Class Projects / Case Histories

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Geology 3006: Water and Society

Class projects will be worth 40% of each student's grade. Projects will be completed in small groups of approximately 4 students. These groups will be assigned on Wednesday, September 30, 1998 in class. Each group will work together to research a Water and Society topic and to present the results of their research. Topics will be chosen by lot in the first weeks of the quarter. Each group will be required to prepare the following:

- An outline of the final project, complete with initial bibliography. This outline and initial bibliography is due Friday, October 16, 1998. The initial bibliography must include at least 5 references; only three of these may be URLs. Click here for reference format for URLs.

- A draft version of the project. The draft version is due Friday, November 13, 1998 and will be returned to groups in a timely manner with comments and suggestions. Each group should indicate on the draft version of their project if the group would like to be considered to present the project in class during the last week of the quarter. Presentations will be 15-20 minutes in length, followed by a short discussion period. Five projects will be selected, based on merit and group interest, to be presented. If selected for presentation, group members will be allowed to substitute the oral presentation grade for 50% of the final exam. That is, all students will complete the entire final exam, but for those students whose group project was presented, the final may be worth 20% of the course grade as opposed to 40% of the grade for nonpresenters. Grades for presenters will be calculated with and without the presentation grade; the highest grade will be reported. This means that presenting your group project is a win-win situation.

- A final version of the project. The final version is due the last day of class, Friday, December 4, 1998. The final project should be approximately 15-20 pages in length and should be prepared as for the journal Science (Click here for information.) Note: This is a change in format from that previously listed. The report should include:
  - an introduction to the topic
  - scientific background/technical aspects/legislative aspects
  - environmental considerations
  - ethical issues
  - conclusions
  - a signed cover sheet indicating the relative efforts of each group member on particular aspects of the project. Click here for an example.
Make sure all group members are involved in investigating the topic and in producing the report. It is expected that all group members participate in the production of the report as a whole. However, in practice some students may be more involved in one or two aspects of the report and less in others (but not to the total exclusion of participation in entire areas of the work). This is OK, but group members should work to understand all aspects of the topic as every member is responsible for the quality of the final report. The question you should ask yourself before handing in the report is whether it is in a form and shape that you would think acceptable to hand in to your boss, supervisor, agency head, president of the company, or a funding agency.

Remember that the purpose of working in groups is to simulate realistic work conditions, to bring students of different backgrounds together to cooperate under simulated real world conditions for the reports, and to provide a support group to which a student can turn if she or he needs class notes, help in solving homework problems, or to discuss some class material. The first step is to get to know all members of your group. Get together as a group as soon as possible (in some cases you may be able to do this on the net). If any logistical problems that prevent a group from working together effectively come up during the quarter, see an instructor as soon as possible to remediate the situation. Do not wait till the end of the quarter!