ECO 307 **Peer Lit Review Evaluation** Taggert J. Brooks

**Ask yourselves the following questions:**

What question are they going to try and answer with this research?

Is the question clearly defined? Do they use ambiguous language?

Does the background material motivate the importance/interest in the question? Have they given you enough information to put the research question in context?

Is it interesting? (Measured by your desire to hear their results)

**Stylistic considerations**

 **Grammar**: Is it readable, has it been proofread?

**Spelling**: Today, with spellchecking software this is less of an issue, but pay attention to incorrect usage of words like there, their or effect, affect, or your, and you’re. I know they are the three that challenge me most.

**Citations**: Did they appropriately cite source material? Did they use a consistent style? For the moment they do not have to have a reference list, but they should use appropriate in-text citation. For example: According to Frank and Bernanke (2007) the stock market does not affect consumption Or this: Few researchers find the stock market affects consumption (Frank and Bernanke, 2007). Look for lazy citation practices where the end of every paragraph has a parenthetical citation. This does not help the reader understand WHICH idea in the preceding paragraph is due to the cited authors. It is important to organize the lit review around **ideas**, rather than around specific **papers**.

**Other things to look for**: Often when initially writing the introduction, there is a tendency to directly answer the questions I’ve posed. This is a good way to get the ideas on paper, but it should only be a start point, as it often makes for uninteresting reading. Look for sentences and paragraphs similar to these:

I am going to do this.... or Some people have said this...

**Avoid the laundry list of activities**. (First we did this….then we did this….next we talked to so and then so and so….) This sounds like an essay on “What I did last summer”, or as Professor Sherony refers to it, “A letter from Camp”. Concentrate on discussing why you did those things, and what you discovered when you did them.

**Avoid excessive colloquialisms**. Informal language generally does not belong in written reports. It just makes you sound juvenile, so save it for the presentation and use it **sparingly**.