

HSTR 207CS: Science and Technology in World History Contemporary Issues in Science Assignment

Overview of assignment

According to the MSU Bulletin, Contemporary Issues in Science courses (CS) are focused “on the ways in which science contributes to the study of significant problems in the contemporary world, and can help individuals and society make informed decisions about these issues.” In order to do this, CS courses examine “the history of particular contemporary scientific issues and the ways in which truths or assumptions about these issues have changed over time. They might examine the social and political consequences of scientific and technological discoveries, or ethical issues arising from their use, or how science and scientific methods can aid public, personal, and professional decision-making.”

The goal of this assignment is to write a paper that analyzes a current issue that pertains to modern science. Using the tools and knowledge provided to you in this course, you should frame your paper within the common themes of our class – technological fixes, socio-trophic cascades, the role of history, ecological model, the impact of social forces on science, and the impact of science on broader culture. To this end, throughout the semester you should keep an active eye on current science news. Try to find articles that share a common theme and are of interest to you. Your analysis should reveal and explain multiple perspectives on the problem, including how those who hold strong opinions on the issue use science to support their arguments. Your paper should also explain how history sheds light on the current issue. This paper represents 30% of your grade, so ask questions, start early, and have fun.

Assignments for Writing Studios

Writing Studio I	(Oct 1):	No Writing, just brainstorming ideas
Writing Studio II	(Oct 15):	Topic, Sources, and Your Ideas
Writing Studio III	(Oct 29):	The Role of History
Writing Studio IV	(Nov 12):	Prospectus
Writing Studio V	(Nov 26):	Rough Draft

How to do the assignment –

1. Pick a topic related to modern science. Once you identify a topic, begin reading broadly to determine how the issue is being discussed and analyzed.
2. In writing the paper, you should explain what the issue is regarding your topic and how it fits into the theme(s) in the course. You should include how historical analysis can help discern the nature of the issue.
3. You will need to use at minimum five sources to write this paper, in addition to the readings assigned in this course. Since this paper is on a contemporary issue, your sources must be from the last five years.
4. Your essay should be five pages in length (about 1,500 words) and should be typed and double-spaced with standard margins and standard 12-point font.
5. All evidence must be properly cited. You can use either footnotes or in-text citations. You must include a bibliography of all your citations. I prefer that you use Chicago style. I have included a summary style sheet for Chicago style on the resource webpage for the course.
6. **Your paper is due on Tuesday, December 3rd.** No late papers will be accepted.