



# Ecology, Environment, & the Anthropocene

## Term Project Guidelines

The major independent assignment of this course is the production of a creative work that is informed by research into a topic or topics that are directly related to course content. This *Term Project* will be developed throughout the semester via an incremental process of planning, drafting, and refinement. This process emphasizes thoughtful conceptualization as a means of preparing to write and make.

### Project objectives:

1. Research scientific work that is related to one or more of the *Key Questions* that form the basis of this course:
  - Your topic must be related to one or more of the *Key Questions* listed in the course syllabus. While your project need not directly answer any of these questions, it must clearly be related to one or more of these questions.
  - This term project is designed to allow you to become more knowledgeable about a subject that you are interested in. It is recommended that you carefully choose the subject matter that will become the focus of your term project. While your subject must relate to the course content, a great diversity of topics could satisfy the requirements of this project.
  - Using library and internet research, you will obtain at least SEVEN (7) related sources of scientific information (your “source list”) that are strongly connected to your chosen topic.
  - You will present your list of sources in annotated form, providing a brief summary of each source and its relevance to your interests.
2. Develop a proposal for using a creative medium to incorporate important ideas uncovered in your research:
  - Through the development and presentation of a formal proposal, you will identify particular ideas and concepts related to your chosen topic that will be incorporated into your creative work. While it is fine to have a particular medium (or even ideas for how to use that medium) in mind, the major focus of the proposal is to decide what ideas, concepts, and information will inspire your creative work. You should also identify the intended audience for your work.
  - You will produce a draft *Proposal* that will be revised based on feedback from your instructor. You also have the option of making two revisions: first one in response to feedback from the *Writing & Tutorial Center*, and then another in response to feedback from your instructor.
3. Design and complete a creative work that incorporates important ideas uncovered in your research:
  - This assignment is intended to complement your major studies, so any media that you might employ for other classes is fair game: digital art, websites, flash, animation, jewelry, an advertisement, sculpture, film/video, short stories, poems, critical analysis, graphic design, photography, painting, fashion design, architectural blueprints, prints, ‘zines, interior design, illustrations, or industrial design.
  - Before committing to hours of implementing your creative ideas, you will make a “sketch” of your planned work to present to your instructor.
  - While you will need to submit your work to your instructor, it will be returned to you within two weeks of submission.

#### 4. Explain your *Term Project* in written form:

- A *Project Summary* provides you with the opportunity to explain how you incorporated scientific information into your term project.
- You will produce a draft *Summary* that will be revised based on feedback from your instructor. You also have the option of making two revisions: first one in response to feedback from the *Writing & Tutorial Center*, and then another in response to feedback from your instructor.

#### Summary of assignments and due dates:

Assignment to be completed	Recommended Date Due	Points	% of Total
Initial Source List	[Week 05]	10	5.6%
Draft Term Project Proposal	[Week 07]	10	5.6%
Term Project Proposal <i>Presentation</i>	[Week 08]*	N/A*	N/A*
Term Project Proposal	[Week 09]	40	22.2%
Term Project Sketch	[Week 11]	10	5.6%
Draft Project Summary	[Week 12]	10	5.6%
Term Project & Term Project Summary	[Week 13]	100	55.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* This due date is inflexible: if you don't make a presentation in class on this day, you will receive a zero for this component of your *Coursework* grade (the presentation you make during this class meeting is worth ~3% of your final course grade).

#### Component Steps for Completing the Project:

##### Initial Source List:

The first step in completing your project is to identify sources you can use to inform your *Term Project*. Using search resources in the library and on the web, identify and obtain at least seven (7) sources that provide relevant information about your chosen subject. This page may help you find valuable sources: <http://www.christopherxjensen.com/teaching/for-students/#Research-res>. You are required to use at least one (1) book found in the Pratt library in your source list, and primary scientific literature will be valued over secondary or tertiary sources (especially when your source is a website). After you have identified the sources you will use, create a source list that:

- briefly describes the subject matter that will be the focus of your research and makes it clear how this topic is related to one or more of the *Key Questions* that form the basis of this course
- makes a complete citation (see *Citations* below) for each source
- provides for each source a short paragraph summarizing the important information and ideas provided by that source (this converts your *Bibliography* into an *Annotated Bibliography*)

## **Term Project Proposal:**

The purpose of submitting the *Term Project Proposal* is to distill the research you have performed into specific, clear subject matter that will be incorporated into the project. It might be valuable to imagine that you are seeking funding to support the completion of your project; your proposal should establish both *what* you want to create and *why* the work will be valuable. The proposal should cover:

- what subject matter your project will focus on;
- what you have learned through research about this subject matter;
- what important information/ideas/concepts you would like to incorporate into your creative project; and
- how you imagine you might incorporate scientific material into your creative work, who you envision as your potential audience, and perhaps what form the creative work might take.

