

EEES 3900, Environmental Readings and Communication (WAC)

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

I. In-class writing assignments (ICW) (10 points each)

At least eight ICW assignments will be performed throughout the semester. The ICWs commonly entail a short writing assignment (10 – 15 min) followed by class discussion or further group work. At some point, you will be asked to read your assignment to the class, so please take these seriously and do your best to write coherently.

II. Portfolio assignments (25 points each)

During the semester you will be assigned to write three, 3-4 page “portfolio” chapters on topics aligned with several environmental issues. Completed portfolios will be handed in at the beginning of class, *before* we discuss the topics.

Grading

Each portfolio will be organized in five sections, as follows, the first three *written in your own words*:

- (1) **Background Information** - A summary of general concerns related to the topic: i.e., what are the threats to the environment, or to public health?
- (2) **Major Obstacles** - What are the to finding workable solutions to the problem?
- (3) **Addressing the Problem** - What is being done, or should be done, to solve the problem?
- (4) **Media Clipping** - A current/recent* or item from the Internet should be included that closely relates to the topic. The clipping can simply be a photocopy or a print of an online article. You must cite the article somewhere in your portfolio to establish its relevance.
*current/recent means within the past 6 years (2007 or more recent).
- (5) **References** – A minimum of ten references from scientific literature should be included (properly formatted and cited within the text) to show that you have attempted to provide detailed examples that back up your statements.

Each section should be **clearly labeled** (i.e., "*Background Information*", "*Major Obstacles*", etc.), and your attached news article should clearly indicate the source and date. Parts 1-3 should total no more than four, 1.5-spaced, typewritten pages.

IMPORTANT: Since the goal of these assignments is to teach you to develop concise, coherent paragraphs, **each paragraph you write MUST be preceded by a *Summary Statement* that identifies the main point of the paragraph.** This is a tool that will help keep you on track and will help me to understand where you are going in your portfolio. For example, if the paragraph is about the economic benefits of vaccinations against infectious diseases,

then your Summary Statement should be “*This paragraph is about the economic benefits of vaccinations against infectious diseases*”. It’s that simple, but very valuable.

One grade level will be deducted for each day a portfolio is handed in late (i.e., one date late, highest possible grade will be an A-; two days late, B+, etc.). Your grade will be calculated, as follows:

Summary Statements precede each paragraph and each section is clearly labeled as outlined in points 1 through 5 above. (3 points)

A current media clipping is attached to the portfolio and referenced within. (2 points)

A minimum of ten references are cited within the text and listed with proper format in the "References" section. (0.5 points each for a total of 5 points)

The remaining 15 points will be awarded as follows:

15-14 points Each paragraph has a purpose and focuses on a single, well-developed topic, while the entire collection of paragraphs work together to express the author's direction and understanding of the topic. This includes the presence of ample, referenced data or facts to back up general statements. Spelling is error-free and grammar is sound.

13-12 points Each paragraph focuses mostly on a single topic and the reader can follow the logic behind the paragraph order, although a small amount of confusion about the author's direction might exist. General statements are supported by referenced data and facts in most cases. Minimal spelling errors are present and grammar is largely correct.

11-10 points Paragraph focus is minimal, causing a number of paragraphs to wander, as well as limited direction of the paper. Supportive, referenced data and facts is present for some paragraphs, but lacking in others. Other shortcomings exist including spelling errors and incorrect grammar.

9-8 points Paragraph focus is missing, causing a number of paragraphs to wander, as well as limited direction of the paper. Supportive, referenced data and facts is missing for most paragraphs. Several spelling errors and overall poor grammar decrease the quality of the paper.

7 or fewer points Please don't allow your paper to be this bad.

Portfolio topics:

Portfolio 1: The emergence of antibiotic resistance in bacteria.

Portfolio 2: The implications of global change to human health

Portfolio 3: Population growth: is it a problem?

III. Term paper outline (30 points) and paper (30 points)

You will write a term paper based on an approved topic. The topic can be chosen from the list found on the course website, OR you can develop your own topic. However, if you would like to develop your own, I must first approve it. **You should tell me what topic you have chosen no later than the deadline defined in the syllabus.**

Topics will be assigned on a first come, first served basis--- if you are quick to choose a particular topic as your first choice, you can be assured of getting it. Be aware that some topics are quite popular and are assigned quickly.

