

**Fall 2017 ECO1002 Group Project**  
**Potential Research and Presentation Topics**

1. What is “net neutrality” exactly? One of the first appointments made by the Trump Administration was Ajit Pai as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In your view based upon research, has the FCC deregulated the internet? How and why specifically? Has this been a big policy change since the Obama Administration? Why or why not? Who are the “winners” and “losers” in any internet regulation policy changes under the Trump administration?
2. President Trump has stated that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is “unfair” and costs American “jobs”. Do you believe after research that this is true? Was or is NAFTA actually “free trade”? Why or why not? What specifically is the status of re-negotiating NAFTA today? What are the points of re-negotiation? Who are the major players in re-negotiation? Who have been or who do you think will be the biggest “winners” and biggest “losers” with any NAFTA re-negotiation?
3. The Empire State Development Corporation ([esd.ny.gov/](http://esd.ny.gov/)) is the New York state agency which uses tax breaks and other incentives to attract firms to locate to New York state for “job-creation”. Who are some of the major beneficiaries of these incentives, what industries and what firms? What is the average cost per job-created for some of these projects? Have these beneficiaries contributed to the election campaigns of Albany politicians? Has there been any corruption in the granting of special treatment to certain firms? Give specific examples.
4. You can also do the same research and answer the same questions as in 3 above, but relating to the New York City Economic Development Corporation ([www.nycedc.com/](http://www.nycedc.com/)).
5. In June 2017 the European Union (EU) announced it is harmonizing and reducing roaming charges within the EU for those with EU-based telecoms and internet-providers. How does this policy change effect those who don’t have EU-based service? What is the EU’s stated reasons for making non-EU service more expensive? Why did it take so long for this harmonization to occur? Who are the “winners” and “losers” in this policy change?

6. In June 2017 the EU announced that is fining Google a record \$2.7 billion for violation of anti-trust behavior. What exactly is Google accused of doing and what is the status of payment of this fine? Who are the biggest “winners” for any required changes to Google’s business practices in the EU? When the European Commission anti-trust officials used monopoly behaviour market measures they did not include Amazon as one of Google’s competitors in the “market” as defined by the regulators, and this has been criticized as unfair by American tech firms. After research do you believe that the European Commission is over-regulating American tech firms in the EU? Why or why not? Have US anti-trust regulators taken any counter-vailing measures against EU-based tech firms?
7. Apple is accused of tax evasion by the EU, and in 2016 received a retro-active tax bill of \$14.5 billion for underpayment of income taxes to Ireland. After research do you find that Apple underpaid its Irish tax bill? Isn’t the reason many firms locate to Ireland for access to the EU market is that Ireland has the lowest corporate income tax? Does the European Commission have the right to set tax rates for individual countries within the EU? Has Ireland been fighting the EU over the Apple ruling on its tax rates? Has Apple paid this retro-active tax yet? Why or why not, what is the status of this case today?
8. London developed as the center for international debt-financing (see LIBOR) and this included clearing services for Euro-based (€- based) payments. With “Brexit” we are finding changes to the financial sector in Europe and the U.K., what is the status of the clearing of €-based payments today? What institutions and firms are developing for payments-clearing in relation to and in response to Brexit? What is the value or profit made for providing these services in this industry? Who are the “winners” and “losers” in this industry due to Brexit?

9. AT&T's proposed \$85 billion take-over of Time Warner has been in limbo because the Trump Administration has not confirmed a chief of anti-trust policy at the US Department of Justice after 6 months in office. What is the status of this case today? Has or is AT&T making any "concessions" to regulators to allow the deal to go through? How does the Trump Administration's response to the deal relate to the Administration's rhetoric about "deregulation"? After research using this take-over as a case-study, does it appear that the Trump administration is deregulating the media, telecoms and technology sectors? Why or why not? Who are the winners and losers in AT&T's proposed take-over of Time Warner?
  
10. In the Robert Higgs youtube video "Regime Uncertainty Then and Now" Higgs mentions that Baker, Bloom and Davis have developed a quantitative index of "regime uncertainty". What is this index exactly? After research into the topic do you believe the index fully capture Higgs' ideas about "regime uncertainty"? Why or why not? Have there been other scholars contributing work on "regime uncertainty"? Can you give examples and your opinion on this research?
  
11. Third parties complain that the US political system is a "duopoly" controlled by the Democrats and Republicans to the exclusion of for example the Green and Libertarian Parties. After research do you find that there is indeed a political duopoly in the United States? Why or why not? Is there any reform that you would recommend for the US political system to allow more competition amongst political parties?
  
12. Some sports and entertainment ticket providers accuse Ticketmaster of exercising monopoly power in the market. After research, do you believe this is true, why or why not? Has Ticketmaster made any "concessions" to appease its critics? Can you give examples? Based on your research do you have any recommendations for making entertainment ticketing more competitive? You can answer the same questions surrounding Live Nation as a promoter exercising monopoly power.