Marine Policy Project – Part 2 Instructions

Select a Topic (10 points)

Now that you are informed about a variety of current marine issues, it’s time to select one for your letter of appeal. Your topic can be the issue you presented in Just a Minute or a completely new one – it’s your choice! The only restriction I have is that the topic must be related to the ocean and controversial. Feel free to explore Chapter 15 in the textbook, the NOAA Ocean Explorer website, and the weekly Ocean News on the NOAA News Highlights website for more ideas.

IMPORTANT: Remember, your final product of this project (Part 5) is a formal letter of appeal asking someone of influence to advocate change. Therefore, you need to consider your topic carefully and ensure it is narrowed down or applied to a specific geographic region.

While you might think this assignment is relatively easy, it is, in fact, the hardest. You need to take the time now to consider your issue carefully and ensure you are able to find 4-5 good references (sources of information). Upon doing this careful consideration now, you will have a much easier time writing your list of facts in Part 3 and writing your letter of appeal in Part 5. Conversely, if you decide to pick the first topic that pops into your mind, you may be ‘sweating it’ during the research and letter writing phase.

Here are some things to consider:

1. Is your topic specific enough that requesting a change is actually do-able?
   a. For example, taking on the Great Garbage Patch in the Pacific is fairly large --- and who would you send your letter to? However, addressing illegal dumping in the Gulf of Mexico is much more do-able (the geographic region is smaller and there are known agencies/states that have jurisdiction in it).

2. Is it controversial?

3. Are you able to find scientific facts to support your argument? (In other words, are you able to find scholarly articles in our online library?)

INSTRUCTIONS: Submit a one-page document that captures:

1. Title of your Project
2. A statement on why you chose it
3. A statement or two on why it is important (why should the general public care)
4. At least three (3) preliminary references in full APA-style formatting
**Grading for Part 2:**

Your topic must be ocean related, controversial, and specific. Don’t forget to tell me why you chose it and why it is important. The research facts list should be typed and contain all the specific details outlined above. Proper citing of references and APA-style formatting is critical. *TurnItIn will be utilized so be careful not to plagiarize – aka, put EVERYTHING in your own words!*

A rubric is provided below. As soon as your proposal is approved you may continue with your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric for MPP</th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>Total Achievable Pts (10 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Good topic. Ocean related. Specific to a geographical region and species/process</td>
<td>Good topic, narrowed down but not enough</td>
<td>Topic too broad to adequately cover in a 3-4 page research paper</td>
<td>Not ocean related or unclear. Does not demonstrate understanding of topic and/or project as a whole. But was submitted on time.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Three good references and formatted using APA style</td>
<td>Less than 3 good reference; Correct format</td>
<td>Less than 3 good references and incorrect format</td>
<td>No references were given</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Clearly stated</td>
<td>Needs Work (understanding not demonstrated)</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why It Was Chosen</td>
<td>Stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tips of obtaining an ‘A’:**

1. **Topic must be narrowed down to a specific geographical region and details of an issue.** For example, “Overfishing” is too broad. A narrowed down topic would be, “Overfishing of the Bluefin Tuna in the Gulf of Mexico.” Another good example is, “The impact of ocean acidification on the Great Barrier Reef System.” Note how the topic is zoomed into a specific geographic location and specific species or process.

2. **Acceptable sources of scientific information** are books, papers, and articles that have been through the rigorous process of review by experts in the field. A "peer reviewed" scientific article has been vetted by experts to make sure the data collection and analysis follow the principles of the scientific method.

3. **READ the journal article you select from the library!** While much of it will be technical, you can gain a lot of background information of the issue and results of the study by reading (and understanding) the abstract, introduction, and conclusion.

   a. Examples of journals that you can be assured have been through this process are as follows: Nature, Science, Scientific American, and National Geographic (also conference transactions and books); websites include NOAA, NASA, EPA, USGS as well as universities, and state, national or international research organizations. The New York Times and LA Times are often used as primary sources because it is
well established that the articles have been through a rigorous editing and fact checking process. National Inquirer or blogs are never used as primary sources.

b. Wikipedia: Although this is a great place to look for links to primary sources, Wikipedia should never be cited as a primary source because not all the information has been vetted and it is hard to tell the difference between the two when they have been integrated into a Wikipedia page. Even in an article that cites another article, if you are thinking of using the idea that was in the cited article, make sure you have read the original article to assure the original authors ‘comments are not being used out of context.

4. **Blogs are particularly dangerous.** Although blog authors often start off supporting their comments with references to vet information, sometimes blogs can take bazaar twists. I recently had a blog link sent to me by a very well-educated friend which started off referring to Jared Diamond’s book "Collapse" and then veered off on a tyrant that I am pretty sure would have never been the intent of Diamond. The manner in which the blog entry was written suggested that the author was presenting Diamond’s ideas. This is very scary! Do not use blogs!

5. **Primary sources** must be listed as **FULL APA-style citations**. I’m expecting to see at least one scholarly article (I’m looking to see if you are using the library). I do not want hyperlinks. Refer to the Library Research Guide on D2L for details.

Example of APA-Style Bibliography:

**References:**


APA-style formatting and LSC-online library are most likely *new* to you. Here are some useful resources:

- Oceanography Research Guide  [http://upresearch.lonestar.edu/apa](http://upresearch.lonestar.edu/apa)
- LSC Library [http://www.lonestar.edu/library/](http://www.lonestar.edu/library/)
- APA-style Formatting [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/)
- In-text citation format: (author(s), year) or (organization, year) - No embedded links!

The most helpful and useful resource is our very own librarian Ms. Betty Rugh!
([betty.h.rugh@lonestar.edu](mailto:betty.h.rugh@lonestar.edu))

Some additional ideas to ponder:

- **Mining Ocean Resources** (choose a specific resource and geographic region): oil, manganese, diamonds, or deep ocean mining

- **Tidal and Wave Energy** (choose a specific method and geographic region)

- **International Fishing Practices and Legislation**: Overfishing, illegal fishing, methods, or fishing regulations (best to focus on a single species and geographic region) – Ex: Shrimp Trawling in the Gulf of Mexico; Shark Fining in Gulf of California

- **The Human Impact on Coastal Zones** (choose a specific topic and region) – Ex: Galveston’s Ike Dyke Project; Louisiana’s preservation of wetlands projects; Bioaccumulation in Galveston Bay; Harmful Algal Blooms in the Gulf of Mexico; Impact of rising sea-level on Florida coastlines

- **Waste Disposal in Oceans**: Choose one type of waste. Ex: plastics, nuclear, sewage, illegal dumping, microbeads, or coastal dumping. It would be best to also narrow this geographically (for example: Gulf of Mexico, Galapagos Islands, or North Atlantic, etc.)

- **Endangered Species** (best to focus on specific species and geographic region): Hawksbill Sea Turtle in the Gulf of Mexico; for more visit - [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/listed.htm#fish](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/listed.htm#fish)

- **Climate change and the oceans**: Focus on a single topic related to this issue. Ex: ocean acidification impact on a specific marine ecosystem like coral reefs, the melting of polar ice impact on the Arctic or Antarctic, the impact of global sea level change on a specific city or region. Climate change is too broad an issue to be adequately covered in a 3-4 page research paper.

- **Deep Ocean Exploration**: approaches, technologies, limitations (best to focus on a specific technology and geographic region)