

PPA 220B – APPLIED ECONOMIC ANALYSIS II

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
SPRING 2012

Professor: Rob Wassmer, Ph.D.

E-Mail: rwassme@csus.edu

Home-Page: http://www.csus.edu/indiv/w/wassmerr/

Class Location: Thursday, 6:00 p.m. - 8:50 p.m., 1051 Folsom Hall

Office: Room 3037 Tahoe Hall

Office Phone: (916) 278-6304

Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.; and by appointment if necessary

Prerequisite: Grade of B- or higher in PPA 220A.

Required Texts:

(1) Cost-Benefit Analysis for Public Sector Decision Makers, (required) Diana Fuguitt and Shanton J. Wilcox, Quorum Books; can be purchased at CSUS bookstore or at Amazon.com (click the previous link to purchase there @ $75 used);

(2) Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming, (required) Bjorn Lomborg, Knopf; can be purchased at CSUS bookstore or at Amazon.com (click the previous link to purchase there @ $7.95 used);

(3) Falling Behind, Robert Frank, (suggested) UC Press; can be purchased at CSUS bookstore or at Amazon.com (click the previous link to purchase there @ $7.24 used);

(4) After the Revolt: CA’s Proposition 13, (suggested) Edited by Jack Citron and Isaac Martin, Berkeley Public Policy Press; can be purchased at CSUS bookstore or at Amazon.com (click the previous link to purchase there @ $17.50 used);

(5) Pension Reform: A Short Guide, (suggested) Nicholas Barr and Peter Diamond, Oxford University Press; can be purchased at CSUS bookstore or at Amazon.com (click the previous link to purchase there @ 21.07 used);

There are also supplemental readings assigned throughout the semester. These are in the schedule below. Copies of these readings are available directly from the Internet (an electronic link is provided below) or at the library’s reserve room. (I apologize for the
need for you to copy documents from the reserve room, but I have done this in order to save you the expense of having to buy an entire book.)

WebCT:

This course requires that you have access to the World Wide Web and WebCT. If you do not have an account at home or work that allows this, you can get one through CSUS. On WebCT I will post an outline of material covered in each meeting. These will be available by the Tuesday afternoon before the class meets. Your grades will also be accessible through WebCT.

Course Objectives:

At the end of PPA 220B, a student that attends all meetings will:

(1) Understand the basic process of how to conduct a benefit/cost assessment and have a working knowledge of some of the specific techniques necessary to do it.

(2) Learn to apply the concepts of benefit/cost assessment to a particular California public policy (Climate Change) and to appreciate this policy tool’s relevance to gaining a better understanding of how to structure a policy intervention.

(3) Be able to apply a specific public policy “tool” (Munger’s Triangle, Government Failure, Comparative Institutional Analysis, Microeconomic Based Market Analysis, Market Failure Approach, etc.) to a California relevant public policy concern in order to gain a better understanding of how “best” to deal with it.

(4) Gain a greater comfort in your ability to make a public presentation and engage in a public discussion on a public policy topic.

This course exposes you to the basic study and application of public economics and benefit/cost analysis to public policy applications specific to California. You will learn and apply theoretical concepts; however, keep in mind that the goal in doing so is in your ability to better understand, analyze, and critique existing and proposed public policies.

Method:

This class will have two distinct halves. The first half will be coverage of benefit/cost analysis for public policy formulation and evaluation, with an application of these concepts to climate change and California policy approaches to it. I will be responsible for this in the form of lectures, classroom activities, and homework assignments. The details on this are in meetings two through nine below. For each of these classes you should bring your own laptop with Excel installed. If you do not have this, please make an arrangement to share with another student.
For the second half of the course I am turning it over to you to practice what Mintrom described in his book’s Chapter 6 as “Presenting Policy Advice.” Each group of six students will be responsible for 1.5 class meetings of coverage on one of four policy topics that the class selected: (1) Income Inequality and California Taxation, (2) Proposition 13 and California Local Governance, (3) Pension Reform in California, and (4) The Impact of Immigration on California. In these 1.5 class meetings, students will cover: (A) a historical look at the institutions, politics, demographics, etc. that led to this overall policy concern in California, (B) the Munger Triangle approach on how to think about government intervention on your topic, (C) the Mintrom approach to thinking about potential governmental failure when intervention in your policy topic occurs, (D) the Mintrom approach of comparative institutional analysis on how to intervene in your policy area, (E) the Hill/Myatt microeconomic and/or Mintrom analysis of markets/market failure approach to thinking about public policy in your issue area, and (F) a cost-benefit approach to thinking about government intervention in this policy area.

