30300 - EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS

Spring 2015

EMPIRICAL ASSIGNMENTS

The course final assignments will help you to "get your hands dirty" with the data and STATA, as well as to formulate a critical assessment of some thrilling piece of empirical research. Both tasks will certainly help you to develop key skills for your upcoming Bachelor thesis!

This is how you'll go about it:

Organization details:

- By April 1st: please form small groups of 2 to 4 students. Each group must choose a representative and send an email to TA Enrico Di Gregorio at enrico.digregorio@unibocconi.it.

- April 15th: each group representative will receive an email containing the pdf of the assigned paper and the relevant dataset in .dta format. Papers will be randomized across groups from a pool of empirical works in development, political and labor economics.

- By June 1st: each group must submit their work, including a memo and a STATA .do file as explained below.

Operating tasks:

Overall, you will need to submit a short memo of no more than 10,000 characters and a clear, well-commented, but parsimonious .do file. More in detail:

- Read the assigned paper, identify the main results table and use the dataset to replicate it by exploiting the empirical techniques surveyed during the course. Sometimes it happens that the exact figures can't be fully replicated: as we know this, do not worry too much about getting all digits right, but please make sure the technique used is correct, and that your results are as close as possible to those in the paper.

- In the memo, report your replicated table (don't worry too much about format, but make sure the results are there), and comment briefly on what you did in STATA, on the adopted technique and on the key results you obtained.

- Next, write a small "referee paragraph" where you give a critical assessment of the paper: after stating what is the fundamental research question(s), highlight the main strengths and weaknesses in the identification strategies adopted by the authors, e.g. what are the possible threats to identification, and propose some possible solutions to the reported problems and what could be the ideal setting for estimating the key effects.

- Finally, send the final version of your STATA .do file, remembering to write small titles or comments above the main commands you are using, so that anyone else could easily navigate through it and understand exactly what you are doing. We should be able to run it with the provided dataset, and see the main table's result displayed on STATA.

Good luck!