

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE - ECON 4431W - WRITING ASSIGNMENT

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Simran Sahi ( [ssahi@umn.edu](mailto:ssahi@umn.edu) ), 4-101 Hanson Hall; 612-625-6353

**TA:** Andrea Waddle ( [waddl003@umn.edu](mailto:waddl003@umn.edu) )

Please contact Andrea by e-mail for help with your questions.

If you need to meet her, please email her to set up an appointment.

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### ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to:

1. Apply analytical skills and economic concepts to examine an interesting trade issue from bilateral or multilateral viewpoints.
2. Learn how to write a formal report underpinned by economic logic and evidence.

### EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ASSIGNMENT:

**Your report should include the economic analysis of a “trade issue”, and your own insight. Survey or descriptive papers (reporting other people’s work/ideas on issues, historical events) or hypothetical scenarios are not acceptable.**

Your final report must be typed, double spaced, and between 10 to 15 pages. The assignment is in four parts; **each assignment must be turned in on the date indicated; and each will be graded separately.** Your target audience for the report is educated college graduates.

**With each assignment you must include all previous graded assignments. Failure to do so will delay grading and lower your grade by 10 points.**

**All assignments are to be turned in on the due dates at the beginning of class.** Those turned in later by the end of the day will receive a penalty of 10 points; those turned in the following day will receive a penalty of 20 points. No assignments will be accepted after that.

If you have any problem understanding what is expected from you or how to go about completing this assignment successfully, please contact the instructor or TA.

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## ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

The assignment is in four parts, each will build on the material in the previous assignment.

### 1. TOPIC of the report (due 11.15 a.m., Tuesday, February 5, 2013.)

You must submit a one-page paper carefully explaining the chosen topic. Explain why you selected the trade issue and the set of countries you intend to analyze.

Please start by writing a **thesis statement** – (one sentence (bold type) describing clearly the question or topic you want to analyze). The thesis statement (to be given in the introduction) should convey your main idea to the reader. Some helpful suggestions on thesis statements can be found on the websites below:

Definition and examples of thesis statements (St. Cloud State University):

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/thesisstatement.html>

How to write a thesis statement (Indiana University):

[http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis\\_statement.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml)

Developing a thesis statement (University of Wisconsin)

[http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis\\_complete.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/thesis_complete.html)

In this assignment, you should try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the trade issue/problem that I am trying to analyze? (analyze or examine or investigate or evaluate)
2. Why is the question interesting? What is the empirical motivation?
3. Is data available? Is it from a reliable source?

Be careful that your project is not too general/ambitious. Please narrow the topic to some specific aspect of a more general question. Remember that well-defined topics are easier to complete successfully.

**You MUST turn in this assignment on the due date – or your Outline (next assignment) will not be accepted.**

## **2. OUTLINE of the report (due 11.15 am, Thursday, February 21, 2013.)**

**REDONE OUTLINE (incorporating Peer Review suggestions -due 11.15 am, Tuesday, February 26, 2013)**

**This has two parts, A and B. Turn in parts A and B to your instructor; and part A only to your Peer Reviewer (details later in class).**

**OUTLINE - PART A.** You must submit a 2-3 page paper giving a clear outline of your project. It should contain:

- \* A title page that includes: title of the report, your name, I.D. number, and date.
- \* A clear introduction describing the trade issue you chose and the way you have decided to analyze it. Remember that your thesis statement should be included in your introduction and it should answer the question: what am I trying to prove/show?
- \* A summary of your essential ideas or arguments. Try to limit yourself to 3 main points. You could report the effects of the trade issue on different countries and agents. Feel free to make subsections where needed.
- \* Make sure you include a theoretical analysis (testing a theory, effects of tariffs etc...).
- \* A conclusion in which you restate the thesis, summarize the main points you developed and present the results you drew from your analysis.
- \* A bibliography where you list the references and data used. You may add an appendix for graphs, data, or mathematical derivations.

