

Guidelines for the Final Paper

The main writing assignment this quarter will be a research and analysis project of approximately ten pages (2500 words). Overall, we would like you to do two things:

- Conduct enough research about a particular issue related to forests (locally, nationally, internationally) to describe what the problem is and the range of responses that have been proposed.
- Analyze the issue in light of at least one of the concepts we have studied this quarter in T³.

This paper should be an insightful product in its own right, and, for those of you planning to continue next quarter, it should provide a running start for the larger research project you will do in the winter. In other words, pick an issue that interests you enough so that you will want to explore it next quarter as well as this one.

Here are the tasks you need to complete:

1. Pick an issue. This can be any ecological, social or economic problem associated with forests (or their absence). To be worth investigating, it must be somewhat complex and open-ended. If it has an unambiguous, technical solution you won't be able to do much with it. **Submit a one-paragraph description of your issue to your seminar leader no later than Monday, Oct. 29 (week 6).** If you have any doubt as to whether your issue is appropriate for this program, ask either faculty member.
2. Do research on this issue. Your research should have two objectives. First, you want to clarify the topic you've chosen. What exactly is the problem? What are its implications? Its interconnections with other problems or matters of importance? What are the economic/social/ecological factors that make the problem a problem? Second, who is proposing to do what? What interest or intellectual groupings are involved in this debate? What are their proposals, and what arguments do they give to justify them?
3. Analyze this debate in the context of the subject matter of T³. Do these proposals illustrate theories we have studied? Do they contradict them? Do they point to gaps or problematic aspects of those theories?
4. **Write a first draft of your paper and submit it to your seminar leader no later than Monday, Nov. 12 (week 8).** This will leave enough time for feedback on these drafts.
5. After receiving feedback when we return from Thanksgiving break, **revise your paper and resubmit it no later than Thursday, Nov. 29 (week 9).**

The objectives you should set for yourself in this assignment include:

- Sufficient research. You need to identify and utilize enough sources to be able to familiarize yourself with the most important aspects of your topic. The sources should be sophisticated enough to provide you with reliable information and comprehensive enough to cover the main questions you want to answer. Of course, there are time constraints, and we do not expect that your research will transform you into an "expert" on your chosen topic in the space of two weeks.
- Working understanding of the concepts in T³. This paper gives you the opportunity to go beyond simply repeating a theory — you are called upon to put it into practice. To do this you need to understand it accurately and deeply.
- Effective organization. Your paper should reflect your research and analysis; it should be organized so that the reader can distinguish the main points from the subsidiary ones, and so the logical links between evidence, reasoning and conclusions are explicit. Whether or not you work from an outline, your paper should have enough structure that a careful reader could extract an outline from it.
- Clear writing. Your writing, in this paper as always, should be grammatically correct, properly punctuated, correctly spelled and intelligibly worded. Use your computer's spell-checker and pagination function. Look up in a dictionary any word whose meaning you are not completely sure of. (Shun "downfall", "instate", "utilize" instead of "use".) Before turning in any written work, whether a first draft or a final version, proofread it carefully. Best is for a friend to proofread it; another good strategy is to read it to yourself out loud. If you feel especially challenged by the writing aspect of this assignment, feel free to contact your seminar leader and make use of the tutors at the LRC.

This paper is not your last word. It is an initial survey of a topic that interests you, one you will follow up next quarter. During the winter you will have the opportunity to develop your own ideas about what should be done and to do the

research to justify this view. For now, you do not have to have all the answers — only an informed understanding of the questions.