These 1.5 unit class meetings are equivalent to 250 minutes of class time divided between 170 minutes on the first night and 80 minutes on the second. The first night will consist of either six or three, 25 minute PowerPoint based presentations (no more than 15 slides per presentation) that involve 15 minutes of presentation and 10 minutes of discussion that each student in a policy area group will lead. At the end of the first night’s presentation, the group as a whole will assign a homework question for the class that is due the next time the class meets. On the second night of presentation, the group will begin with the remaining three presentations (if necessary) and a 15 minute small group discussion of homework question. They will then offer an outside speaker(s) to talk on the topic for 60 minutes.

If there are concepts or ideas covered in a Thursday night session that you did not understand, it is important to your overall success that you get these misunderstandings resolved before the next time we meet. You can do this by talking to your fellow classmates (I encourage you to form study groups or electronic study networks), visiting me in my Thursday office hours, sending an e-mail question to me at rwassme@csus.edu (please do not send by WebCT because I check less often), or phoning me at 278-6304. My promise to you is that if I am not in my office, I will respond to your Monday through Friday e-mail or phone call within 24 hours.

Questions, comments, and discussion about material assigned for a Thursday night class are always encouraged during that class. In office hours I am pleased to discuss a suggestion on how the class is taught, economics and public policy in general, the MPPA or MULD programs, or your career plans. To insure an adequate participation grade, please plan on stopping by to visit me at least once during my office hours. This is especially essential so I can offer advice on your PowerPoint presentation.

Students will need to come well prepared to class in the form of completing all reading assignments, looking over my notes, and being prepared to participate in the class discussion. I will not hesitate to call on students who do not voluntarily participate.
Grading:

The grade you receive in this course comes from five different components. The first component counts 40 percent and is the average of grades assigned in 13 weekly homework assignments. The first homework assignment (due at our second meeting) is in the schedule below. The remaining assignments are on SacCT. The second counts 15 percent and is my evaluation of your PowerPoint presentation. The third counts 15 percent and is the students’ evaluation of your PowerPoint presentation. The fourth counts 20 percent and is my evaluation of your portion of policy white paper. The fifth counts 10 percent and is based upon the grade I assign for your class participation. You must complete all of the first four components of grading in order to receive a passing grade in this class.

See the appendix to this syllabus for the rubrics I will use for grading your homework, your presentations, and written section in your group’s white paper.

Some grades are based on the following table:

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<tr>
<th>Percent Correct</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Number Grade</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>84-81</td>
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<td>76-73</td>
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Academic Honesty

When you do any writing for this class, or any class at Sacramento State, it is important that you are aware of what plagiarism is, and how its practice can become grounds for dismissal from the university. Details are available at the University Policy Manual found at [http://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/UMA00150.htm](http://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/UMA00150.htm). The following is directly from this manual:
**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At CSUS plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporation of another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge. Plagiarism at CSUS includes but is not limited to:

1. The act of incorporating into one’s own work the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work without giving appropriate credit thereby representing the product as entirely one’s own. Examples include not only word-for-word copying, but also the "mosaic" (i.e., interspersing a few of one's own words while, in essence, copying another's work), the paraphrase (i.e., rewriting another's work while still using the other's fundamental idea or theory); fabrication (i.e., inventing or counterfeiting sources), ghost-writing (i.e., submitting another's work as one's own) and failure to include quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged; and
2. Representing as one's own another's artistic or scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works.

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**Schedule:**

This class will meet a total of 15 times throughout the semester. The readings for each meeting are below. **I reserve the right to add additional readings to those listed below as long as I give them to you at least a week before we meet.**

The first week is unique in that I am out of town and you will be on your own to choose your policy topic, choose your group, and start planning your responsibilities for the second half of the class.

**Meeting 1 (Jan 26)**

I am out of town at a Boston-based policy conference. I will try to participate in the class through SKYPE. I will also arrange a student facilitator to coordinate. Instructions on how to proceed in class are below. **Two “bad” things happen if you miss this first class.** First, you lose some major class participation points. Second, you will be assigned a remaining coverage area for a policy topic you had no choice in.

You have **four policy topics** to choose from: (1) Income Inequality and California Taxation, (2) Proposition 13 and California Local Governance, (3) Pension Reform in California, and (4) The Impact of Immigration on California. You must only choose one
of them. Since there are approximately 24 students in the class, there will be six people working on each of these topics in the form of the following categories. Coverage area (A) that must always be chosen.