**You MUST have access to the data by this time.**

- \* Please include your previous assignment (the graded TOPIC).

### **OUTLINE - PART B.**

For this assignment, each student is required to read and summarize one academic economic publication. The objective of this reading is for you to become familiar with the structure and format of writing in Economics. **Each student must submit the complete reference of the article read, and its brief summary on a separate page. Do not quote the abstract!! This is worth 10 points. (Do not include the article).**

Please use one of these academic economic publications: The American Economic Review, International Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of International Economics, or Journal of International Money and Finance. None other is acceptable.

Other publications including "The Economist", "The Wall Street Journal", magazines, and newspapers do not qualify.

**PEER REVIEW TO BE UNDERTAKEN February 21-26, 2013. Details later.**

### **3. FIRST DRAFT (due 11.15 am Tuesday, April 2, 2013.)**

You should submit a 10 - 15 page version of your paper containing all your main ideas/points. You **MUST** have all effects listed. If your first draft is good, you will only have to make minor revisions before turning it in as your final report and will not need to include new material.

The first draft should contain the same elements as the outline, but each main idea/point or effect should be fully developed and explained. You should examine the impacts of the trade policy (or trade, etc...) on different groups within the relevant economies such as consumers, producers, workers, and others. You need to provide a complete list of references in your bibliography. Include only the sources you actually used in your paper and make sure your sources are credible. **Please remember to include your two previous graded assignments (the TOPIC and OUTLINE).**

### **4. FINAL REPORT (written and electronic copies) (due 11.15 am Tuesday, April 30, 2013.)**

**Written submission:** You should submit a final, polished version of your paper, taking into account the comments made on previous assignments. You should not need to add new material at this stage, although you are allowed to if you have discovered elements that would substantially alter the logic or the conclusions of your paper. You will be asked to submit a few statements telling us the changes you made in the paper based on the TA's (and instructor's) comments and suggestions on your first draft.

**Turn in all parts of the assignment - please staple everything (topic, outline, first draft, and final draft) together, with the final report on top.**

**IMPORTANT: Electronic submission:** You also need to submit a copy of the final report to me via e-mail. This should definitely include the main body of the paper and bibliography; it need not include appendices, graphs, tables, or data. Acceptable formats include MS-Word, pdf, and Word Perfect. Your electronic work will be scanned for plagiarism using University software tools.

You should email me the report before class on April 30, 2013. I will not accept any electronic submission after 11.15 am on that day. Proof of my receiving your report will be my return mail acknowledging receipt. My email address is: [ssahi@umn.edu](mailto:ssahi@umn.edu)

**Remember to keep one copy of the final paper for your records.**

### **5. PRESENTATIONS (April 30 and May 2, 2013)**

All students will present a five-minute summary of their paper in class, focusing on the main ideas. This will also count toward your grade on the report. Feel free to write up a one-page abstract and read it out.

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## CHOOSING A TOPIC (EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TOPICS):

Topics are to be selected based on the following (A-D):

**A. Choose a trade dispute between selected countries-** Examine the **impact of the trade dispute on the selected countries, explaining all impacts.** The paper should examine the winners and losers from the trade problem, (impacts on producers, consumers, government, workers, others), and also the **aggregate impact** (for example, on the countries' output, employment, investment, prices, long-term growth etc.). Discuss the trade policies of both countries. **You will need sufficient data (minimum 15-20 years).**

**B. Trade reforms and their impact:** Compare two countries that decided to liberalize their trade policies and analyze the different effects of those policies (example- Chile and Mexico, or New Zealand, Ireland, India, China, ...). Or compare the paths of two countries that had a similar situation in a certain year, when one of them decided to liberalize trade and the other decided not to (example of Brazil and Mexico). Again, you should examine the sectoral and overall impacts as explained above. You will need sufficient data (15-20 years).

**C. The impact of technology on trade:** Certain technologies allow the trading of commodities that were not traded before. For example, the introduction of "freezing" at the beginning of the century allowed Argentina to export meat; the use of shipping containers has made it easier for transporting goods across countries; internet and better communication has helped trade as well.

