

Model Assignment: ECO 310 Biographical Sketch

General Presentation

Throughout the semester, we'll be discussing economic history and economic theories with aloofness, exercising some detachment as we ponder over them. In this assignment, I'd like you to get more personal. In particular, I'd like you to acquaint yourself with an economist from the past (dead or at least pretty old) and tell me about her or him, her or his ideas, and her or his time (I'll use the masculine for the remainder of the description, without much loss of generality, unfortunately).

Components

The presentation kinda says it all. I'd like you to pick a dead economist who had some sort of impact on the profession (and perhaps the wider world). Then I'd like you to tell me about...

- His life.
 - You can deal with the personal, but should also mention some of the experiences he may have had that could have shaped him and his ideas (travels, jobs, social class, education, mentors, etc.).
- The times he lived in.
 - Here, I don't want you to give a thorough historical account of the period.
 - However, you should give an overview of some of the important historical events he lived through (and perhaps contributed to) and the type of society in which he lived (e.g. values that may have been prevalent, type of government, etc.).
- His theories.
 - In doing this, you may want to relate him to some contemporaries, predecessors and followers (again, no need to try to be exhaustive, some short linkages will do).

In the process, I'd like you to pay special attention to how these relate to each other. For example, how did his life or the times he lived in influence his theories... and vice versa?

Length

This assignment can be as long as you want. I don't count words; I grade on content. Still, make sure you have enough of that (content)... If you insist on having a target, I think something between 5 and 10 pages double-spaced would be reasonable.

Sources

You may use whichever source you want. Just make sure you fully cite any thing you make use of.

Grading: This assignment is worth 20% of the grade. I won't be grading style (but please make an effort!), just content, in its accuracy and relevance to the topic. I'm not expecting a fully detailed biography, of course, but am looking for a short coherent sketch that would allow him to be placed in a portrait gallery alongside all the others who have shaped economic theory over the years.