Each *Term Project Proposal* will be accompanied by an *Annotated Bibliography* that provides for each source not only a complete citation but also a short paragraph summarizing what information/ideas/concepts this source contributed to your project. See below for exact formatting guidelines.

## **Term Project Proposal Presentations:**

During Week 08 of class you will be making a brief (5-10 minute) presentation of your *Term Project Proposal*. This presentation allows you to practice the skill of selling an idea and will also allow you to get additional feedback on your project idea before you commit to executing that idea. You will be required to give feedback to several other students in class, and in return they will provide feedback on your presentation. Unlike other components of the *Term Project*, there is a hard-and-fast deadline for this presentation: you must make it in class during Week 08, as the presentation and the feedback you provide to others represents the *Coursework* for this class session. See the *Learning Management System* for details on how to prepare your presentation before class.

## **Term Project Sketch:**

Chances are that you will spend a fair amount of time executing the creative work that will make up your *Term Project*. To make sure that this time is well spent, you will submit a “sketch” of the work you plan to execute. What constitutes a “sketch” will vary based on the kind of work you plan to do, but all sketches should include:

- a description of what medium or media you plan to use to create your work;
- a clear and specific plan for what you are going to be creating; and
- an explanation of how the work will incorporate the scientific content identified in your *Term Project Proposal*.

Feel free to discuss with your instructor what form your “sketch” should take.

## **Final Term Project:**

The overall goal of the *Term Project* is to produce a creative work that incorporates important ideas and information related to the *Key Questions* of the course. There are many subjects that can successfully serve as the focus of the project, and there are many ways of incorporating science into creative work. Remember that while the work must express scientific concepts, it need not do so on its own: the *Project Summary* can serve to explain subtle or abstract ideas that are present in the creative work. Because the final *Term Project* may take a great variety of creative forms, different students will deliver their *Final Projects* in different ways:

- If your project is purely digital, it can be directly uploaded to the *LMS*. Some movie projects may exceed the upload limit I have set on the *LMS* (100 MB), and should be uploaded to a film-streaming site such as YouTube or Vimeo (please provide the URL video in the “notes” section of the *Final Term Project* submission page on the *LMS*).
- If your project is analog, you should upload a set of at least six (6) portfolio-quality images of your work to the *LMS* as a single PDF file. In addition, you must deliver the project to your instructor. If your project is an installation and cannot be delivered, you must arrange a time for your instructor to visit your project.

### Term Project Summary:

All students will submit a *Term Project Summary* that includes an *Annotated Bibliography*. The *Term Project Summary* should:

- provide general scientific background required to understand the project;
- describe and explain the scientific information, ideas, and concepts that were incorporated into the project, using citations to indicate which sources provided particular content;
- discuss how particular creative methods were used to incorporate the information/ideas/concepts into the work; and
- identify the intended audience for the work and explain the impact that the work is designed to have on that audience.

Each *Term Project Summary* will be accompanied by an *Annotated Bibliography* that provides for each source not only a complete citation but also a short paragraph summarizing what information/ideas/concepts this source contributed to your project. See below for exact formatting guidelines.

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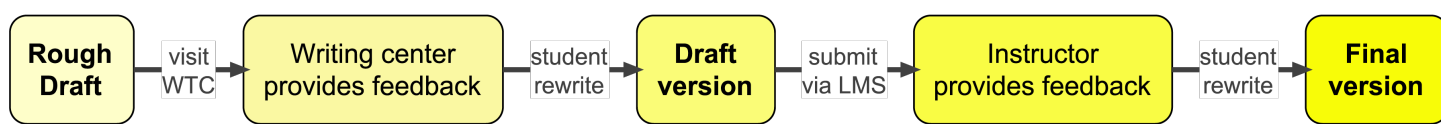
## General Guidelines for Completing the Project:

### Length requirements for the written components of this project:

1. **Proposal:** Produce at least three (3) and no more than four (4) pages of **single-spaced** text (minimum 1500 words).
2. **Summary:** Produce at least two (2) and no more than three (3) pages of **single-spaced** text (minimum 1000 words).

### Drafting and revision process for the written components of this project:

For both the *Project Proposal* and the *Project Summary*, you must perform at least one revision of your written work based on feedback that you receive on earlier drafts. This is a conceptual diagram representing the full drafting process for the two major written components of this project:



The first phase of this drafting process is optional: you will receive extra credit for visiting the *Writing & Tutorial Center* (WTC) before handing in your *Draft* to your instructor. The second phase of this

drafting process is mandatory: you must submit a *Draft* to your instructor and revise this *Draft* into a *Final* version based on the feedback that you received. Although it is expected that “revised” work will be superior to “draft” work, the term “draft” should not be construed to mean hastily-conceived, incomplete, or poorly-composed. Those students who present the best possible “draft” work will get the most out of the review and revision process.

