939 (New York: Routledge, 1996).