

VAST 290
Spring 2008
Final Project Proposal Due 4/7/08

Assignment:

You are to write a brief proposal of the topic you will explore in your final paper, which should consist of a short description (7-15 sentences) that identifies the topic you have selected and explains how you intend to explore it. You must produce at least 4 or 5 references in addition to your short description as evidence that you have done enough background research to determine that your topic is realistically viable as the subject of a significant research paper. Note these references should be substantive, meaning they should not be short pieces from obscure websites, but rather articles from well-respected news or information sources. To help you obtain these references, Lijuan Xu a reference librarian at Skillman will be providing a library information session during class on Monday. She and any of the librarians at the reference desk in Skillman Library are happy to help you with research for your project.

Final Project (Writing Assignment/ Presentation) “The Issues” (25%):

The issue of human-induced climate change is complex and multifaceted. For your final project you are to select one aspect of the human-induced climate change issue we have treated this semester to investigate in greater detail. *Your selected topic must be approved by the instructor.* This is a research paper, in which you will need to draw upon resources we have examined in this course, as well as additional resources obtained through your own literature search. Your task is to investigate in detail your chosen topic and write a position paper about that topic. In other words, your paper should not just be a summary, but an informed perspective with a well-defined thesis statement that the rest of your paper elucidates and supports. Your paper and final presentation should include a discussion of both the science of your topic as well as the related policy issues and questions. This paper is to be no less than 8 pages no more than 10 pages (double-spaced not including figures and references). During the last two weeks of class, you will be required to give a 10 minute presentation on your topic to the rest of the class. These presentations will be accompanied by short class discussions.

Some Potential Topic Categories:

- Environmental Impacts (e.g. on ecosystems, on human populations, on the spread of disease, sea level rise, etc) What should be done to remediate or address the impact you have selected to explore?
- Economic Aspects/ Impacts - current or potential (e.g. on a specific country, branch of government, state, city, industry or organization and what you think should be done).
- Policy Aspects (e.g. how a country, branch of government, state, city, industry or organization has chosen to address climate change. Your analysis of whether or not their strategy is effective/fair).
- Scientific Evidence (focus on one aspect of the evidence. Investigate how the data are obtained, what the uncertainties are, provide your analysis of how robust the data are and what needs to be done to reduce the remaining uncertainties).

Format for References: St. Martin’s Handbook CBE Style name-year format (p.480-488)

	10	8	6	4	0-2
Position/ Ideas	Excels in responding to assignment. Demonstrates sophistication of thought. Position/thesis is clearly communicated. Paper recognizes the complexity of its position/thesis: acknowledges its contradictions, qualifications, or limits and follows out their logical implications.	Responds appropriately to assignment. Clearly states position/thesis, but may have minor lapses in development. Acknowledges the complexity of position/thesis, but may not evaluate the material critically enough.	Responds sufficiently to assignment. Presents position/thesis in adequate terms. Shows basic comprehension of topic, perhaps with some lapses in understanding.	Does not respond appropriately to the assignment. Position/thesis is too vague or obvious to be developed effectively. Paper misunderstands important material.	Does not respond to the assignment, lacks a position/thesis. Paper misunderstands important material.
Organization/ Coherence	Uses a logical structure appropriate to paper's subject, purpose, audience, thesis, and disciplinary field. Sophisticated transitional sentences developing one idea from the previous one or identifying their logical relations. It guides the reader through the chain of reasoning or progression of ideas.	Shows a logical progression of ideas and uses fairly sophisticated transitional devices. Some logical links may be faulty, but each paragraph clearly relates to paper's central idea.	May list ideas or arrange them randomly rather than using any evident logical structure. May use transitions, but they may not be logic-based. While each paragraph may relate to central idea, the logic is not always clear. Paragraphs have topic sentences but may be overly general, and arrangement of sentences within paragraphs may lack coherence.	May have random organization, lacking internal paragraph coherence and using few or inappropriate transitions. Paragraphs may lack topic sentences or main ideas, or may be too general or too specific to be effective. Paragraphs may not all relate to paper's thesis.	No appreciable organization; lacks transitions and coherence.
Support/ Completeness	Uses a diversity of sources appropriately and effectively, providing strong evidence and explanations of concepts to build a robust case for the paper's position/thesis. Appropriately defines and explains terms and concepts.	Uses a reasonable variety of sources to provide good evidence to support its position/thesis. Interprets the evidence building a solid case for the paper's position/thesis. Attempts to define terms and concepts, not always successfully.	Provides sufficient evidence, using enough sources to support its position/thesis. May assume that evidence speaks for itself and needs no explicit tie to the position/thesis. May be a summary rather than analysis. May have some lapses in logic. Does not attempt to define all terms or concepts or does not do so successfully.	Provides insufficient evidence to support its position/thesis. Uses few sources. Depends on overgeneralizations for support. May be a summary rather than analysis. Contains lapses in logic. Misrepresents important concepts or information.	Provides insufficient evidence. Uses irrelevant details or lacks supporting evidence entirely. Neglects to use sources where necessary. May be unduly brief. Misrepresents important concepts or information.
Mechanics/ Style	Chooses words for their precise meaning and uses an appropriate level of specificity. Sentence style fits paper's audience and purpose. Sentences are varied, yet clearly structured and carefully focused, not long and rambling. Almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.	Generally uses words accurately and effectively, but may sometimes be too general. Sentences are generally clear, well structured, and focused, though some may be awkward or ineffective. May contain a few errors, but they do not impede understanding.	Uses relatively vague and general words, may use some inappropriate language. Sentence structure is generally correct, but sentences may be wordy, unfocused, repetitive, or confusing. Usually contains several mechanical errors, which may temporarily confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding.	May be too vague and abstract. Usually contains several awkward or ungrammatical sentences; sentence structure is simple or monotonous. Usually contains either many mechanical errors or a few important errors that block the reader's understanding and ability to see connections between thoughts.	Usually contains many awkward sentences, misuses words, employs inappropriate language. Usually contains so many mechanical errors that it is impossible for the reader to follow the thinking from sentence to sentence.