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Guidelines for Writing Assignments

You will complete two writing assignments in ESM 120. For each writing assignment, you will craft an argument and support that argument using scientific evidence. Papers should be related to topics covered in discussion. No late work will be accepted, so make sure to turn your writing assignments in on time.

Length/Format: 500 word limit (no more than 2 pages)

- Header should be ***one line***
- 12 point font, 1 inch margins
- Argument paper with (see rubric for more detailed guidelines):
 - o An introduction that includes a thesis statement
 - o Body paragraphs that have topic sentences and support the thesis with cited scientific evidence
 - Make sure to *interpret* the evidence (explain how it fits into your argument) as well as *evaluate* the evidence (is this strong evidence? How was it obtained? Are there studies that have found contradictory results? Are all assumptions valid?)
 - Your body paragraphs should synthesize multiple references when appropriate. Avoid writing body paragraphs that are merely a summary of a single reference.
 - o A conclusion that wraps up your argument by assessing how the data support your thesis statement and connects your topic to the global environment

Revisions:

- You will submit two drafts of each paper: a first draft and a final draft
- After submitting your first draft, you will receive a grade and comments. Use this feedback to revise and improve your final draft, due two weeks after the first draft.
- The first draft and final draft are worth an equal amount of points – so please do not submit a sloppy first draft or an unrevised final draft.
- You must turn in your first draft along with your final draft when submitting your final draft for grading.
- You must revise and *improve* your final draft. If you submit a final draft that is not revised, or if your revisions do not address any of the comments on your first draft, you will receive a 0.

References:

- You should use at least one of the assigned readings as a reference
- You must have 2 additional primary references (e.g. scientific journal articles) for a total of 3 primary references. Primary references should be the bulk of your citations, News articles are not primary references!
- You can use textbook and websites *in addition to* (not in place of) the 3 primary references
- Web link in citations are only necessary when you are citing a website (e.g. not necessary when citing online newspaper articles)
- Use the online database, Web of Science, to find scientific journal articles. See instructions below on how to access Web of Science.
- You must have a reference section at the end of your paper. Use the following style:

Journal articles:

Backsoon, I.L.B, and Seeyah, B.I. 1998. El Nino or El Nonsense? Journal of Cosmetology 1:115-119.

Books:

Backsoon, I.L.B. 2001. The facts behind clichés. 2nd ed. Bemidji State University Press, Bemidji, MN.

Newspaper or magazine articles:

Backsoon, I.L.B., Verisi, X.O., and Enopi, L.M. 2005. Heat or humidity? Duluth Daily Diatribe. 2 January, p. A2.

Web Sources:

The Onion. 2008. Scientists warn large earth collider may destroy earth.

http://www.theonion.com/content/news/scientists_warn_large_earth. (Date viewed: 18 December 2008).

In-text citations:

- Must cite sources within the text in the proper format: e.g. (Backsoon, 2001) or (Backsoon & Seeyah, 1998)
 - o Note: one citation may be sufficient for several sentences if it is clear that the sentences are related
- Failure to cite information/data/thoughts that are not your own within your paper is considered plagiarism.

Writing style:

- Your paper must have a thesis statement. The purpose of the paper is to make an argument and evaluate evidence for and against that argument, not to be descriptive.
- Use technical language. Your paper should follow a formal, scientific style. It is possible to write both eloquently and technically!
- Avoid fluffy prose, dramatic statements, and hyperbole.
- You must use facts, back them up and *cite* them. Failure to cite information is considered plagiarism.
- Do not use quotes; paraphrase information in your own words
- Make sure every paragraph has a topic and concluding sentence
- Avoid use of 'us'/'we' such as 'our country' or 'our earth' (specify which country or the earth)
- Write concisely

Grammar:

- Put a noun after the word 'this' or don't use the word 'this'
- Don't end a sentence with a preposition
- We recommend Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* as a grammar/style guide

Science:

- Use scientific terms and define them when appropriate
- Use (cited) data to support your thesis; do not make unsupported generalizations/claims
- Recognize uncertainty! Many environmental issues are not black and white. Acknowledge good arguments or evidence from the "other side" – and refute them if possible.

Plagiarism

Scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data, and conclusions of others'. Intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly cited. Plagiarism is an EXTREMELY SERIOUS academic offence. If you have questions regarding what is considered plagiarism, please visit the following website for specific examples.

- Resource on avoiding plagiarism: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

- Simple rule of thumb: if you have three or more words in a row that are the same as the writer's phrasing, you need to place it in quotes and cite it. Even better, reword the phrase (and still cite it).

Writing Resources

If you need tutoring for writing skills, I recommend visiting the Student Academic Success Center. Writing and ESL specialists are available to meet one-on-one with students to help with writing. (<http://success.ucdavis.edu/academic/writing.html>).

Additional online writing resources: <http://twwc.ucdavis.edu/misc/online-writing-resources-to-share-with-students/>

Accessing Web of Science

Web of Science is a good way to find primary sources for writing assignments. You can search for topics that are relevant to your paper (e.g. El Nino AND California fisheries). Textbooks, news articles, and websites are not acceptable primary sources for this writing assignment, but can be used as additional references.

To access Web of Science from off campus, you must:

- 1) go to lib.ucdavis.edu
- 2) click VPN under Quick Links in the left hand column to log in from off campus
- 2) click on Databases A-Z
- 3) search for 'Web of Science'
- 4) select the last item, 'Web of Science [via Web of Knowledge]'



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