**D. Analyze the impacts of a particular change in the trade relationship of two countries, due to change in trade policies etc...you can do this for a particular good or an industry. Discuss all effects on trade, production, wages, employment, etc....** You can focus on a Latin-American country like Peru, Bolivia, Colombia or Venezuela and its trade relationship with the US (concentrate on one country and one commodity), or on EU-African country trade, etc..

**Make sure your topic is related to a focused question on international trade or trade issues. Please make sure you can obtain at least 15-20 years of data for the countries and issues involved. Remember that your paper must examine the trade issue from bilateral or multilateral viewpoints. You MUST undertake some statistical work (regressions) to show the cause and effects of certain events on the economies (sectoral and aggregate impacts). Most papers with good statistical work get better grades.**

Students are not allowed to choose the same topic. If you have difficulty finding a topic that interests you, please check the list below for inspiration.

1. Underdeveloped countries and their trade with developed countries- losers and winners
2. Impact of tariffs/trade policies on trade (of any commodity) between any two countries.
3. Analyze a particular trade dispute between a selected set of countries. For a list of disputes, please see WTO website ([http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dispu\\_e/dispu\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_e.htm)).
4. Analyze trade issues within the European Community, or EU's trade issues with other countries, or with countries that have recently joined the E.U.
5. Test any trade theory (using at least 20 years data)

6. Effects of U.S. or EU protection policy on sugar/bananas/cotton/steel/other good.
7. Study the impact of E.U. Common Agricultural Policy on some participating (and non-participating) economies.
8. Changes in a country's tax policy and its effects on trade.
  
9. Aerospace (or other) exports from the UK to the US; and the impact of the trade issues.
10. Trade liberalizations in Chile and Mexico (or other countries) in the 1980s, why the different effects? Also, effects of trade policies on growth, inequality, labor patterns, wages, etc
  
11. CER and Australia-New Zealand Trade – issues, sectoral benefits.
12. Chile – US/EU fruit trade, Caribbean-US/EU fruit trade....

Below are examples of “UNACCEPTABLE” topics because they are either vague, not related to trade, or too broad :

1. China/Russia and WTO
2. Asian Financial Crisis or Trade and the Current World Recession
3. A history of automobile trade between the US and Japan...
4. Role of WTO in the world trade
5. Multinational corporations and FDI
6. Any hypothetical scenario or a “trade survey”, (e.g. US trade with UK, pros or cons of including Chile in NAFTA, steel trade between US and Korea, CAFTA and its implications, ...).
7. Please do not pick illegal goods or countries which do not have reliable data

**NO SURVEY OF TRADE BETWEEN COUNTRIES IS ACCEPTABLE.  
YOU MUST EXAMINE A TRADE ISSUE AND GIVE YOUR OWN ANALYSIS.  
MAKE SURE YOU PICK A TOPIC WHERE YOU CAN COLLECT AT LEAST  
15-20 YEARS OF RELIABLE DATA.**

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

**You should use *various* resources and *cite* them properly.**

You can use academic journals, popular newspapers (Wall Street Journal), magazines (Economist, etc.), and/or reports from various institutions. You can use tables, graphs, or maps to present information. Please make sure you have a mix of internet and other sources; make sure the sources are well-reputed and credible; that is, do not choose all references from news magazines or obscure internet sources. Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source. Do NOT cite it. If unsure about the credibility of your references, please contact one of us.

Please provide appropriate references where needed in the paper. You can check here for tips on citing:

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/instruction/tutorials#citing> and at <http://www.easybib.com/>

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## GRADING CRITERIA

Each part of the assignment (Outline, First Draft, and Final Report) will receive an individual grade (Denoted by G1, G2, G3 respectively).

