

## Environmental Issues Research Project

The alternative to 16 hours of environmentally related community service is a 10-15 page research paper on one local, environmental issue and the ways in which people are addressing that issue. Five sections of the paper will be due throughout the quarter so that I can follow your work and help guide your research *and* so that you are not burdened with the job of writing a long research paper right at the end of the quarter (not that students ever wait until the end to finish things!). The time you spend on the paper should be roughly equivalent to the time spent by those students completing 16 hours of service-learning and writing a 5-page paper.

### CHOOSING A TOPIC

Any of the topics covered in this class are well suited to further research. I encourage you to choose something that interests you and is related to the field you want to go into. You should choose something specific enough so that you can explore the background, trends and efforts to remediate that issue over the course of 12 weeks. If you aren't familiar with any of these issues, choose something that sounds interesting and that you'd like to learn more about. I can also help you figure out a good choice and find more resources, so don't hesitate to ask for help when you are getting started. Some ideas for topics include:

- Affects of climate change in the Pacific Northwest
- Urban air quality concerns: construction, vehicles, indoor air quality, etc.
- Water quality issues in Puget Sound: fertilizers, pesticides, vehicle pollution, etc.
- Water quality issues in local rivers and urban creeks
- Endangered species: list of globally endangered species at: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>
- Forest ecosystem degradation and recovery
- Food security and local organizations working on it
- Farmland preservation
- Urban soil quality
- Growing food in urban areas
- Fisheries collapse (endangered salmon, cod, bluefin tuna) and sustainable fisheries
- Fish farming in Puget Sound
- Marine mammal issues (noise, hunting, harassment) and conservation
- Materials use and consumption
- Landfills
- Electronic waste
- Superfund (hazardous waste) sites in WA
- Green buildings
- Urban planning
- Transportation issues
- Toxicity in the environment (lead, flame retardants, pesticides...)
- Renewable energy: solar, wind, hydropower
- See right hand column on the online schedule or instructor for more ideas and resources

### PAPER SECTIONS (60% - 5 PAPERS FOR 12% EACH)

Each paper section should be 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced and fully cited. Make sure to answer all of the questions asked below for each paper section and feel free to include more information than what is asked if it does not meet the 2-3 page requirement. Each section should utilize at least 3 outside sources, such as books, websites, scientific articles and/or newspaper articles. Your research paper should be based on research, that is, unbiased facts that you find in outside sources. These sections should not include your personal opinions, though you may include your views in the introduction and conclusion, which will be included in the final paper. All sources, ideas, quotes, etc., **MUST BE CITED**. If you do not cite your source, it is a form of plagiarism and the assignment will receive a zero. Any idea *or* quote you use from an outside source should include a citation and *each* section should have a bibliography at the end that shows your sources.

(over)

**1. Cause and scientific basis of the environmental issue, due 10/15**

What is the issue? Explain the science behind why this issue occurs and the implications of the issue. Describe the history of this issue and its significance in the Pacific Northwest and/or nationwide or globally.

**2. Current research, due 10/27**

Describe current research being done on the issue, including who is researching it. Provide further background on the scientific basis of this issue.

**3. Trends, due 11/5**

What are the future projections for this issue? Is this issue getting worse or better? How do we know? Describe the research that suggests this and what methods they used. What are the implications of it getting better or worse? Are there any socio-economic implications of this issue?

**4. Local efforts, due 11/17**

What organizations and/or individuals are working on this issue locally? Describe how effective they are. What are the methods for changing what is happening? Are organizations elsewhere in the state, region or world working on it with a different approach? How and why? Are there any city, state or federal policy decisions that affect this issue? What kind of financial resources are put toward solving the issue?

**5. Sustainability, due 12/1**

How might sustainable principles be related to this issue? After completing your research, why do you think this issue was allowed to happen? Is it happening in other areas or countries? What could be done or is being done to prevent it from happening in new places? Is there an effective campaign to educate the public about this issue? How could the public be better informed?

**FINAL PAPER, DUE 12/10 (25%)**

Make changes that were suggested and/or asked on each of your paper sections. Combine the five sections with a ~1 page introduction and ~1 page conclusion. The introduction and conclusion should include:

- a thesis statement, which is an arguable statement that summarizes the theme of your paper
- your personal stance on the issue
- your opinions on the efforts being done about the issue and whether more should be done
- your reactions to what you learned
- your opinion about how the future will be for yourself and others if this issue gets better/worse

The introduction and conclusion should be the only place in the paper that shows your opinions about the issue. The remainder of the paper should include information and facts that you deduced, gathered, understood and described in your own words from outside sources.

**3. CLASSROOM PRESENTATION (15%)**

The presentation is completely free form. The only requirement is that it conveys the scientific basis of your environmental issue, the implications of that issue and your personal reflections. The presentation could be a photographic exhibit, a series of sketches, a collage, a poster, a mural, a regular verbal presentation, etc. I invite you to let your creative powers flow! We will spend the last two class periods presenting our projects.