

Essays on course content

Assignment

You will write four short papers summarizing what you have learned in the class. Each paper should clearly demonstrate your ecological knowledge. These content-based papers will integrate concepts discussed in class and that you have read in the text and articles. Think of these assignments as papers describing what you learned in each section of the course, but do not limit your writing to just that section of content, though that should make up the bulk of content. Integrate new content with old and integrate concepts and content from other courses and the laboratory portion of this course into these papers, as opportunities arise. Your demonstration of content should be cumulative; in other words, demonstrate that you are constructing your own knowledge as the course progresses.

The challenge is to write a cohesive paper on the topics discussed (not all, but most). I encourage you to reflect for a while after each class and jot down thoughts that can later be integrated and organized into a cohesive paper. You should not make the paper a set of unconnected paragraphs or ideas, each one describing a separate concept, but rather you should develop a unifying thesis or idea around which you weave in the various ideas we have discussed.

Format

All papers must be **single-spaced** with 2.5 cm margins, two hard-returns between each paragraph, and your name, pledge, date, and title at the top of the first page (no title page). **Submit all papers electronically.** Name your file "lastname_content#.docx."

Plagiarism and Citations

Read carefully the Department of Biology's Statement on Plagiarism (<http://www.bio.davidson.edu/dept/plagiarism.html>). In addition to information on plagiarism, this document discusses when and how to cite sources and what information to include in a Literature Cited section. **Do not use footnotes**; use the author and year system. Citations should be in a standard and consistent format. Cite your chosen article and cite the textbook and any other sources as appropriate.

The Draft Process

I am willing to examine a polished draft of your paper (a rough draft that has clearly not been edited by you will be returned without comment). If you want to take advantage of this option you must turn the draft in to me not less than four days before the final due date. That will give me time to look at it and you time to edit it. Good writing habits include completing multiple drafts, whether you turn it in a draft to me or not. You should also seriously consider using the Writing Center.

Assessment

These exercises are worth 240 points – 60 points per essay (10% of your grade for each). You will be graded on accuracy, integration of ecological principles, as well as your writing skills. Papers will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Opening paragraph specifies thesis, objectives, unifying theme.
- Accurate content and description of ecological experiment
- Integration of ecological concepts and class material into Essay
- Well-written, and a presentation that flows well
- Organized, strong, and logical analysis of content
- References: You must cite the main article in the text and list it in a reference section. You will probably find it necessary to include other citations.