

Social Security Essay Instructions

Write a paper on some economic issue or problem directly connected with Social Security.

- Possible ideas for topics include but are not limited to: solvency of social security fund, solvency of disability insurance fund, womens' benefit computation compared to mens', immigrant's rights to benefits, etc.
- ◆ This paper is a highly structured argumentative paper. It will consist of a clearly defined thesis statement, and four clearly labeled main discussion points relating to that thesis statement. A conclusion is not necessary but you may have one. However, it will NOT be included in the page count.
- ◆ The paper must be hand written in blue or black ink. It must be single-spaced (that means EACH line must be written on), and must be a minimum of five pages (all front or front/back or all back) in TLCC in a blue book (available for purchase in the bookstore).
- ◆ Do not write the paper in first person (I). Do not write a history or mere description of the social security program.
- ◆ Papers are blind graded. That means I do not know who I am grading. For that reason, only put your name, once, on the outside cover. Thank you.
- ◆ For internet courses only: Writing must be in TLCC under supervision, not at home. For regular classes: The paper will be written in class.
- ◆ An outline must be prepared and turned in. The date will be announced in class. The outline will be returned to you on the date you are to do the paper. No other materials will be allowed to be used in writing your actual paper, only your outline.
 - ◆ Put your name, class meeting time or section number at the top.
 - ◆ Your outline must be on ONE page, you may use front and back.
 - ◆ It must have the thesis statement at the top. One sentence.
 - ◆ Each of the four main discussion points must be labeled using Roman numerals such as I, II, III, IV.
 - ◆ Underneath each discussion point continue in an outline format what your individual paragraph topics will be.
 - ◆ You should include statistics that you will need.
 - ◆ You may not use quotes.
 - ◆ Cite sources, any format is ok.
 - ◆ This is to be in an outline format. Complete sentences or sentence fragments used to construct sentences are not to be used.
- ◆ This must be your writing.
- ◆ ANY violation of these procedures will result in a very dramatic reduction in grade.

Grading Criteria

Please understand that a summary of the grading will be posted to your paper but I do not attempt to write a justification for each grading point. This is due to the limitations of time. The number of comments on each paper is NOT reflective of the grade. Sometimes, comments are just, well, comments.

You are graded on Organization, Content, and Clarity. Each category will receive either good, average, or weak. This is a highly structured argumentative essay.

- Organization

Organization means the presence of a thesis statement, and four labeled discussion points. Each discussion point must relate directly to the thesis statement. Negatives: thesis statement and/or four discussion points are not labeled or are missing, discussion points do not relate to thesis statement.

Good has all of the positives and no negatives, average is missing one positive or has a negative, all else is weak.

- Content

Content includes research on the topic chosen. This is an economics course so an intelligent discourse using quantitative data is expected. Given your thesis statement, certain issues are expected to be discussed and, if missing, will lower your grade. Negatives: misinformation or confusion as to how Social Security works, lack of economic or other data, missing costs or negatives of proposal, material that does not relate to the thesis statement.

Good has all of the positives and no negatives, average is missing one positive or has a negative, all else is weak.

- Clarity

Clarity means that I can read it, understand it, and it clearly relates to the paragraph topic. This is from a point of view as an outside reader, not yours. Negatives: lack of paragraphing, poor paragraph structure, contradictory statements, awkward phrasing, unreadable handwriting.

Good has all of the positives and no negatives, average is missing one positive or has a negative, all else is weak.

Grading Scale

GGG	60
GGA	55
GAA	50
AAA	45
AAW	40
AWW	35
WWW	30

One blank line is allowed at the bottom of each page and between paragraphs. Any additional blank lines will be penalized at one point per line up to a maximum of 10 per page.

Some Helpful Websites

- www.ssa.gov

The premier website. You will be held accountable for information in the current Board of Trustees Report. At least read its summary.

- www.actuary.org

One of the best sources of unbiased analysis of social security. In the publications webpage can be found some very good sources for papers on individual topics within Social Security. In particular, a good paper to read on the general retirement issue is "Financing the Retirement of Future Generations (98)".

They have a Social Security game that is quite enlightening to play. Let me know what you think if you play the game.

- www.aarp.org

This website is from the American Association of Retired Persons. It has good factual summaries. Note that the AARP is very concerned with protection of Social Security retirement benefits, which is very understandable. But they also have other very good retirement advice.

- www.ncpa.org

This is fairly conservative website so be aware it has some strong biases, nevertheless, I wanted to include this so that you can read some the arguments being advanced against Social Security. Please be careful, in some of the articles I have found misinformation about how Social Security is constructed.

- www.socsec.org

The website is sponsored by the Century Foundation, which has its own agenda, as do all nonprofit foundations. Past students have liked its analysis.

- www.urban.org

Some of the Conservatives really do not like this organization and label it as very liberal. I am not sure that I buy into that. I do find it to be a good source for general research on retirement as well as Social Security issues.

- www.cbpp.org

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. It focuses on the impact of fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals. Focus does not always mean a liberal or conservative position. I find it has a good factual basis in its articles. A related website is www.epinet.org.

- www.cbo.gov

The Congressional Budget Office. It was created by Congress to obtain objective analyses of budget and economic issues, it has an extensive

library of reports on Social Security.

Please let me encourage you to conduct your own research and internet searches. I realize that time is short and these websites should serve as a starter for the serious paper writer.

Blogging

Blogging is hot. But remember that nearly all blogs are private opinions. I admit that blogging is fun. And some of the more informed folks run some good blogging sites. I wouldn't rely on these for your paper but on the other hand, you may pick up some interesting arguments. Try this one: econRT.com. IF you get hooked on blogging, don't blame me.

A SAMPLE OUTLINE

A sample outline using Workman's Compensation (not a topic to be used in the paper). This is a VERY general outline. Yours will need to be much more detailed from which to write a paper. However, I think you can get a good idea of how to organize your paper from this brief outline.

Thesis statement: Coverage and eligibility for the Workman's Compensation Fund need to be expanded to protect a more technologically advanced and occupationally diverse workforce.

I. The workforce composition has changed as has the nature of workplace hazards.

- Documentation showing shift in occupation employment
- Documentation showing how risks have changed.

II. These new risks will require changes to current program.

- Changes in eligibility requirements
- Changes in benefits
- Address counterarguments of critics

III. Possible methods of funding changes

- Demonstrate feasibility of funding estimated additional costs
- Alternative sources of financing

IV. Advantages of changes

- Benefits to society of more comprehensive coverage and care
- Costs of changing and of not changing