Your grade for the written part of the assignment is given by the formula:

$$G = (1/10) * [G1*2 + G2*3 + G3*5]$$

In other words, the Final Report counts for 50 %, the First draft for 30 % and the Outline for 20%. This G grade is 95 % of the grade of the assignment, with 5 % being for the oral presentation.

### **The Outline (G1) will be graded as follows:**

Your redone outline (taking into account your peer reviewer's comments) will count for 80 points, and your peer review for your partner will count for 20 points; for a total of 100 points. You must conduct a peer review for a partner, or you will receive a zero. Please contact the instructor for details.

Grading of all parts of the assignment - the Outline, First Draft, and Final Report - will be based on:

1. The level of analytical skill and intuition demonstrated in the report (e.g. whether you can analyze the issue critically, whether you can argue logically, originality of your ideas, etc.); - (75% of the grade) AND
2. The presentation of the report (e.g. how well you explain difficult concepts and arguments, the coherence and clarity of the presentation, the amount of spelling and grammatical errors, etc.) - (20% of the grade) AND
3. Oral Presentation of the report - (5% of the grade)

Note that this Writing Assignment (including the Oral Presentation) counts for 25% of your grade in the Econ 4431W course.

Only reports that demonstrate outstanding qualities in all criteria will be awarded the highest grade. Reports that are unsatisfactory in any of the criteria will result in a grade of "F".

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## SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

**In this course, students are to write a paper themselves with help from the instructor and TA. They are not to use a paper submitted earlier for any other university course, or turn in a paper written by somebody else. All writing must be the work of the student.**

Students must work on their reports individually. The College of Liberal Arts defines scholastic dishonesty as "any act that violates the right of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student's own academic work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or exams; plagiarizing (misrepresenting as one's own anything done by another); submitting the same or substantially similar papers for

more than one course without the consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another of necessary course materials; or sabotaging another's work."

Students who commit any form of the scholastic dishonesty described above will receive a grade "F" for their Writing Assignment.

*PLAGIARISM: This involves passing off anyone else's work as your own, and includes copying a whole paper or parts of it and claiming it as your own work. It also includes turning in your own same or essentially similar paper for two or more courses. The University has very strict rules concerning plagiarism. If you use any other person's work, words, or ideas, please cite and acknowledge the sources. Note that the University has purchased a program that allows professors to check if any student paper, essay, or research paper has been copied or paraphrased from the Internet. I will use this program (Safeassign) to check for plagiarism. Please check the following website for more details on plagiarism.*

*Definition of Plagiarism from University of Minnesota:*

<http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/infomachine2367.html>

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## REFERENCES

1. "So You Have To Write an Economics Term Paper..." by L. Officer, D. Saks, and J. Saks.
2. "The Elements of Style" by W. Strunk Jr. and E. B. White
3. "The Writer's Guide to College Economics" by T. L. Wyrich.
4. "Economical Writing" by Deirdre McCloskey

These are on reserve at the Wilson library. Some sample papers written by previous students of the class are also on reserve.

Sources for economics journals: - Wilson library/JSTOR

Sources are listed on the Resources/Links page on the class homepage.

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## USING ONLINE SOURCES (Courtesy of Professor Roger McCain, Drexel University)

The Web offers a very large range of sources for presentations and papers, but it is a mishmash of sources that range from excellent to appallingly bad to deliberately misleading. You should not use an online source for any purpose in this course without first verifying that it is:

1. **Substantive** for the purpose intended. For most purposes a document that is only a few lines long will not be useful. This *does* depend on the purpose. To be used as a basis for the presentation, for example, the source should provide at least a few pages of information on the topic. By contrast, if the purpose is to define a term, then a line or two may be sufficient. Message boards and blogs should not be used.