The topics of **coverage areas for each policy** that needs to be completed on each of these topics are: (A) a historical look at the institutions, politics, demographics, etc. that led to this overall policy concern in California that is supported with empirical evidence in the form of data presented in figures that would make Tufte proud – the person who chooses this broad coverage area will also be responsible for writing an introduction and conclusion for the groups’ compiled paper, overall coordination of project, and securing an outside speaker for class, (B) the Munger Triangle approach on how to think about government intervention on your topic, (C) the Mintrom approach to thinking about potential governmental failure when intervention in your policy topic occurs, (D) the Mintrom approach of comparative institutional analysis on how to intervene in your policy area, (E) the Hill/Myatt microeconomic and/or Mintrom analysis of markets/market failure approach to thinking about public policy in your issue area, and (F) a cost-benefit approach to thinking about government intervention in this policy area.

Tasks completed tonight include:

1. Begin by dividing yourselves into four groups that represent the **four policy topics** given above. There can be no more than 6 people in a group because there are only six **coverage areas for each policy**. You should first try to accomplish this by consensus. I suggest that you rank your preference for each of the four policy topics before entering class. Then all who chose (1) as their first choice policy topic should reveal themselves. If more than six emerge, offer the option to give up your first choice and be guaranteed your second policy choice. If this does not work, then eliminate some through random process (coin flip).

2. Once you have no more than six in each of the **four policy topics** groups, then break off into these groups and within this group again rank your choices from one to six on the (A) through (F) **coverage areas for each policy**. Follow the same process as suggested above to get each of these A-F coverage areas done. The one that definitely needs to be done is (A). The one who takes this on should be confident in their organization and leadership skills because much of what they need to do is to envision and coordinate the oral and paper presentations required for each policy topic (see Mintrom Chapters 5 and 6).

3. Come up with a list of students in the class and their assignment in regard to coverage areas A-F for policy topics 1-4. Each student who has taken on (A) should email me this completed list on Friday January 26.

4. Spend the remaining time in class (as a policy group) looking over the background reading I have provided below on each policy topic and surfing the web and the Sac State Library’s Literature bases to find further relevant info to look at.

*Your assignment for next week is to find two new pieces of reference literature (different than I list below) that offers some desired background on the policy topic and
coverage area you are working in. Make paper copies of these two pieces of reference literature and attach them to a two-page, double-spaced, and typed memo (in the form used for PPA 220A) that lists the policy topic and coverage area you have chosen, and then describe in one-page each why the two chosen reference articles are appropriate. This is due at the start of Feb. 2 class.

Meeting 2 (Feb. 2)

FugWil (Chapter 1) - A History of Application
FugWil (Chapter 2) - The Decision Maker, the Analyst, and Cost-Benefit Analysis
FugWil (Chapter 3) - Policy Advocates and Adversaries
Lomborg – *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming*, Ch. 2
“It’s Getting Hotter: The Short Story”

Meeting 3 (Feb. 9)

FugWil (Chapter 4) - Economics and Cost-Benefit Analysis
FugWil (Chapter 5) - Economic Valuation of Individual Preferences
FugWil (Chapter 6) - Who is Society?

Meeting 4 (Feb. 16)

FugWil (Chapter 7) - With and Without Analysis
FugWil (Chapter 8) - Aggregate Benefits and Costs
FugWil (Chapter 9) - Present Value of Benefits and Costs Over Time
Meeting 5 (Feb. 23)

FugWil (Chapter 10) - Decision Criteria

FugWil (Chapter 11) - Discount Rate

FugWil (Chapter 12) - Inflation


Meeting 6 (March 1)

FugWil (Chapter 13) - Time Horizon

FugWil (Chapter 14) - Uncertainty and Risk

FugWil (Chapter 15) – Principles of Cost-Benefit Analysis


Meeting 7 (March 8)

FugWil (Chapter 16) - Identifying Benefits and Costs

FugWil (Chapter 17) - Market Valuation

FugWil (Chapter 18) - Contingent Valuation


Meeting 8 (March 15)

FugWil (Chapter 19) - Travel Cost Method

FugWil (Chapter 20) - Hedonic Pricing Method

FugWil (Chapter 21) - Valuation of Human Life

**Meeting 9 (March 29)**

FugWil (Chapter 22) - Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

FugWil (Chapter 23) – Principles for Identifying and Valuing Benefits and Costs

Bjorn Lomborg – *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming*, Ch. 5 “Conclusion: Making Our Top Priorities Cool”

**Meeting 10 (April 5)**

**Proposition 13 and CA Local Governance**

Six (A-F) students, 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions

**Suggested Background Reading** for Proposition 13 and CA Local Governance

Citrin and Martin, *After the Tax Revolt: California’s Proposition 13*

Shrag – "The Spirit of 13" - *Paradise Lost: CA’s Experience, America’s Future* (on reserve at library)

