

## **Research Proposal and Outline (15% of course grade – Due October 25)**

A. Proposal: Your proposal should be no more than 500 words and is meant to provide:

- 1. Definition of the Problem** that you are interested in researching throughout the course. Perhaps including a specific case study within a larger environmental or social risk/hazard can strengthen your definition in this early stage of your project
- 2. Explanation of the Theory and Information** will allow you to structure your investigation and research coverage (where will you get your information from and how you will balance sources).
- 3. Theoretical Implications** of your problem to the study of risk and hazards and formulate a
- 4. Thesis Statement** that explains the intention of your paper/presentation and how it will contribute to the field.
- 5. Reference List:** 80% of your references should be peer-reviewed sources and focus directly in the components of your sections in the outline.

B. Outline: After a brief search of your research topic, try to organize the structure of your essay using major descriptive headings and sub-headings that provide a topical description of your proposal and case study(s).

## **Essay (40% of course grade – Due November 15)**

Your essay should provide an interdisciplinary examination of a topic of your choice, but is restricted to one of the geographic themes identified in the course lecture schedule. Your research should be grounded in an independent literature review. I will also be noting if you deviate far from your proposal/outline and reference list. The essay should be developed throughout the course and changing topics after the proposal **MUST** be discussed with me. The length of the essay should be approximately 2500 words, and should follow a similar format to the *Guidelines for Geography Essays*.

## **Example Essay Topic Statements**

1. “There is a struggle between a narrow, essentially quantitative, technical view of risk and a broad social and cultural one” (Hewitt, 1997). Discuss the comment, with reference to several different types of risk.
2. What are the problems involved in mapping risk? Discuss, with reference to several different types of risk.
3. What is the *hazards paradigm*; and why is it increasingly found unsatisfactory in dealing with human interactions with natural hazards?
4. “Often, society re-examines the application of new technology only after it is too late, after the device is thoroughly integrated into social institutions, after the device has produced a series of undesirable second- and third order consequences, or worse, after the device has caused a disaster and a body count...” (Reich, 1991). Discuss this comment, with reference to several different types of new technology; suggesting in each case how the situation could have been better handled.
5. Discuss the significance of *Dubious Weapons* as used in warfare and terrorism, with examples from past and present day.
6. “The challenge is to create ways of analyzing the vulnerability implicit in everyday life” (Wisner, 1983). Explain, and give examples of ways to meet this challenge.
7. “Work in the field of risks and disasters is justified largely in terms of the desire to reduce human misery and material losses, and to maintain control over other activities” (Hewitt, 1997). Give examples of where risk and hazards research has contributed positively to reducing losses and/or maintaining control.
8. Discuss at least three major earthquakes in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary damage. To what extent were differences between the events a result of physical geographic setting, and to what extent a result of human occupation?
9. “The socio-cultural impact of tourism may well be the most serious problem at the present time” (di Castri and Glaser, 1980). Discuss the comment in terms of risk and hazards in mountain areas.
10. “There are... special problems of vulnerability and response in urban communities and for their members (Hewitt, 1997). Discuss this comment in terms of a range of different types of hazard and actual disasters.

***Essays can be handed in during class on November 15<sup>th</sup>, or can be placed in my mail-box outside of the Geography Department offices not later than 4:00 p.m. A 10% penalty will be deducted per day late.***

Student Name:

Final Mark:

This form is used to assess your essays. It is derived from Hay's (1997) "Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences." You can use it to establish areas for improvement in your written communication. After each line item there are spaces for four tics [ ]. The further a tic appears to the right, the better your work was for this item. No tic for an item means that that particular item did not apply to the assignment being marked. There is a separate evaluation form for research projects.

Note that all line items are not equivalent; thus, a simple addition of tics will not lead to your overall mark. Line items are of different importance depending on the nature and level of the assignment being marked. If you have any questions regarding this marking, please contact me to schedule a meeting. You will be required to bring your assignment, this sheet, your guide to style and grammar, and any other relevant documentation to this meeting.

QUALITY OF ARGUMENT	POOR			GOOD
Does the argument fully address the topic?				
Does the argument demonstrate internal coherence?				
Is the argument well structured throughout the paper?				
Is the material presented relevant to the topic?				
Is the topic dealt with at sufficient length?				
QUALITY OF EVIDENCE				
Is the argument well supported by evidence and examples?				
Is there an accurate presentation of evidence and examples?				
Is there an effective use of figures and tables?				
Are illustrations effectively presented and correctly cited?				
WRITTEN EXPRESSION AND PRESENTATION				
Is the writing fluent and succinct?				
Is the writing grammatically correct?				
What is the quality of punctuation?				
What is the quality of spelling?				
Is the writing and presentation legible?				
Is the assignment of reasonable length?				
SOURCES AND REFERENCING				
Are there an adequate number and type of sources?				
Are the sources acknowledged?				
Is the referencing style consistent and correct?				
Is the reference list correctly presented?				
OVERALL DEMONSTRATED ACADEMIC ABILITY				