Your paper should not exceed five pages. Use 1.5-spacing and Times New Roman 12-point font. Additional page(s) at the end must contain a list of citations in proper format, which also will be incorporated into the text at the appropriate places. Every citation used in the text should be listed at the end, and vice versa. It's not always obvious when to provide a citation for a piece of information, but in general, specific data (numbers) and statements of fact that are not common knowledge should be accompanied by a citation giving their source. At least one figure (but not more than two) that does not count toward the page limit should also be included.

I will use two major criteria in evaluating your paper:

(1) *quality of content* (20 points).

You must go beyond a general, superficial treatment of the subject. Challenge yourself. Dig into the primary literature, and defend any original ideas of your own. Avoid websites as references...go find the original information.

Since five pages is not much space (~1250 words), you must make every sentence count. Remember, **"one paragraph – one topic"**.

(2) *organization* (10 points).

The paper should be organized in a logical manner, and flow smoothly from one section to the next. This was the purpose of developing an outline. Use that outline to structure your paper.

Each section should have a **heading** that describes the general content of the section, and begin with a general statement before going into specifics and details. Examples should follow, and then a concluding sentence(s) that wraps up the information AND tells me why the information is important should conclude the paragraph.

Any arguments you present should be developed in a clear, logical sequence of ideas. I will place considerable weight on grammar and spelling, as these aspects of writing enhance your ability to communicate effectively, and will be taken seriously by the reader. For each misspelled word or gross grammar mistake (verb conjugation or tense

errors, for example) I will deduct a point. Remember, your paper is worth 30 points, four spelling errors will take you down to the “B” level.

Figures should be clear, labeled correctly, and presented with a proper caption (all of this will be discussed throughout the semester).

Due dates: A one-page outline of your paper is due on **October 22nd**. The final version of your paper is due on **November 12th**.

IV. Proposal Presentations (09/05 – 09/24) (20 points)

Each student will prepare a 8-10 minute PowerPoint presentation that educates the class about your term paper topic. The details of this presentation and how it will be graded will be provided in class, but students should be thinking about not only the general topic, but also why the topic is important and warrants research. The purpose of this exercise is to (i) learn about your topic, and (ii) to become comfortable with slide preparation, your presentation style, and communicating information.

Tentative Proposal Presentation order (will change if student enrollment changes)

09/05

Monica Aspacher
Mark Chase
Patrick Cisek
Lindsey Crego

09/10

Tyler Dean
Jessica Dilworth
Kelsey Friemoth
Abril Galang

09/12

Jason George
Kristen Hebebrand
Joshua Jackson
Tyler Jaynes

09/17

Nacori Lyons
John Martin
Picciuto, Michael
Kenneth Reynolds

09/19

Bryce Shide
Kirsten Tanner
Daniel Thompson
Zachary Turner

09/24

Kristian Zimmerman

V. Oral Presentation of your paper topic (11/14 – 12/05) (30 points)

Each of you will present an oral report about your term paper topic. Reports should be no less than 12 minutes and no more than 15 minutes in length to allow time for discussion and the presentation of three/four student reports during a single class period. *Please practice your presentations for time*, as a point will be deducted for each minute outside of the assigned time frame.

Reports will be on the subject of your written term paper topic and must be presented via PowerPoint. Presentations will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. **Content** – Is it well researched or is the information superficial? (10 points)
2. **Organization** – Does it make a good general statement of the importance of the issue at the beginning, explain the pertinent background information, present relevant data/examples and end with meaningful conclusions? (8 points)
3. **Clarity and style** – Is the speaker articulate, are appropriate words used, is eye contact maintained? (8 points)
4. **Visual aids** – Are font sizes and colors appropriate and easy to see in the classroom? Are the figures appropriate and do they help for understanding the topic? (4 points)
5. **Time limits** – Stay within the assigned time-frame (12 - 15 min) (a point deducted for each minute outside of the time-frame)

We will be under a very tight schedule during this time period, so no presentation make-ups will be allowed.