EC9C3 Assignment 1 - Research Design

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1 Introduction

Your job is to develop **one detailed applied micro research proposals** following the structure outlined in the next section.

The topic can be *anything* in terms of field - labour, development, political economy, macro, history etc.

Maximum length is 5000 words. You can have appendices of any length but stick to the 5,000 word limit for the core. The idea is to teach you how to select the most important information for including in your core research design.

2 Structure of the Assignment.

You want address the following:

2.1 Question 1 - Motivation (10% marks)

What is the motivation for your research? Is it (i) evidence on a completely new / understudied issue; (ii) fresh, novel evidence on on old question; or (iii) something that is general and focused on methodology?

2.2 Outline the Research Question (10% marks)

What is the specific research question? This is not a statement of the general topic (eg: 'violent crime in Mexico') but rather something with more specific hooks (eg: the role of economic versus non-economic factors in driving crime?).

2.3 What are the three most relevant papers for your proposal? (10% marks)

Here I want you to note **only three papers** from the literature that are relevant to your proposal. They could be in the same subject area or be relevant in methodological terms. For example, you could be taking a paper from structural IO and be planning to apply its estimation strategy or model to (say) a new education or political economy question.

2.4 What is the estimating equation? (30% marks)

Probably the most important part. Write the key estimating equation(s) that you will focus on. All your data construction will be focused on getting to the point of trying out the estimating equation on data as soon as possible. Discuss the outcomes variables, controls and any econometric issues that mighty come up. Think of this as writing the 'estimation strategy' section of the paper.

2.5 The Data (20% marks)

What data will you use? Outline the steps that you will take to develop the dataset. How much time and cross-sectional variation do you expect to see in the data? How does the actual data that you able to get compare to the 'ideal dataset' you would have if you had unlimited resourcs for collection?

2.6 What could go wrong? (20% marks)

Is the data you are using difficult to collect, for example, subject to confidentiality and location restrictions? What if there is just no serious variation in the data for the outcomes of interest and main independent variables? What if there are imprecise or null results of some posited treatment? What is your back-up plan? is there a point early in the project where you can cut your losses and move onto something else?

Due Date: Monday 11th November.