

ENCO 4362 – U.S. Energy Policy and Regulation

Term paper assignment – Overview

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENT

Your term paper should address a significant issue of current interest in U.S. energy policy or regulation. The topic may come from among topics we have discussed in the course or you may select any other current U.S. energy policy issue. Your topic selection must be approved by the instructor.

1. You may choose to write either an “editorial essay” or a “research paper.” The purpose of an editorial essay is to encourage your audience to consider (and perhaps be persuaded by) your position on an energy policy topic. The purpose of the research essay is to identify and summarize clearly the current state of knowledge on an energy policy topic.

In both cases you want to write clearly, rely on well-established facts, and present your material in a logical manner. The main differences are, for the editorial essay, the emphasis is on clear writing and persuasion, while for the research essay the emphasis is on completeness and organization.

Tell me when you select your topic whether you intend to write an editorial essay or a research paper.

2. Focus your topic. For example, not “Shale gas issues,” but maybe “Local air pollution from shale gas development” or “Pennsylvania’s natural gas severance tax debate.”
3. The paper should be about 1200 words long, the equivalent of about four and a half pages of double-spaced, standard-sized text. However, your paper may range from 1000 words to 1400 words without penalty. Papers longer or shorter than these limits will be penalized a few points.
4. You must include a title page and bibliography. Details on these and many other topics related to your term paper are included in the “Guide to Writing Term Papers in U.S. Energy Policy and Regulation” posted on the class website. You are responsible for following the guidance in both this assignment sheet and in the accompanying “Guide to Writing Term Papers.”

Note especially the guidance on citation of resources. Your writing submissions may be submitted to Turnitin.com or similar service intended to verify that you have not plagiarized others’ work and have cited sources well. You will have the ability to check your own paper using the online service prior to submitting it to me.

TASK DEADLINES:

- February 24: Task 1 – Topic submitted for approval by email, due by 6 PM.
- March 3: Task 2 – Update email including thesis statement, due by 6 PM.
- April 7: Task 3 – Finished draft, due by 6 PM.
- April 14: Task 4 – Peer review, due by 6 PM.
- May 4: Task 5 – Final term paper, due Midnight.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS BY TASK

Task 1 – Topic approval. You may write on any current topic in the realm of U.S. energy policy or regulation. You must have your topic approved by Dr. Giberson. Submit your proposed topic to Dr. Giberson via email no later than 6 PM on February 24. Submit your topic early and get a head start!

Your email should identify your topic, let me know whether you intend to write an editorial essay or a research essay, and provide a one- or two-sentence description. For example your email may say:

Proposed topic: Offshore areas currently off-limits to oil and gas development.

Research Essay.

The paper will summarize the policy history that lead to portions of offshore territory to be off-limits for oil and gas development, then describe the current issues relevant to debates to open up these territories for leasing. Beach tourism appears to be a critical factor for many states.

Task 2 – Update email. Send me an email by 6 PM on March 3 with an update on your early progress. Your “update” should contain a thesis statement (as described in the “Guide to Writing Term Papers”) and a brief description of the research you have done up to that point, including a list of articles you’ve reviewed and ideas you have come across.

Task 3 – Finished draft. Send me a finished draft (including title page and bibliography) through email by 6 PM on April 7.

Task 4 – Peer review and comments. You will be assigned to read and comment upon two of your classmates’ draft papers. Comments on your classmates papers will be due to me by 6 PM on April 14. I will review the comments and forward them to the author.

Task 5 – Final term paper. Send me a new and improved version of your paper. After getting comments from your classmates and me, you’ll have a little more time to work and think about your paper. Make it better, then turn it in by Midnight, May 4.

A research essay may include tables, charts, or other images inline in the text or on separate pages. (Editorial essays limited to text.) The title page, bibliography, and any chart and caption text do not count toward the required word count.

Your draft and the final paper should be submitted in Microsoft Word format.

GRADING:

Tasks 1 and 2 are not separately graded, but late submissions on these tasks will be penalized up to five points of your term paper grade. Task 3, the finished draft, is 60 percent; task 4, peer review, is 10 percent; and task 5, the final term paper, is 30 percent of your term paper grade.

The term paper grade counts as 25 percent of your overall course grade.