COURSEWORK ASSESSMENT (2020)

This is a **coursework only module** that utilises the skills and techniques you learned in the Introductory Econometrics module last semester (as well as basic descriptive statistics you would have learned in Introductory Statistics). The coursework is based on conducting an empirical investigation of an area of your choice[*] using data from **Wave 9** of the Understanding Society Survey. **Failure to use this dataset will result in a mark of 0 for the project**.

A brief overview of the survey is contained below - more details will be provided in the lectures in week 1 and on Blackboard.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY SURVEY

The Understanding Society is a longitudinal survey (i.e. re-interviewing the same individuals / households over time). It is also commonly referred to as the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS). The survey builds on and extends an earlier survey that was known as the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The project will involve using a single cross-section (**Wave 9**) of the UKHLS data as applied to individuals although some household variables are also included in the datafile.

The Understanding Society survey provides information on household composition, employment and skills, income and wealth, education, health and lifestyle, social and political attitudes, well-being, environment and transport, children and families. Given its coverage, Understanding Society and its predecessor, the BHPS, have been and continue to be used in a wide range of applications, see for example:

https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/

For the project you will be using a condensed version of the dataset. **The dataset will be available to download from Blackboard but you must register with the UK Data Service before using the dataset. Details on the registration process will be provided in the lectures in week 1. Please note that the dataset will only be made available once the majority of students have registered.**

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[*] Subject to data availability.

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

> **Preliminary Project Proposal (formative assessment). Deadline Thursday 30th January 2020 (in-class submission).**

You have the opportunity to prepare a preliminary project proposal. The preliminary proposal will include title (topic area), a list of variables and estimation technique(s). A template for you to use will be made available.

> **Project Proposal (summative assessment – 20%). Deadline 3pm Wednesday 12th February 2020 (Blackboard submission).**

A project proposal will be submitted which will count for **20%** of the final mark for the module. A template for you to use will be made available.

> **Data Management and Preliminary Analysis (formative assessment). Deadline Thursday 19th March 2020 (in-class submission).**

You will produce a brief document that includes descriptive and graphical analysis of variables being used for your chosen topic. The style of this document will resemble what is typically included in a research report / academic article.

> **Individual Econometric Project (summative assessment - 80%). Deadline 3pm Wednesday 6th May 2020 (Blackboard submission).**

An **individual econometric project** will count for **80%** of the final mark for this module. Your econometric work is to be carried out using **STATA**. Word count 4,000. A suggested outline for the project is provided below and sample projects can be found on the Norwich Economic Papers series (however please note that some of these examples use different statistical software).

SUGGESTED OUTLINE OF THE FINAL PROJECT

- **Introduction**

State clearly the research question you are investigating. Indicate how you approach the problem (outline the structure of your answer).

- **Background (Literature Review)**

Describe the underlying theory (if applicable) and findings of important related literature. Identify any original contribution you believe your study could make.

- **Model**

You must centre your project on one or a number of relationships / propositions suitable for statistical estimation and/or testing. This should be related to relevant theory (where appropriate). In this section you should write out the regression equation / model you will be estimating.

- **Data**

Carefully define your variables; include a list of expected signs and a table of descriptive statistics. Some preliminary charts and diagrams should also be included.

- **Empirical Analysis**

The analysis of the results is a key stage of the study. It involves estimating an initial model or models, performing appropriate diagnostic tests, reformulating and re-estimating, conducting tests of hypothesis and, finally, prediction and policy implications. You should consider including a comparative table of results (in terms of different estimation methods, different samples and / or variables) - basically whatever you think is appropriate given the research topic/question you are considering. Make sure the results are interpreted appropriately.

- **Conclusion**

Summarise your findings and discuss their implications (e.g. are there any policy implications associated with your results?). Discuss the limitations of the work you have carried out and scope for further work.

- **Bibliography**

Properly cite your references. This must conform to Harvard Style.

- **Presentation**

Please give consideration to the readability of your project e.g. the formatting of tables, figures, equations and regression output. I would expect you to include the main figures/tables/equations etc. within the main body of the project. Additional figures and tables can be included in an appendix (which will not count towards the word count) but remember your marker will not necessarily look at the material in the appendix, so use it wisely!

- **Appendix**

You must include a do-file of all the commands used in producing the work associated with your project. You can also use the appendix to include additional material, such as additional regressions run or regression output from STATA.

Preliminary Advice

- **Start Early**

Think about some potential topics you might be interested in NOW. Try not to luxuriate in the comfort of having a deadline which at this stage is almost 4 months away.

- **Be Realistic**

Use bibliographic sources and online databases to obtain relevant articles. Be realistic in the number of references used (textbooks, journal articles, working papers, articles in the FT, Economist, etc). Avoid referencing tabloid newspapers.

- **Make the Best Use of Previous Academic Literature**

Use these references to identify approaches, both in terms of the estimation methods used but more specifically in the choice of variables. This will provide you with an idea of the most appropriate variables that have been used in previous studies.

- **Effective and Efficient**

Try to work effectively. It is often good practice to make a list of tasks to be carried out before sitting down at the computer – this will enable you to work more efficiently.

- **Be Prepared**

Be prepared to spend a long time with the data, both in terms of preparing the dataset and the statistical analysis (unfortunately this is inevitable). Try not to lose the original datafile just in case things go wrong! Also, you may have to compromise on your topic choice, or choice of variables, depending on data availability. Save your work regularly (and save to multiple locations)!

- **Persevere**

The skills you develop in this module **WILL** be useful!

POTENTIAL TOPIC AREAS (SOME SUGGESTIONS)

- Health and Well-Being

  - General health, GP / hospital visits

- Well-Being and Satisfaction

  life satisfaction, job satisfaction, leisure satisfication.

- Labour Market

  - Wage determination, employment decisions (e.g. part-time versus full-time, hours worked).

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- Consumption

  - Smoking behaviour, alcohol consumption, fruit and vegetable consumption.

- Leisure Activities

  - Internet use, hours of TV, physical activity.

- Financial Behaviour

  - Financial situation/expectations.

- Political and Social Behaviour

  - voting behaviour, political engagement.

IT IS POSSIBLE A SMALL NUMBER OF THE BEST PROJECTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN A FUTURE VOLUME OF THE NORWICH ECONOMIC PAPERS SERIES.

PROJECTS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN PREVIOUS VOLUMES (12, 14, 16, 18 AND 20) OF THE NORWICH ECONOMIC PAPERS SERIES ARE AVAILABLE (BUT PLEASE NOTE THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS PRIOR TO VOLUME 20 WERE UNDERTAKEN USING DIFFERENT STATISTICAL SOFTWARE).

https://www.uea.ac.uk/economics/norwich-economic-papers/volume-archive