Econ 1560 Paper Assignment.

Papers are due Thursday, Dec. 11, at 5:00. You should email your paper to me (David_Weil@Brown.edu) in the form of a .doc, or .docx file.

Your assignment is to produce a paper that adds value to the content of the course and/or textbook. This can be a critique of some part of the book or course, an extension, an example, an application of the ideas we explored to some new context, a new theory of your own, etc.

You are welcome to bring to bear additional data, academic analyses, your own personal experiences, and so on. However, none of this is required.

The audience you should write for is someone who has read the book and sat through the course. Thus you should not explain in the paper anything that such a person would be expected to know. You should also not assume that your reader is familiar with material that is not covered in the course.

It is OK if your paper draws on material that you have covered in another course, however in such a case you should append a note clearly explaining what you have and have not drawn from that course.

Papers should be no more than 1,000 words in length (a little less than four pages double spaced, using standard fonts and margins). Additional material (such as notes explaining how the paper is related to another course and a reasonable number of graphs or tables) will not be counted against this total. If I think that a paper is too long, I will use the word count feature in Word to check, and points will be deducted if appropriate.

Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10 points (out of 100) for every day or fraction thereof they are late.

Some further notes based on the experience of previous years:

- Just because you are in college, it does not mean that you can ignore the rules for writing essays that you learned in high school. Your essay should be well structured, with arguments introduced in a logical fashion.

- Whenever possible, you should bring in facts to support your arguments. In some cases there will be no available data relevant to your essay. But if there are easily obtained facts that would bear on your argument, and you haven’t bothered to look them up, that is a sign that you did not take the assignment seriously.
• You should be very careful about plagiarism. Direct quotations should be in quotation marks; paraphrases should be properly attributed.

• I am serious when I say that the target audience should be someone who has taken the course. You may have taken advanced courses that gave you advanced tools that would be beyond the grasp on many of your peers. You should not use these tools, even if you know that I understand them.

• If you bring in material from other courses, you should be especially careful to clearly explain that you are doing so (in the form of a note at the end of the essay, which is not counted against the total number of words that you can use.) You should specify what course(s) you used material from.

• Although you are welcome to use material from other courses, simply summarizing what some other school of thought has to say about the material we covered does not make for a good essay. You should be able to describe that other school of thought in terms of our course’s framework, and you should provide your own analysis of why one approach is better, what is learned from the contrast between them, etc. Also, you should remember that your target audience is students in this course, so that you should properly explain jargon or concepts from other courses or fields that our students would not be expected to know.

• Students who have lived, worked, or studied in developing countries are welcome to bring their experience to bear on the paper. However you should not think that having such experience to report is a substitute for having a good idea and a cogent argument to support it. You should use your experience to provide supporting evidence for your argument.

• I have posted on the course web page some sample papers from previous years, along with my comments.