

Assignment 2: A global issue in a specific country

Purposes: To apply the ideas we have been developing about global processes and the culture of capitalism to understanding a specific issue in a particular country. To practice researching current economic, political, and social issues.

What you do: Based (if possible) on clues from your interview with an immigrant, find an issue or problem in or involving his or her country that you can discuss in terms of global processes and the culture of capitalism. You might find inspiration by scanning the table of contents of Robbins. Possibilities include environmental problems, poverty and associated issues of crime such as the drug trade or smuggling (trafficking) of women or farm laborers, immigration or emigration issues, ethnic or racial conflicts, labor or social unrest, revolution, terrorism (if you can relate it to global processes), problems stemming from past or present colonialism, population problems, disease problems (if you can relate them to global processes), and so on.

Write a 5 to 7 page (double-spaced) research paper explaining

- the issue as it plays out in that particular country
- its origins or causes (which may be debated or unclear, but at least address them)
- its social, economic, and cultural effects
- how it fits into global processes and/or the culture of capitalism, using approaches along the lines developed in this class
- any prospects, programs, etc. that might be able to help.

You might consider how the issue is caused or shaped by policies related to foreign investment; or by price fluctuations outside the country; or by foreign military pressure; or by advertising, television, or news; or by modern communications; or by pollutants produced by other countries; or by resource exploitation by foreign companies or for foreign markets; and so on? What impact do these global processes have on the issue and the people of the country?

Your research should help you find specifics with which to illustrate and explain the problem, its impacts, people's responses, and so on. You may want to look for statistics that quantify the problem, cases that illustrate it, news stories about it, government or non-governmental programs that address it, studies about it, and so on.

You don't have to find that capitalism is the villain, as Robbins usually does. But you do need to examine the global processes involved and the role that capitalism plays in them. You could even explain an anti-capitalist viewpoint on the subject proposed by a reasonable source (Greenpeace, Amnesty International, etc.) and argue against it, as long as you can support a reasonable alternative view of the global processes involved.

Sources: This is a research paper, based largely on information you find in at least four published sources. These may be found in books, journal articles, online databases, or internet websites, if they are academic and reputable. Be sure to properly cite all your sources of information.

Hints for finding subjects and sources: Try the SSU library's "Quicksearch" feature. Go to the SSU library home page at <http://library.sonoma.edu/> and click on "databases",

then “global studies”, “anthropology”, “economics”, “environmental studies and planning”, “geography”, “newspapers”, or another field related to a potential subject for your paper. Then look in the upper right corner and click on “Quicksearch” to get a search box that will search for your terms in a number of subject-relevant databases. You might start with the name of the country and a word or two about the issue you are considering. If you get no good hits under “global studies”, try “anthropology”, and so on. You may be surprised by what kinds of scholars have looked into your subject. Often a single good source will lead to many more through its bibliography. This takes you back in time to earlier sources.

If you find a good source in a journal, newspaper, or book (including articles in online database versions of journals), you can often also go forward in time to find other, more recent sources that have cited it while discussing the issue. To find sources that build on one that you already have, go to the SSU library home page, click on “databases”, “databases by title (A-Z)”, “S”, and scroll down to “Social Sciences Citation Index”. This can be a tremendous help in expanding your sources and knowledge of your subject.

Or ask a librarian for help, through online chat 24/7 from the library’s home page, or in person in the library. They are there to help you.

Wikipedia and other online sources: Wikipedia is useful for orienting yourself, getting ideas, and finding other sources, but it and similar sites are not acceptable sources themselves, because you cannot be confident that the information in them is correct. If you find a useful fact on Wikipedia, track down a reliable source that confirms it, and cite that source. Never cite Wikipedia or similar websites.

Always prefer sources in published articles and in scholarly databases to websites, with the exceptions of websites by major institutions like museums, government agencies, multilateral institutions, the United Nations, major advocacy groups with a reputation for reasonableness, universities, university faculty, and so on. Don’t trust tourism sites, commercial sites, religious sites, and obviously amateur sites, except as indications of what those businesses, religions, and so on are doing or promoting.

Citations: All information that is not common knowledge must be properly cited with in-text references (like (Smith 2005:12)), footnotes, or endnotes. The paper must also have a bibliography listing every source cited. Every source in the bibliography must be cited at least once in the text.

Format or style: The paper may be in any standard research paper style.

Grading: The paper is worth up to 200 points, of the 1000 possible in the course. The grading rubric is attached, to give you an idea of what I will be looking for.

Submitting the paper: Submit the paper by email to bruce.owen@sonoma.edu, as an attachment. No paper copy is involved. A good way to send it is to click “Email me!” on the class website. Being able to email files as attachments is a useful skill.

File format: Save the paper in Word 95 (.doc), Word 2000 (.doc), or Rich Text (.rtf) format. These are nearly universal formats that any word processor should be able to make and open. The command to save in these formats is often under a “Save As” menu item. Being able to share files in these formats is another useful skill.

File name: Name the file in this format:

a340-09f-1-Issue-LastnameFirstname

Replace “LastnameFirstname” with your name, last name first, capitalizing the first letter of each name. Do not use a comma in the filename, because email programs will often cut off the filename at the comma. The first part identifies the class, semester, and section. Most word processors will add a 3-letter file extension like “.doc” or “.rtf”.

Drafts: You are welcome to discuss your assignment with me or give me a draft to review before the assignment is due. My comments and suggestions may help you write a better essay and get a better grade. Please send your draft at least a few days before the deadline, so I will have time to respond and you will have time to revise. If you email a draft, please name the file as above, but add “-draft”, like

a340-09f-1-Issue-SmithJohn-draft.doc

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Points	Possible	Item
	20	Background on the issue and the country
	30	Discussion of causes of the issue
	40	Discussion of effects of the issue
	40	Themes related to globalization and/or the culture of capitalism clearly pointed out, and interpretations or explanations suggested
	20	Discussion of prospects or programs that might help the situation
	10	Cultural relativist approach, not ethnocentric
	20	At least four adequate, reliable sources of information
	10	Sources are properly cited in the text, in endnotes, or in footnotes
	10	Bibliography with all sources cited in the text (all must be cited)
		Late (-10%) or Rewrite (-20%)
	200	Total