

Instructions for preparing, writing and delivering the essay

A. Rules for selecting the books

1. Pick one book from each of the three lists of books published at <https://gandalf.fee.urv.cat/professors/AntonioQuesada/Curso2526/MacAna2526.html>.
2. Your essay should be based on the three books you have chosen.
3. Two books cannot share an author.
4. Books can be ordered: just write to aqa@urv.cat with your request.

B. Rules for delivering the essay

5. Writing the essay is an individual evaluation activity for Macroeconomic Analysis.
6. Send the essay as a pdf document to the address aqa@urv.cat.
7. Submission deadline: 14:00 of the 13th of November, 2025.

C. Rules for preparing and writing the essay

8. It is not necessary to read completely each book fully. The reading should be focused on getting quickly the main ideas, concepts, issues, proposals, messages, arguments... in each book. As a rule, the initial and final section of a book (if both exist) summarize the essence of the book.
9. Exceptionally, some book is an edited volume: several authors contribute chapters, which tend to cover non-overlapping aspects of the topic covered in the book. In this case, you could reduce the reading of the book to four chapters of your choice and dispense with the rest of the book.
10. Write your essay in English.
11. The first page should be a cover page that includes:
 - a title for the essay,
 - your name,
 - the books you have selected.
12. Avoid serious grammatical or spelling errors.
13. Respect the basic conventions for writing academic papers (as illustrated by the books selected). Specifically:
 - use a reader-friendly font, in a not-too big nor too-small size (such as Times New Roman size 12 or the one in this document, Palatino Linotype size 12);
 - separate lines sufficiently (line spacing in this document is 18 pt);

- separate paragraphs;
 - as a general rule, write short sentences;
 - punctuate sentences appropriately;
 - remove unnecessary or redundant words;
 - mention in the text your sources of information (at least the three books chosen);
 - be plain and direct in your writing.
14. Avoid irrelevant, worthless or superfluous information. Your essay does not need sentences like 'The book is very interesting', 'I have learned a lot', 'This is a very popular book' or 'The author was born in X and is well-known for having done this and that'.
 15. Justify paragraphs: align the text to the right, as done in this document, so that all lines (except perhaps the last one in a paragraph or isolated ones) have the same length.
 16. Organize your essay in four sections, numbered 1 to 4, each with a descriptive heading.
 17. In Section 1 you should summarize the main ideas in each book, focusing on the issues addressed, solutions offered, insights provided or arguments developed. One page per book could be enough for the summary, but use as much space as you feel convenient.
 18. It is acceptable to divide this section into three subsections, which each subsection covering the summary of one book.
 19. Try to add value to the description of the main ideas; for instance, organizing them better, for your purposes, than the book. In particular, it is not advisable to present the ideas in this mechanical way: 'In chapter 1 the book says that ...; in chapter 2, that ...; in chapter 3, that ...'. Identify first the ideas and then reflect on how to present them 'organically', trying to link them (main ideas, secondary ideas, essential ideas). This will also help for what comes next.
 20. In Section 2 you must relate the ideas presented in Section 1 with the aim of conducting a critical analysis taken the three books together. Do the ideas in some book contradict some idea from another book? Do the messages in the books reinforce each other? Are the ideas flawed? Do they confront well with empirical evidence? Are the arguments used to support the ideas well-founded? Recent events contradict those ideas or are consistent with them? The critical analysis (which could rely on additional bibliographical sources) should be 'objective', in the sense of relying on logical, conceptual, empirical, factual... reasons. Maybe ideas, concepts or results in the lecture notes could be used to develop the critical analysis. As a suggestion, Section 2 could be expected to be around twice the length of Section 1.
 21. What makes Section 2 worth is connecting the ideas in the three books and putting them to the test. Is anything wrong with the ideas? Can you provide additional arguments or evidence in support of the claims in the books? If the book makes some prediction, have events validated them or prove them wrong? Section 1 is about describing and organizing ideas; Section 2 is about arguing with those ideas, by creating or criticizing arguments.
 22. Section 2 is equivalent to writing a brief critical review of the three books taken together.

23. In Section 3 you are required to present your view of what the books say. This section is a personal, subjective addition to what has been developed in Sections 1 and 2. Which ideas have you found convincing? Which ones weak? Can you offer further arguments in favour or against them? Do you find anything missing, wrong or unquestionable? As with all the sections, there is no minimum nor maximum length, but, as a reference, Section 3 could be shorter than Section 1.
24. The aim of Section 3 is that you contrast your worldview with that of authors of the books. If you are against some idea defended in them, can you provide arguments to question those ideas based on your training, experience or values? If instead you agree with some, can you offer additional support from a subjective perspective, again resorting to your training, experience or personal values?
25. Section 4 (to be entitled 'References') lists, following standard academic conventions, all the bibliographical sources cited in the text. This section must include, at least, the books selected. Each time you take some idea or information from a source, mention the source.

D. Assessment

26. I need to read all your essays before assessing your work. I will inform you through your URV student email of the mark (a number between 0 and 10) I propose for your essay.
27. If you agree, that will be the mark of your essay; if you disagree, I will provide a detailed motivation of my proposal and will be open to reassess the mark.