2. **Reliable.** Much of the content on the web is no more reliable than the opinions you may hear in barroom conversation. Among the things that make information reliable are
    - a. Institutional Authority. Is the site sponsored by an institution that is recognized as an authority and that would exercise oversight, such as the United Nations or the National Bureau of Economic Research? Personal websites (including mine) are less reliable. Anything WIKI is questionable.
    - b. Personal Authority. Is the author identified? If so, is the author recognized as an expert in a field relevant to the topic? What evidence is there of this recognition? Does the author have graduate degrees in the field? Has she or he published articles in recognized scholarly organs relevant to the field? Books?
    - c. Internal evidence. Are there misspellings, grammatical errors, and other evidence of unscholarly writing? Are there logical errors and inconsistencies? Are there representations of fact you know to be false? If you find any evidence of these failings, DO NOT USE THE SOURCE.
  
  3. **Unbiased or biased in known ways.**
    - a. If there is an institutional authority, it may be biased, and may make the bias known. If there is an “About Us” page or equivalent, check it. Examples would be the Ludwig von Mises Institute, which supports free market economics, and Marxists.org, which doesn’t. These are both excellent sources for some purposes but should be used with caution.
    - b. If the author is known, and has or announces a known slant, that may be useful.
    - c. Internal evidence may be found. For example, The Center for Economic and Policy Research “about us” page lists an advisory board including two economists who were high-profile supporters of Kerry in ’04.
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## WRITING TECHNIQUES.

The following are some common problems of students' reports:

1. The paper lacks focus and is not well organized. A major reason why this happens is that students cannot decide on THE most important message that they want the readers to get from the report. This leads to the importance of a **thesis statement** – make sure it is included in the introduction. Examples of thesis statements from people who have taken this course earlier:

*\*I intend to demonstrate that changes to A's overall tax policy resulted in lower corporate income tax rates which negatively affected service trade and the service sector between A and the rest of the world.*

*\* The introduction of new technology and government trade policies in the –X trade between A and B between 1985 and 2005 has favorably affected A's producers of X.*

*\*This paper will assess the effects of a free trade agreement on A's ----- industry, specifically addressing three points: how -----imports from B as a proportion of A's total ----- imports have increased, how a greater proportion of exports of ----- from A are shipped to B, and how A's producers have been or will be affected by the free trade agreement.*

*\*In this paper, I will focus on the effects of these ongoing disputes on the ----- producers in A. I will show that A's producers are being hurt by these disputes in several ways: by mills closing, unemployment increasing in the industry, and imports from B remaining high. I will show how A's producers were affected during each of the trade disputes. A and B's unremitting trade dispute over ----- has led to the demise of the ---- producers in A.*

*\*In this paper I will demonstrate that A has increased its exports of ----- to B under free trade more successfully than has C by achieving a post-free-trade-agreement average export growth rate twelve times higher than its pre-agreement rate compared with C, and by merely tripling its growth rate in the same period and that this is due specifically to the A-B Free Trade Area and A's skilled-labor-abundance in the labor-intensive ----- industry.*

2. There are not enough analyses and explanations in the report. Many times students state some ideas or conjectures without explaining step by step the logic behind these. Please guide the readers through your arguments carefully to make sure that they understand the arguments.

3. The use of quotations to substitute for the explanations. A common mistake students make in their reports is that they use quotations from textbooks or articles AS the arguments. It is acceptable for students to use some ideas suggested by others, yet students should try to explain the ideas in their own words and should not simply copy the quotations without their own explanations. The total number of quotations in a paper should be limited; they should be used to highlight a particular idea or show its importance. Make sure your entire written script is not just quotes. Generally, quotes should not be more than 10% of the entire script.

4. A lot of grammatical and spelling errors in the report. To avoid these errors, students should ask someone who is good in composition to proofread their reports. Students should also use the many writing services available on campus to get advice on correct grammar usage.

5. Confusing cause with effect. Another common mistake is not recognizing that an apparent cause of something might instead be an effect of that something. You should give evidence of the cause or effect or acknowledge that the evidence of causality here is not clear.

