Group Presentations

This assignment asks all of you to think about and research a particular debate in macroeconomics and to present your findings and thoughts to the class. You will be assigned to a group of 3-4 students, and will been given a particular debate and a particular position to defend.

Your group will make a presentation in class with the goal of providing the best possible support for the position you have been assigned. Whether or not you agree with the position is irrelevant. There are good reasons to believe arguments made on both sides of each of these debates. Your goal should be to understand both sides so that you can give the best possible statement of the position you have been assigned.

The structure of the presentations will be as follows:

- For each debate, the two teams representing the opposing sides will each give a brief presentation making their strongest points favoring their position. Each side’s presentation should be less than 8 minutes.
- We will then allow each side 1-2 minutes to ask questions of their opposing side.
- Lastly, there will be around 5 minutes for discussion with the entire class.

Your group’s presentation should include the following elements:

- You should organize your presentation around 3-4 main arguments in favor of your position. The number of arguments should be equal to the number of people in your group. Typically each member of the group presents one argument, but this is not required.
- Graphs used to support your arguments. There should be a number of graphs equal to the number of people in your group. You could look at particular historical events of interest, or at changes in a macroeconomic variable over time.
• Since there are only 8 minutes for the talk, try to make it clear what the three strongest arguments in favor of your position are (then you can use the graphs to back up these arguments).
• Also, it’s important that you demonstrate that you understand the arguments that favor the opposing position, and say something about why you disagree with them.
• You should use slides to organize your talk. This will give you an organized way to present the graphs, and will give the audience a visual reinforcement of the words that you’re saying.
• Make sure that I receive your slides and/or graphs by midnight the day before your scheduled presentation.

Grading on this project will be based on the quality and thoughtfulness of your arguments, and how well you followed these instructions. I will also ask each of you to send me an email to let me know whether or not other members of your group adequately contributed to the presentation.

Here are some general guidelines for the project:

• Be respectful of everyone in the class: the opposite side, your teammates and everyone else.
• Our goal is, first and foremost, to learn. Focus on explaining your position in a thoughtful manner rather than trying to defeat the opposition.

Lastly, here are a few sources for you to look at:

• For graphs, look at the St. Louis Fed’s economic database called FRED: http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/
• Google data explorer is a little bit hard to use, but may also be useful: http://www.google.com/publicdata/directory
• Look at articles in the popular and/or academic press. Feel free to ask me questions about understanding any of these things.