

## **METR/ENVS 113: Assignment 3 (Spring 2011)**

**Due Date: May 10, 2011 (Tuesday)**

Write a 2-3 page paper (excluding outline on first page, figures, tables, and references) on a topic related to air pollution, climate change, or energy-environment-economy motivated by a recent news story. A file directory containing a number of news stories I have downloaded over the past year is available for you to download from the course web site. You can browse these stories to identify a story of interest to you, or you can find one on your own.

The content of your paper will be additional details about the topic of the news story that come from material you have obtained independently. If possible try to obtain this information from official source documentation (documents, reports, papers concerning the topic from EPA, CARB, BAAQMD, NOAA, NASA, etc ...). Other sources may be the research journal article(s) cited in the news story, particularly if the story is about a recent research finding from, say, a university or a government research laboratory.

Another good source for information on a specific air pollutant (aside from carbon dioxide) is the Agency of Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Google 'ATSDR <name of pollutant>' to obtain the "toxicological profile" of the pollutant, which gives information about sources, industrial uses of chemical, air releases, health effects and other stuff.

Details you will be looking for in your independently obtained material may involve issues relating to regulation, how a research study was designed, more details about research findings than would have been presented in the news story, or additional background about the science relating to the topic in the news story than would have been presented in the story.

### **Requirements**

1. Final paper is to be submitted both through turnitin.com and as a hardcopy in class on the due date. For turnitin.com, the classid (METR/ENVS113) is 3911707 and the password is 'airpollution'
2. In your write-up, **present and discuss at least one visual, preferably up to three if possible**. These can be graphs, pie-charts, tables, or anything else that provides substantive information. The visuals must come from the documentation you have obtained independently – not the news story motivating your paper and not from my lecture notes. Reference and explain the meaning of the visual presented and why it is relevant to the point you are making.
3. Provide an outline of the paper at the beginning of your paper (on Page 1). This will be similar in structure to what I had on the PM2.5 Assignment #2 instructions. Roman numeral 'I' in the outline should be 'Introduction', where you say what news story you have chosen (cite story and provide reference in reference list), why you have chosen it, and its relevance to air pollution. Roman numeral 'II' should be 'Background', where you give a short background discussion on the basic topic involved in the news story and the air pollutant(s) involved (ATSDR could be helpful here if the topic is something other than carbon dioxide).

For example, if the news story involves some issue regarding climate change then the background discussed in section II Roman numeral 'II' would be on what climate change is. The remaining parts of the paper can be organized as you see fit.

4. Your paper should be organized into separate sections according to your outline (see item 3 above), with sections appropriately titled and very clearly formatted (font size, font type, numbering system) so that the beginning of a new section is very clear to the reader. Please use page breaks to prevent new sections from beginning near the bottom of a page. This assignment should be about 2 – 3 pages excluding visuals, using 1.5 inch spacing and standard size margins.
5. See course greensheet for general writing instructions. **I do** grade on presentation, spelling, punctuation, etc ... as well as content. This is to be “final product” quality work, not “rough draft”. However, no cover page or other things (“pretty fonts”) should be included to embellish the visual presentation of the work. Leave it fairly generic and bland ... just no typos, spelling errors, inconsistent margins and indentations, etc ... (!).
6. Write in a manner that is targeted towards a general reader (i.e. not me). See ‘requirements’ below for additional instructions.
7. Try to avoid using semi colons (;). Separate sentences should be used instead. Rarely is a semi-colon necessary, and in many cases in my reading of course papers these are not used correctly (often in place of commas)
8. Obviously, this assignment is more open-ended as to what you will write about than in the two previous assignments. Please see me to discuss if there are any questions or to see if you are heading in the right direction. Note due date above – try to avoid starting this the “last minute”.

## **Objectives**

1. To develop your ability, through researching and independently obtained source documents, to obtain a deeper understanding of an issue than is presented in a news story. From what you have learned about air pollution, climate change and energy-environment-economy issues in this class to date (and to come in the next few weeks), you have more background than the typical person has to understand the official documentation to give you this deeper understanding. By doing this paper, you will see this for yourself.
2. To further familiarize yourself with material provided by official agencies (EPA, CARB, BAAQMD, NASA, NOAA, others) on air pollution and related subjects.
3. To further develop the practice of substantiating statements by presenting and referencing data from official sources.
4. To further develop technical and scientific writing skills.