We suggest you use these techniques:

1. The use of graphs, tables and charts. Whenever possible, try to use these to summarize the statistics used in the report, and try to use graphs to summarize some of the economic arguments used (e.g. shift in supply and demand, effect of government policies on trade, etc.).
2. The use of footnotes. There may be some arguments that are interesting and yet do not fit into the report very well; a possible strategy is to present these arguments in a footnote.
3. A good "Introduction" and a good "Conclusion". A good "Introduction" can compel the readers to continue reading the report with enthusiasm. Students should try to state clearly and precisely the issue that is addressed in the report, explain why the issue is interesting and/or important to the readers, and give the readers some hints about the major conclusion that is obtained in the report. A good "Conclusion" should remind the readers of THE most important message of the report and why it is interesting and/or important to the readers.

**CHECK LIST:**

**Remember to submit the summary and complete reference of the academic publication you read with the second assignment (Outline) (Penalty: 10 points).**

**Remember to attach all previous assignments with each new assignment submitted. (Penalty: 10 points each time)**

**Remember to turn in your assignment on time. No assignments will be accepted after the second day. (Penalty: 10 points per day up to a maximum of 20 points per assignment). There will be no exception to this rule.**

**Turn in the Final Report definitely by the due date – absolutely no acceptance of late submissions. Remember to turn in written and electronic versions of your Final Report by 11.15 a.m. on APRIL 30, 2013.**

Pay special attention to the material in **bold font**.

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# ECONOMICS 4431W- SPRING 2013

## ASSESSMENT FORMS FOR THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

### ASSIGNMENT: TOPIC

Good	Satisfactory	Weak	
			Thesis statement (idea, goal of paper)
			Quality of thesis/goal Why is it interesting?
			Issues/Problems/Countries
			Checked for data availability?
			Overall

### ASSIGNMENT: REDONE OUTLINE

Good	Satisfactory	Weak	
			Thesis statement (idea, goal of paper) and Quality of thesis
			Incorporate Peer Reviewer's suggestions?
			Issues/Problems/Countries
			Follow rules of assignment?
			Quality/Quantity of Sources/Data used
			Mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation, proofreading
			Citations/Footnotes
			Overall

**ASSIGNMENT: FIRST DRAFT AND FINAL DRAFT**

<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Weak</b>	
			Thesis statement (idea, goal of paper) and Quality of thesis/goal
			Issues/Problems/Countries
			Follow rules of assignment?
			Quality/Quantity of Sources/Data used
			Mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation, proofreading
			Citations/Footnotes
			Positive response to suggestions given earlier
			Overall

**Peer Response Sheet**  
**Distributed on FEBRUARY 21, 2013**

Paper Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note to the author:**

- \* Please submit one copy of the **Outline** to the **Peer Reviewer** and one to **Professor Sahi**.
- \* You should receive the completed peer review sheet, take the comments into account, and hand in the **Redone Outline plus Part A and Part B** of this sheet to Professor Sahi on **FEBRUARY 26, 2013**.

**Note to the reviewer:**

- \* Complete one worksheet for each paper reviewed.
- \* Provide a supportive critique of the paper, provide explanations for your answer wherever possible. Your comments should be helpful to the author as he/she revises the outline.

**PART A- please turn over**



**Peer Response Sheet**  
**Distributed on FEBRUARY 21, 2013**

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**PART B:**

**To be filled in by the Author of the paper after receiving the response from the Peer Reviewer.**

**Please attach Part A and Part B of this sheet when you hand in material on FEBRUARY 26, 2013.**

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1. In a scale 1 to 5 (5 being the best) how would you rate the usefulness of this peer review?

2. Did you use any suggestion from this review?

3. If yes, what? If no, why?

4. Did your peer understand the thesis of your paper?

5. What is the thesis of your paper?



**COMMENT SHEET – SPRING 2013**

To be submitted with the Final Report on APRIL 30, 2013.  
Note that the final paper will be graded only if this is attached.

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHOR \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please summarize the main point of your paper in a sentence or two. (Thesis)

2. Please give a description of the work you did since the first draft stage.

3. What suggestions (given by TA/instructor) did you use?