

17.871
Spring 2012
Group Projects: Further Guidance

Assignment summary

Working with your assigned group, answer the question posed to you. Each of the questions can be answered with regression analysis, and I would prefer to see at least one regression reported in your presentation.

For your presentations, please e-mail me the slides you will use well in advance of class, so that I can ensure that they will load on my computer, and so that I can spot any obvious major problems, with the content or the length.

For your paper, e-mail a copy to me by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 16 (as specified in the original assignment). Also, attach a *Stata do-file* and your *data file* that will reproduce the analysis you report.

Grading rubric

The following is the distribution of points for how the assignment will be graded:

- Writing/Organization - 30 points
- Lit. Review - 15 points
- Data Collection - 15 points
- Data Analysis - 20 points
- Data Presentation - 20 points

Presentation

You should be able to make your presentation using five slides. Here they are:

1. Research question
 - Pose your question
 - What is the current state of academic thinking about your question?
 - Develop a hypothesis about one key explanatory variable
 - Explain why it's important to democracy, public policy, etc.
2. Research design (methodology: usually regression)
 - Describe dependent variable, key explanatory variable, control variables (justify the controls)
 - Descriptive statistics (recode all to 0-1, present means and sds)
3. Bivariate relationship for key variable
 - Scatter plot for continuous variables, box plots or crosstabs for nominal variables, label axes, label data points

- Present and interpret bivariate coef. (**include a sentence on the slide**), put regression line on scatter plot
- 4. Present and interpret multivariate regression coefficients
 - Raw Stata output is okay, but only this time!
 - Does adding the control variables to your regression change the results? Why?
Interpret the coefficient with a sentence on the slide.
 - Interpret SER (**include a sentence on the slide!**)
- 5. Conclusion
 - What's the most important inference?
 - What are the policy implications or implications for democracy?
 - How strong of an inference can we draw? Problems? Alternative explanations?
 - Internal validity? (Nonrandom selection and reverse causation)
 - External validity?

Please practice your presentations and ensure that you are under 20 minutes! (Fifteen minutes is best. I won't complain if you do a 10-minute presentation, if it covers all the bases.)

Please bring copies of your slides for everyone in class.

Finishing group projects can be difficult interpersonally. A surprisingly useful trick is to be kind in all your interactions with group members.

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