Econ 310 Labor Economics Class  Project

Description of Project:

This project represents a significant portion of the student’s class effort and final grade. Student teams will pick topics from the list provided below, subject to my approval. Each student must form a team by Thursday, September 12, 2002 and select a project by Thursday, September 19, 2002. Dates for presentations will be determined at the time of topic selection and will reflect the chapter from which the topic is chosen. Please note that material included in class presentations and student study guides is testable material and will be included on the final exam. There will be 3 project team members, each responsible for one of the three items included in this project. All 3 items are due the day of the class presentation. The three items are listed below.

1) 7 minute class presentation (use overheads or power point)
2) 10 page written paper (not including references; double spaced, 12 point font)
3) 2 page student study guide (single-spaced; use outline format)

Project Grading:

The team project will represent 30% of the final grade. The 3 items to be produced by the team will each be worth one-third of the 30% total. Each item will be graded separately and the single grade will be an average of those three item grades. Each team member will receive the same grade but each team member will assume primary responsibility for a specific item. Students will form groups of 3; no exceptions on team size except if necessary due to class size.

Criteria to be used in grading:

* comprehensiveness of material covered
* organization
* development of economic story
* citations (not all from internet)
* clarity of exposition and presentation
* usefulness of study guide

Project General Time Line

September 12, 2002: team member listings
September 19, 2002: project selection
October 15, 2002: first class presentations
Projects by Chapters

Chapter 1
Neoclassical school
Institutional school

Chapter 2
Voluntary versus involuntary part-time employment (currently and trends over time; why?)
Re-authorization of TANF (issues, arguments, constituencies, status)
Transition from welfare to work (status report)
Moonlighting across the business cycle (observed trends and possible explanations)
FLSA (outline legislation and discuss predicted and actual impacts on employment)
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC: history, current, economic impact)
Comprehensive and critical review of book by Rebecca Blank: *It Takes a Nation*

Chapter 3
9/11 Tribute: Professor Leslie Whittington’s contributions to research in work/family issues
FMLA (outline legislation and discuss predicted and actual impacts on employment)
Household and Bargaining Models of labor supply
Child care subsidies for welfare/low income population under TANF
The Economics of Child Care and Women’s Labor Force Participation
Difference in Child Care Usage Patterns across race and income level

Chapter 4
Wage subsidy programs
NAFTA (outline legislation and discuss predicted and actual impacts on employment)
Monopsony theory and evidence

Chapter 5
Displaced workers (description, why, policies to fix)
Impact of internet on employment

Chapter 6
The market for baseball players: historical context and current situation
Job Lock: reasons and solutions

Chapter 7
Trends in males versus females in college attendance (details of trends, why, future?)
Head Start (as a human capital investment; motivation for federal funding; evidence of impact)
Intermittent work for women (how affects schooling and occupation choices; lifetime effects)
Chapter 8
Changing nature of pensions and implications for personal risk
Flexible benefit plans (history, economic effects, including increase in inequality)
Teachers’ wages and percentage female over time.
Pros/Cons of privatizing social security (include current legislative outlook)

Chapter 9
Audit studies of discrimination (history, how used, findings)
Mommy Track (history of term, evidence, impact)
Glass ceiling (history of term, evidence, potential solutions)
Affirmative action (history, economic arguments, evidence on impact, current legal status)
Comparable worth (history, economic arguments pro/con; current status)

Chapter 10
Employee selection (1 of the 3 human resource management practices)
Compensation management (1 of the 3 human resource management practices)
Employee involvement programs (1 of the 3 human resource management practices)
Executive compensation (i.e., are CEOs paid too much?)
Employee stock options as a form of compensation

Chapters 11/12
The future of unions (include some history too)
Detroit Free Press strike about a decade ago (why? result? now?)
Women and unions
African Americans and unions

Chapter 13
Racial differences in unemployment (evidence, over time, link to education, why?)
Unemployment in the 1990s (United States versus Germany: evidence; why? Future projections)