

Microeconomics for Public Policy I
Fall 2023, 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. This assignment asks you to look for examples of what we are studying in the news.

Each week one or two students are article finders, and another one or two are presenters. Each finder finds his or her own article, and each presenter makes a **short** presentation on the assigned article (one of the two). Students who are neither finders nor presenters should read the articles before class in order to tie class topics to policy.

Sign up now on the [google sheet](#) (lectures tab, ripped from headlines subsection) twice: once as a finder and once as a presenter. If each day does not have the same number of article finders and presenters, I reserve the right to rearrange the schedule to even things out.

If you do not want to use your real name on the public google sheet, use an alias on this and on your presentation slides. Make sure that you can remember the alias in the event I need to write you about the article or presentation.

If you are an article finder for a given lecture, you must send me a link to an article related to that lecture by Wednesday midnight of the week of the lecture. 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. Please let me post the link rather than posting it yourself – this way everyone is clear that I have approved the article.

Presenters: do not start work until I ok the article! After I give an ok, I will link to the article(s) on the google sheet (more info below). If you don't see a link by Thursday at 5 pm, please be in touch with me.

To review the timing, Lecture 1 is today. If you are the article finder for Lecture 1, you must send the article by Wednesday midnight following Lecture 1. If you are the article presenter based on material from Lecture 1, you present at the beginning of Lecture 2.

As an article finder, 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.

You must 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 opinion pieces, not news articles. Such opinion pieces are not a good fit for this 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.

For an example of the type of article that is a fit for this assignment, look at the vanilla article on the course website under today's lecture. It explains supply and demand issues in the vanilla market. The author is primarily writing about vanilla, and the goal is to educate readers about that, rather than to explain supply and demand themselves.

To reiterate: columns, opinion pieces, and articles that explain economic concepts to laypeople are uniformly bad choices for this assignment. Choosing this type of article shows me that you know how to google the economic term. I am looking, instead, to see if you can apply the economic concept in a case where the term is not explicitly used.

Once articles are posted, each presenter created slides for a presentation no longer than four minute based on the chosen article. By 3 pm before class on Tuesday, presenters must post presentation slides. These slides should

- quickly summarize the article
- spend most of the time assessing whether the article supports or refutes what we learned in class and why

It is entirely fine if the article does not agree with what we learned in class – your job is to think about which assumptions of our framework are at odds with the article

Presenters, you will set yourself a timer that will ring after four minutes!

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

Each student will be an article finder and a presenter once.

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.

See the "ripped from the headlines" sub-section on the lectures tab for a link to these instructions and the google sheet where you should sign up and where you can find the article links. The google sheet has a tab for each section of the course (afternoon, evening).

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 midnight on Wednesday, but before noon Thursday, student receives 1.5% credit, rather than 2.5%.
 - After two and a half days, the student receives zero credit.
- 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. This grade is very rare.