

**GGRA03: Cities and Environments**  
**Spring Term 2017**  
**ASSIGNMENT 2 – Major Paper Proposal (10%) – Due February 28<sup>th</sup>**

This assignment is meant to get you thinking about your major paper by choosing a topic and finding initial sources on that topic. Submitting a proposal in advance of writing your major paper will also allow your TA to give comments about your intended argument, the proposed structure of your essay, and the quality of the sources you have chosen. This will help you refine, focus, and strengthen your research and writing.

**SKILL BUILDING GOALS → Designing an Essay and Finding Academic Sources**

**Detailed instructions:**

- 1) **Pick a general topic** for your major paper based on one of the articles below:
  - Cities tackling climate change:  
<https://www.thestar.com/business/2015/11/27/cities-take-lead-in-climate-change-battle.html>
  - Park equity:  
<https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/10/15/the-ugliest-side-of-torontos-ravines.html>
  - Urban environments and mental health:  
<https://lsecities.net/media/objects/articles/urban-stress-and-mental-health/en-gb/>
  - Measuring the many benefits of urban trees:  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/torontos-urban-forest-worth-7-billion-report-says/article19071376/>
- 2) Once you have selected your topic and read the associated newspaper article, **narrow your focus a bit more** by identifying a **specific angle, issue, or related theme** that interests you. (*For instance, if you picked the topic of climate change and cities, you may decide to focus on green municipal transit initiatives.*)  
  
This may require brainstorming and preliminary research. If you are having trouble choosing a topic, or want to make sure your focus is appropriate, consider attending your TA's office hours.
- 3) Use the University of Toronto Library's "[Advanced Article Search](#)" feature, alongside [Geography](#) or [Social Science](#) databases, to **find three academic sources** (scholarly journal articles and/or books) on your topic that you will use to develop and support your own argument in your final paper.

Refer to the January 17<sup>th</sup> tutorial exercise ("Selecting, Paraphrasing, Quoting, & Referencing Sources in the Social Sciences") if you are unsure whether a source is **academic** in nature.

Make sure the references you select are related in some way to your ideas and the points you wish to make in your final paper. For instance, the readings you pick may offer evidence to support your own position on the topic, or provide counter-arguments you would like to challenge. *Avoid using articles that are easy to locate but are tangential or only loosely related to your topic.*

**Writing your proposal**

- 4) Drawing on your chosen academic sources, write a **research proposal (3-4 pages)** that includes the following:
  - a. A **brief introduction** to your chosen topic and a **clear, draft thesis statement that explains the main argument that you plan to make in your paper**. This section should be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 full page in length, and should address the following questions:
    - What is the specific angle, issue, or theme(s) that you aim to explore in your research paper?

- Why have you chosen this topic as your focus? Why is it interesting, important, or timely?
- What is your preliminary argument or thesis? What will you want to “show” or “argue” (or, what “case” will you want to make) in your final paper?
  - *At this stage, consider your thesis a draft or a work-in-progress. It may change as you do additional research, think more about your topic, and get feedback on your work from your TA. This is a normal part of the research process.*

b. **A 1-page outline that illustrates how you plan to support your main argument.** Consider the following:

- How will you structure your paper (i.e., major sections)?
- What specific points or examples do you plan to discuss in each section of your essay?
- How will these sections, or the points or examples you have chosen, support your thesis?

c. **An annotated bibliography that lists three academic sources you will use and states how you will draw on each of them in your final paper.** This part of your proposal should be between 1 and 1.5 pages in length. For each academic source, provide:

- A complete bibliographic reference in APA format;
  - *List your references in alphabetical order by author’s last name, as you would with a typical bibliography.*
- A short description (2-3 sentences) of the reading, succinctly summarizing its main argument, ideas, or findings;
- A brief indication (2-3 sentences) of why you think this source will be helpful for your paper or how you plan to use it to help make your own argument.

d. **If applicable, a reference list that contains bibliographic details for any additional academic (i.e., beyond the required three) or non-academic sources you have used in your proposal.** It is completely fine to simply use three academic readings in your paper; however, you may come across other scholarly pieces you would like to refer to, or find newspaper articles/government reports that contain examples, facts, ideas, or concepts that you would like to cite. You are welcome to use these materials, provided that they are in addition to the required three academic sources. Simply list these works in proper APA format at the end of your proposal. You do not need to provide annotations.

**In writing your proposal, you may find it useful to refer back to the Skills Development Guides and Exercises discussed in tutorial, specifically the handouts on:**

- “Selecting, Paraphrasing, Quoting, & Referencing Sources in the Social Sciences” (Jan. 17)
- “How to Formulate an Effective Research Proposal” (Jan. 24)
- “How to Write a Strong Thesis Statement and Paper Outline” (Jan. 31)

- 5) No title page is needed for this assignment, but please ensure your formatting includes:
  - 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with page numbers provided;
  - Complete references in APA format for all sources drawn upon, paraphrased, or quoted. It is important to properly cite, and your grade will reflect this. See the tutorial exercises from Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> or the [University of Toronto’s website](#) for more information on this referencing style;
  - Your name, tutorial group, student number, and “Assignment 2” at the top of the page;
  - No more than 4 pages.
- 6) Your grade will be based on the appropriateness of your topic, the clarity of your proposed structure and argument, your selection and use of academic sources, the effectiveness of your annotations and citations, and overall presentation (including spelling and grammar). **Your assignment is due at 11:59pm on February 28<sup>th</sup> on BOTH the Blackboard site and TurnItIn. Remember to name your Word document as follows: LastName\_FirstName\_A2.docx.**