

## Delicate Balance, Fall 2005 – Guidelines For Writing The Final Paper

### Overview

The main objectives of bringing in speakers for the Delicate Balance class are:

- to provide an in-depth guide to a variety of contemporary environmental challenges and to give you the opportunity to become familiar with the relevant academic literature related to these challenges;
- to demonstrate how to incorporate research into a clear, useful presentation that has a thesis that is well supported by evidence and argument; and
- to model presentation styles and skills.

The final paper project represents an opportunity for you to select an issue of your choice to research, write a paper, and present your findings to the class. The research you conduct for your paper must involve substantial research of the academic literature.

### Paper Organization

In general, your paper (minimum length: 15 double spaced, typed pages) should consist of three broad sections.

The first section of your paper should be the introduction. In this section, you provide a clear and concise thesis statement, which you plan to defend using evidence found in the body of the text. Prior to developing your thesis statement, you should frame one or more research questions that guide your initial research phase. Once some preliminary research has been conducted you can then begin to construct your thesis statement. Additional research will then be conducted to gather evidence in support of your thesis. As you gather more evidence, it may be necessary to re-frame your thesis statement. The introduction can also contain background information on the environmental issue you have chosen. The introduction should be brief, no more than a few pages.

The second section, the body, constructs your argument, linking research from the relevant academic literature into a systematic case in support of the thesis statement presented in the introduction. This is the lengthiest and most substantial part of your paper.

The final section of your paper is the conclusion. In this section you should again refer to your thesis statement and summarize the evidence you have gathered in support of your thesis statement. You may also point out where more research could be useful or other questions that have been raised by your research and what direction further inquiry should take.

### Timeline

#### **Due on September 29 (Thursday) *Project/Paper Proposal***

The research proposal should contain your initial thesis statement along with the research questions used to guide your exploratory research. The proposal should contain references as well as a short analysis on what you believe will be the expected findings.

In past years, topics for Delicate Balance papers included: oil drilling in Alaska, environmental effects of food production system in the US; a history of the modern zoos; the ecology of the eastern coyote, and others

#### **Due on October 31 (Monday) *Bibliography and Outline***

At this stage in your research, you should have collected and reviewed most of the literature you plan to use to write your final paper. As a result, you must submit a complete bibliography, along with an outline of your final paper.

#### **Due on November 21 (Monday) *Draft of final research paper for peer review***

A complete first draft (with works cited or references) of the research paper is due on this date. The peer review process should provide you with critical feedback on your first draft.

#### **Due on December 5 (Monday): *Final Paper***

Your final paper is due in class.