### Visiting the *Writing & Tutorial Center (WTC)*:

On the *LMS* you will find the ***WTC Visit Form***. This form must be submitted to your instructor to establish that you have visited the *WTC* prior to submitting your draft to your instructor. The *WTC* is located on the first floor of North Hall; you can't miss its beautiful coral reef tanks. The center is open Monday through Friday for approximately forty-eight hours, so if you plan ahead you will be able to find a time to visit. You can just walk in, but making an appointment assures that you will have a writing tutor waiting for you when you arrive. You can visit the *WTC* website at <http://tinyurl.com/nfnvtww> and make an appointment by calling 718-636-3459 or sending an email to [wtc@pratt.edu](mailto:wtc@pratt.edu). Please be aware that the *WTC* does not provide proofreading services: you should bring a draft that you have already carefully reviewed for basic errors in spelling and grammar.

### Bibliography & Citations:

1. Your bibliography must contain at least seven sources. Of these sources, at least one must be from the Pratt library. Speak to your instructor if you are not clear on what this means.
2. The source of all material that is not of your own creation must be cited. This includes:
  - ★ All print media (examples: articles, books)
  - ★ All digital media (examples: websites, downloaded books and articles, podcasts)
  - ★ All images (analog or digital) other than those that you have created entirely
2. All sources in your *Bibliography* must be referenced in the text of your paper. Do not include sources that are not cited at least once.
3. In referencing your citations, use the correct number from your numbered bibliography. *For example*: “Methane released by livestock represents a major contribution to greenhouse gas emissions [6].”
4. Please use a standard bibliographical format and use it consistently. Although I am flexible about *how* you organize the information presented in each citation, there are particular pieces of information that *must* be in each citation. For help on citing properly, please see this page: <http://www.christopherxjensen.com/teaching/for-students/#citation>.
5. Please be careful about web citations. Much of what is published on the web is unreliable. It is up to you to assess the validity of all your sources.

### Format of the *Project Proposal and Summary*:

1. Please present your *Project Proposal and Summary* in type-written, **single-spaced** format. The font should be 12 point, margins should be 1” on all sides.
2. Along with the main *Project Proposal and Summary*, also provide a numbered *Annotated Bibliography* (does not count towards page minimum or maximum) that: a) lists each of the sources you used to inform your project in a standard citation format (see below); and b) provides a short paragraph summarizing what information/ideas/concepts this source contributed to your project.
3. Reference all ideas that are not your own using your numbered *Annotated Bibliography*. Both superscripts<sup>1</sup> and bracketed [2] citations are acceptable, but use a consistent format.

### **Submission of *Term Project* work:**

Unless otherwise specified, all submission of work should be done via the *Learning Management System (LMS)* in *Adobe PDF* format. Formats other than PDF will not be accepted. Analog creative work (whether it be two- or three-dimensional) must be photodocumented as described above and submitted to your instructor. See the *LMS* page describing *How to Submit Work in this Course* for submission details and specifications.

There is a 10% per day penalty imposed on late submissions of any component of this project. Although you may use some of your “allowance days” (see course syllabus) for *Term Project* components, remember that turning in earlier stages of the project will likely delay later stages, causing late penalties to accumulate. Please be aware that appointments at the *WTC* can be harder to come by as the semester progresses, and that you should expect that it will take several days for your instructor to provide you with feedback on your draft work; the due dates incorporate these inherent delays into the project workflow, but if you procrastinate it’s possible that these delays may prevent you from completing a project by the end of the term.

### **How you will be graded:**

Your grade will be primarily based on how well you meet the objectives stated above. In addition, your instructor will assess how well you expressed an understanding of biological concepts. *Your project should clearly demonstrate what you have learned in this class.* All written work is expected to use proper spelling and grammar, except where obvious and necessary creative liberties are being taken with the language. Please see the *LMS* for sample grading sheets that provide you with a precise idea of how you will be graded.

### **On academic honesty:**

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be turned over to the Registrar’s office for potential referral to the academic judiciary. Please be careful to indicate the source of all ideas other than your own; this includes both direct quotes (“evolution is the science of...”) and paraphrasing of books, scientific papers, and websites. Careful citation makes you seem more authoritative in whatever you write. For more information on the course plagiarism policy see the syllabus and this site: <http://www.christopherxjensen.com/teaching/for-students/#no-plagiarism>.