

Your final essay should be a deeper consideration of an issue that you have already written about generally. In the three formal essays that you wrote on Computers, Medicine, and the Environment, your writing was shaped primarily by the literature that we have read. In your final essay, your writing should be shaped primarily by a particular issue that you want to consider.

The challenge is to adopt a more participatory tone, join the conversation, make a pitch for a better understanding of science, technology, and society. Alternately, make a pitch for a position or an action that can be promoted on an individual, local, national, or global level. All of the reading and writing that we have done together will form the sturdy foundation on which this argument will rest – you will still be expected to address the literature we have read, but will only need to do so insofar as the literature is relevant to your essay.

The key distinction between the final essay and the earlier essays is that the issue that you identify and develop will be one that interests you (as opposed to ideas that exist in the literature we've read). You should still ask yourself questions about how theory and policy studies shape your understanding of the issue, but your focus should be on what *you* want to add to the conversation, not on what others have already said.

You will need to consult appropriate outside sources to do this. The tone, scope, and aim of your thesis will tell you what sorts of sources to seek out. If you want to argue for better understanding of an issue, then you will need to seek out review articles in scientific and technical journals; if you want to argue for local or national policy change, you will need to seek out the relevant current policies.

As an ideal, imagine yourself writing an essay that will be part of the assigned reading the next time the seminar is offered. Your essay should be 8-12 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins and a reasonable sized font). Quotations are *not* necessary, but if you use them, be sure to cite them properly. Evidence of outside sources *is* necessary, as is a formal bibliography.

Each essay in the seminar must be distinct – I encourage you to register your topic with me as soon as you have settled on it, but certainly no later than May 11 so that we can prevent duplication of efforts.

This assignment is not vague; it is open-ended.

It is your responsibility to find a worthwhile issue.

It is your responsibility to create a structure for your essay that will allow you to explore this issue in a meaningful way.

It is my responsibility to help you through that process.

If at any stage of this project you don't feel that you understand what to do, let me know.

The final draft is due Tuesday May 23.