

RESEARCH PAPER AND PRESENTATION

PURPOSE

One feature of global courses is the completion of a special project that allows students to study global issues in some depth, expand research skills, and present ideas in a public setting. Hard work, thoughtfulness, and creativity are a powerful combination that can change a community (and thus the world) for the better. For this project, you will study an issue in another country in depth and offer a proposal for one way to address the problem.

To accomplish this, you will complete the following with your team:

- Choose a specific real-world problem/issue in a country you select that is related to course topics.
- Devise a proposed plan for how the problem/issue could be addressed in that community. Making a good plan requires that you brainstorm in your group and research how others are addressing similar problems in other communities. It also requires that you learn about the community that you are trying to improve.

The learning goals for this project are the same as for the entire course:

- Engage with contemporary issues in a global context.
- Imagine the world through the eyes of people from diverse backgrounds (empathy).
- Evaluate different models of personal and social responsibility.
- Research and write more effectively on global topics.
- Begin to self-identify as a global citizen who is connected with other peoples and the natural environment around the world.

The project will unfold in stages that have both group and individual assignments.

PROCESS

Stages

1. Choosing a team. Early in the semester, you will join a team of 3-4 students. As a group, you will select a country and a broad issue related to course materials to focus on. You will have time in class to form initial groups and determine what broad issue you want

to focus on, such as poverty and health interventions, poverty and education, food production, hunger and humanitarian aids, clothing production, and so on.

2. Fact Sheet (1 page)

- **Format:** Your team will prepare a 1-page (front & back) summary sheet with information about your country related to that issue. If, for example, you are focusing on poverty and health, you might include country-related economic information, such as the GDP, percentage of people living above/below the poverty line; rates of health insurance, poverty-related health issues, and so on. A librarian will visit class to talk about ways to find this information using a library research guide.
- **Audience:** Your audience for this 1-page sheet will be your classmates, who you are informing about information related to the issue you have chosen. As you turn them in, I will upload them to the course website so that your classmates can consult them to learn more about your country and issue.
- Your fact sheet can include visual information as well as written. You can include an image, chart, or graph to help inform your reader. Consider effective and appealing ways to communicate the information.
- The sheet should concisely communicate answers to such questions as the following (suggestions to consider):
 - Why is this problem significant for your country?
 - What factors contribute to the problem or should we keep in mind when thinking about this problem in this country or area?
 - What economic, social, industrial, or environmental factors are helpful for us to understand the scope of this problem?
 - How does this issue touch on global concerns? Local ones?
 - Who is affected by this problem?
 - Who is trying to solve this problem? (NGOs, governmental agencies, churches, other aid groups)

3. Group Annotated Bibliography (Google doc)

- **Format:** As you gather resources for the previous and subsequent assignments, your team will create a collaborative annotated bibliography of sources using a group Google Doc. Each team member should contribute at least 3-4 items to the bibliography, for a total of 12-15 entries per team.
- **Audience:** Your group members and me. You can include the books, articles or websites you consult for your individual papers and 1-page summary. These

items do not have to be ones you ultimately use in your papers or projects. The list can include works you are citing in your projects as well as ones you read and decided not to use, along with an explanation of why or why not.

- The bibliography should include:
 - An accurate citation for each work, using a consistent citation format (MLA, APA or Chicago style)
 - An evaluation of the credibility, accuracy, and potential bias of the source— what are the author(s)'s affiliations? Was it created by an academic, an organization, a company?
 - A short summary of the main points of the source.
 - A brief discussion of whether this source was helpful for your research.

4. Individual White Paper (5-7 pages)

- **Format:** Your team will decide which different kinds of expertise are needed to develop a feasible group proposal to address this problem. Each team member will develop a different aspect of this expertise and write a 1250-1750 word, double-spaced white paper or policy brief. You can find examples of these linked off the course schedule, and we will discuss them in class as well.
- **Audience:** Your immediate audience is your team. Your research will help the group develop a more compelling project proposal by covering more sides of the issue than any one of you could cover alone. Your paper should provide useful information to help the team come up with a feasible proposal in the next stage of the project.
- For example, if your team is focusing on poverty and health, you might divide up in the following way:
 - One team member might research the causes and effects of a specific health-related problem on the people in a specific area of the country.
 - Another might research and develop a white paper focused on the efforts of a governmental agency or entities to address the problem.
 - Yet another might focus on humanitarian aid organization(s) that are trying to address the problem and costs for those interventions.
 - And a fourth team member might look at cultural perspectives on the problem such as: do particular cultural beliefs or practices in the area affect the efforts to solve it?

- This is just one example of how your team might divide up. There are many other possible types of expertise individuals on your team may decide to focus on. I encourage you to discuss these with me as you decide which topics to focus on.

5. Group Project Presentations (15-20 min)

- **Format:** After spring break, your team will develop a project proposal to present to the class at the end of the semester, in a 15-20-minute presentation. Your proposal should suggest a viable solution to address the issue you have defined.
- **Audience:** A (fictional) donor has offered funding for two small-scale projects that will meaningfully impact people affected by the problem you are focusing on. The donor is particularly interested in helping fund social entrepreneurs who are in or have recently graduated from college, because she believes in the power of individuals doing what they can to affect positive change on local and global levels. You will present the proposal to an audience of your classmates, who will serve as a selection committee for the donor.
- As you develop your plan, consider what you learned in the earlier stages of the project:
 - Are there existing organizations or efforts that you could partner with?
 - Should you create something new?
 - Why does the problem exist? How can you get at the root causes?
- Think broadly and creatively. Your plan will evolve over time as you learn more and try things out. While designing your plan, consider the following:
 - Plausibility – could this really work?
 - Research – why guess when you can find out for sure.
 - Start-up – how will you get started?
 - Scale-up – how will you expand the effort?
 - Self-sufficiency – could your effort eventually become self-sufficient?
 - Effectiveness – how will you know that the effort is having the positive social/environmental impact that you intend?
- Your project proposal should be visually interesting, well-organized, and engaging, and should persuade the selection committee that the project:
 - Is well-thought-out
 - Is feasible for a recent-college graduate to undertake
 - Responds to the problem in a culturally sensitive way
 - Aligns with, supports, or supplements ongoing efforts in productive ways
 - Is ethically and socially responsible

The next-to-last week of class will be devoted to a mini-symposium; your team will present its proposal and your classmates will select two winning projects. Your presentations can be creative or include multimedia. After each presentation, there will be 5 minutes for the audience to ask you questions about your ideas.

*Winning projects will earn 3 points of extra credit added to the team members' project grade.