

Interdisciplinary term paper:

Your final course assignment will be to craft a substantive paper recommending a specific change in environmental policy (broadly construed). This assignment will account for the most significant portion of your grade, and consequently deserves serious time, research, and effort. It is due at the time of the final, as dictated by the university registrar. In order to accomplish your assignment you will need to consider and implement the following:

1. Policy: I mean “policy” in a broad sense as opposed to the technical sense used in some of the literature read in class. You are being asked to recommend a specific change, and this can take a variety of forms. You will need to decide:
 1. Scope: at what level are seeking to implement change? Your policy change can be aimed at the level of an individual company or institution (e.g., Georgetown University’s SFS-Q or Qatar Airways), a city (e.g., Doha), or a country (Qatar). I will consider proposals for regions (e.g., GCC) on an individual basis
 2. Audience: Be specific concerning for whom you are drafting your policy recommendations. I should not be your audience; rather, you should assume that this is an actual recommendation and write your paper accordingly. For example, you might address your paper to the Traffic Department of the Ministry of the Interior.
 3. Type of Change: Decide early on the type of recommendation you will propose. I will be flexible in the types of things you can do; the most important thing is for you to be both specific and concrete in your proposals – nothing vague. We will discuss possibilities in class, and you will hopefully find lots of examples on your own in your response posts. But here are some examples of the sorts of proposals you can make:
 1. Craft a policy statement for a specific organization
 2. Change city zoning laws
 3. Adopt specific industry standards
 4. Design a program to facilitate some specific outcome (e.g., govt grants for retrofitting buildings)
 5. Propose a specific law
 6. Recommend increased participation in international agreements (e.g., Qatar becoming a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol)
2. Paper Sections: Your paper will consist of five sections: an executive summary, a brief on current conditions, why change is needed, proposed change, and conclusion
 1. Executive summary: (1 page) This section will concisely summarize the nature of your paper and what it says. Imagine your paper being passed to a very busy official who is certainly not going to take the time to read everything you’ve written. You need to give her all of the most important information right upfront in a clear and concise manner. What does she need to know if she can only read a one-page summary?
 2. Brief on current conditions: (2-5 pages) What this section entails will depend on the nature of the changes you’re recommending. For example, if you’re recommending that Qatar become a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, then you will need to do research into the nature of Qatar’s involvement to date with the UNFCCC and why it is not currently a signatory. You will then detail its past actions and involvements and the reasons for such. If you’re proposing the implementation of a specific law, you will need to do research into and then write about both the existing laws and perhaps examples of similar laws in other countries.
 3. Why change is needed: (2-5 pages) Again what you write here will be dependent on the change you propose. This is the section of your paper where you justify the need for change. It will consist of two critical components.
 1. A moral justification: You need to discuss the morality of the proposed decision. This is a component that is often absent or marginal in public and policy discourse, but cannot be absent from your paper. What justifies your proposed change? Your answer to this question needs to be argumentative in form and

might well entail more than one argument, one of which must be moral or theological. For example, you might justify a new law concerning the treatment of animals or regulations on the importation of meat on a utilitarian ethic (think Peter Singer) or theological reasoning (think Nomanul Haq). You might then have a separate argument based on practical or economic efficiency.

Additionally, you will want briefly to discuss the various other benefits associated with the change (think about the Reiche article on Energy Policy in the Gulf), and specifically how it will impact or influence others. That said, don't just give me a laundry list of reasons. Give me one or more well crafted arguments, along with a concise statement of other benefits that will accrue to your proposal.

2. Consider objections: It is absolutely critical that you discuss objections and alternatives. I want you to be realistic and hard-nosed. What interests will oppose your proposal? Why? Consider and respond to the most substantive objections you can envision. Remember that if you do not understand the nuances of your opponent's position, you do not understand the subject you're discussing.
4. Proposed Change: (2-5 pages) Detail your proposal. The three things to keep in mind in this section are: *be specific, be specific, and be specific*. If you're proposing an organizational policy statement, then actually write the statement, followed by a discussion of how this statement is to be distributed and how the various relevant factions will be held accountable to the document. If proposing a new government program, state exactly who it is that will oversee implementation of the program, how its success will be evaluated, and any timetables involved and any institutional changes that will have to accompany the program. Who will be impacted by your change?
 1. Environmental impact: Detail exactly what you anticipate the environmental impact of your proposal to be. You will want to connect this back to your justification for the change.
 2. Economic feasibility: You must include this subsection. Remember that even Leopold's call for a radical new ethic acknowledged an economic constraint. How will it be paid for? What will the economic consequences be?
5. Conclusion: (1-2 pages) In addition to restating what it is that your paper determines (i.e., your proposal and its justification), you will want to conclude by discussing any future work to be done. If you've written an organizational policy statement, you might talk about future procedures or envisioned plans of action that need to be drafted. Perhaps your proposal will require ongoing research or funding initiatives. Perhaps it is part of a broader initiative or has goals for future expansion. Perhaps the long-term success of the proposal is dependent on other specific variables that you want to address. Conclude by making clear the broader, long-term picture of which your proposal is a part.
3. Suggested precursors: I want to motivate you to take your paper seriously and also to help you craft the best proposal you can. Consequently, I recommend that you:
 1. Meet with me: The earlier the better. *Do not come to this meeting with vague notions*. Rather, prepare beforehand by researching something specific, getting a good grasp of what's out there and what has been done elsewhere.
 2. Email me your executive summary: I will try to give constructive feedback.
 3. Finally, while this writing assignment is significantly different than your first assignment, many of the writing conventions and suggestions will be the same. It would be a good idea to review this material.