

Lake Superior Course Topics

My goals in this course include

- reinforcing or introducing a level of passion about Lake Superior
- provide or reinforce skills in research, public speaking and contributing to policy.

In the course outline the first grading appears as **Seminar 20%**.

As mentioned on day one the format could be as a poster presentation or a brief seminar with slides.

A third option is to write a policy paper. It is election time, so imagine a winning candidate asks you for advice about a Lake Superior topic. See below for more details and an example.

Some of the lectures in this course present overviews of broad subjects. Examples include the glacial history of Lake Superior, presented last week, and upcoming topics like the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway. Research topics for seminars could be a tangent or extension of early lecture content.

The following list of fairly broad topics can be used to find a more focused investigation. For example “*Species at risk*” could be narrowed to a certain fish type, woodland caribou, etc. Your research should be primarily about issues of the Lake Superior Basin (including the Lake Nipigon Basin) but some topics can extend and include issues of the lower Great Lakes.

Please submit a topic proposal with a considered **title** and a **research question**. To make this exercise meaningful do some investigation before you write your proposal. Hopefully this avoids problems of finding out too late that your topic/research question is not going to work. Briefly outline your approach with well-phrased text and:

- What (2-3) scholarly sources do you plan to use?
- Why did you choose this topic?
- Why should your readers/listeners care?

Review the following topics for ideas

water quality issues

storm water management

long-range transport of toxins invasive species shoreline alteration/development

wildlife habitat

species at risk

fluctuating water levels

soil health climate change

stream rehabilitation and protection

algal blooms

beach health and E.coli contamination

energy transport and transport of dangerous goods.

The following are more specific and suggested by Zeke M in our class:

a) interactive presentation on the geography of Sibley peninsula and Islands easily visible from Hillcrest park

b) a presentation highlighting the herring commercial fishery on Superior and the shipping process to get herring from Lake Superior to Eastern Europe.

c) "American Superior" (in order to learn about Lake Superior in a historical context from an American point of view)

d) History of the town of Rosspport, [or another geographical point of interest].

And

A topic that you define.

Examples

Thunder Bay's North Harbour: Sediment Evaluation and Management Options

A topic like this could be a poster or seminar.

Water Quality Issues in First Nation Communities within the Robinson-Superior Treaty Area. Probably this topic would not work so well as a poster but could as a seminar.

Writing a Policy Brief

The word count can be 1000 to 1200 words – i.e. "brief" and easy. It is not an easy and simple option.

Imagine an elected parliamentarian (as mentioned above) asks or tells you to provide concise and compelling information about a topic destined to be government legislation and/or policy. Other imagined situations could be the boss of an environmental company, in a city department, an agency like Mattawa, etc. Providing a sloppy or incorrect data and information could be embarrassing to your employer and resulted in various negative outcomes.

If this option appeals to you and happy to provide more information, guidelines and an example.

