Microeconomics for Public Policy I
Fall 2018, Leah Brooks

Ripped from the Headlines Assignment
Rules of Engagement

The goal of this assignment is to connect what you're learning in class to policy-relevant news.

Each week some students are article finders, and others are presenters.

By Wednesday midnight, each article finder must send me a link to an article that relates to the lecture from the previous day (Tuesday). This means that by tomorrow at midnight, each article finder will send an article relating to Lecture 1. I will post the links by the end of the day on Thursday. Presenters: do not start work until I ok the article! After I give an ok, I will link to the article on the google sheet (link to be posted on the "handouts" tab).

As an article chooser, what you choose should illustrate – either by being consistent or by contradicting – something we learned in class. By "article" I mean newspaper, magazine (but not too long!), or reputable news outlet article. Even a short video or podcast would be fine.

The key here is to find an article that is an example, not an explanation. I frequently receive submissions that explain economic concepts to readers, along the lines of "see how supply and demand work in the [blah blah] market." These articles are usually columns, not news articles. Such columns are not a good fit for the assignment. Such a submission (a) doesn't show me that you can find an illustration of the principle we studied without the author's help and (b) doesn't leave the presenter any thinking to do.

The Expedia/Orbitz article I linked to from today's lecture notes is a good example of an example that markets matter for mergers. The article tells us that market definition matters for this industry at this moment. It doesn't explicitly say "look, market definition matters! and here's an example!" The vanilla article on the course website under today's lecture is also a good example, rather than an explanation.

Once articles are posted, presenters should work as a group to make one four minute presentation based on one of the articles (your choice). By Tuesday at noon (day of class), presenters send me a short – again, four-minute maximum! – presentation on whether the article supports or refutes what we learned in class and why. Presenters should make power point slides and assume that the class has read the article. You should summarize a VERY little bit, and spend the vast majority of your time explaining how the evidence is or isn't consistent with what we studied.

DO NOT use any phrases directly from the article (or any other source) without quotation. Do not use ideas without citation.

I will bring a timer and cut you off after four minutes!

Each student will be an article finder and a presenter. Sign up tomorrow (I will send the links tomorrow morning), and I'll link the sheets on the webpage on Wednesday.

I intend to put the following week's article finders and presenters after each week's Ripped from the Headlines presentations in the slides for class. If I forget to do this, please remind me. This mostly fixes the problem of article finders forgetting, which harms presenters.

Grading
- Half of the grade comes from choosing the article (pass/fail) and half from the presentation, as described below
- Late articles decline by one percentage point every 12 hours the article is late. For example, if the article arrives after mighnight on Wednesday, but before noon Thursday, student receives 1.5% credit, rather than 2.5%.
- For presentation:
  - B- or below: the student(s) made a substantial error in the application of course material
  - B: the student(s) identified some course-related content but may have misapplied some central issues
  - B+ is an average grade on this assignment: the student(s) identifies some key issues from the previous class that are mentioned in the article
  - A-: the student(s) has done some more novel or creative or particularly clear interpretation
  - A: the student(s) has both understood the article and its application quite well and has expanded on the concept in a meaningful way