Wassmer: “Urban Devolution and Metropolitan Local Governance in California's Next Half Century of Growth,”
http://www.csus.edu/indiv/w/wassmerr/urbandev.pdf

Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, http://www.hjta.org

*Prop 13 student group assigns hw question through SacCT*

**Meeting 11 (April 12)**

**Proposition 13 and CA Local Governance**

15 minute small group, student led discussion of hw question

One hour presentation on topic by outside speaker(s) arranged by students

**Pension Reform in CA**

Three students (A-C), 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions
Suggested Background Reading for Pension Reform in CA

Barr and Diamond, *Pension Reform: A Short Guide*


California Pension Reform Links, [http://californiapensionreform.com](http://californiapensionreform.com)

**Pension Reform student group assigns hw question through SacCT**

**Meeting 12 (April 19)**

**Pension Reform in CA**

Three students (D-F), 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions

15 minute small group, student led discussion of hw question

One hour presentation on topic by outside speaker(s), arranged by students

**Meeting 13 (April 26)**

**Income Inequality and California Taxation**

Six (A-F) students, 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions

Suggested Background Reading for Income Inequality and California Taxation

Frank, *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class*


Meeting 14 (May 3)

Income Inequality and California Taxation
15 minute small group, student led discussion of hw question
One hour presentation on topic by outside speaker(s) arranged by students

Impact of Immigration on California
Three student (A-C), 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions

Suggested Background Reading for Impact of Immigration in California

PPIC, “Illegal Immigration,” [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/atissue/AI_711HJA1.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/atissue/AI_711HJA1.pdf)


PPIC – “California’s Newest Immigrants” - [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/caccounts/CC_1103LHCC.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/caccounts/CC_1103LHCC.pdf)


NPR, “Hidden Benefits and Costs of Illegal Immigration,”

WSJ, “Costs and Benefits of Immigration,”
http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2006/06/econoblog_the_c.html


Immigration student group assigns hw question through SacCT

Meeting 15 (May 10)

Impact of Immigration on California
Three students (D-F), 15 minute each PowerPoint presentations and 10 minute each discussions
15 minute small group, student led discussion of hw question
One hour presentation on topic by outside speaker(s), arranged by students

Final White Paper Due (May 17)

Project leader in charge of (A) should gather all sections, organize into a White Paper on the policy topic and submit paper copy to my Tahoe 3037 Office by 6 pm. An electronic copy should also be sent. Grades will be assigned separately for each student section of White Paper and for the paper as a whole.
Grading Rubric for Weekly Homework Questions

PPA 220B
Spring 2012

Excellent = 10, Good = 9, Acceptable = 8, Needs Improvement = 7, Poor = 6, Absent = 0

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<tr>
<th>Required Content</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name and discussion question at top of document that is no more than two typed pages long, with one inch margins and 11 font</td>
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<td>Begins with an appropriate introductory paragraph that describes topic and layout of write-up</td>
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<td>Finishes with an appropriate concluding paragraph that summarizes answer to discussion question asked</td>
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<td>Paragraphs and transitions between them flow smoothly</td>
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<td>Appropriate writing style and language use for a college educated reader not familiar with the topic</td>
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<td>No grammar or spelling errors</td>
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<td>Answer appropriately draws upon outside material relevant to the discussion question and cites this material using APA style</td>
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<td>Answer appropriately addresses discussion question by drawing upon assigned reading related to it (Three times other values)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
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Total score (100 possible)
Presenter Name:_________________________________  Grade: ____________

Grading Rubric for Student PowerPoint Presentations

PPA 220B

Spring 2012

Excellent = 10, Good = 9, Acceptable = 8, Needs Improvement = 7, Poor = 6, Absent = 0

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<td>Clarity/organization in presenting material through PowerPoint</td>
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<td>Ability to engage the audience in discussion</td>
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<td>Handling of questions</td>
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<td>Ability to stay within the allotted time frame and cover material effectively</td>
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<td>(15 minutes for PowerPoint, 10 minutes for discussion)</td>
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<td>“Comfort” level displayed in public speaking</td>
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<td>45</td>
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Total score (100 possible)
White Paper Assignment

PPA 220B – Fall 2012 – Professor Rob Wassmer
Due May 17, 2011 at 6 p.m.
One Grade Deduction for Every Day Late
Submit a Paper Copy under My Office Door and an Electronic Copy to rwassme@csus.edu

Overview

You are to write no more than an eight-page, typed, and double-spaced section of a White Paper (11 Times New Roman Font) on one of four possible policy topics: (1) Income Inequality and California Taxation, (2) Proposition 13 and California Local Governance, (3) Pension Reform in California, and (4) The Impact of Immigration on California.

Within one of these policy topics, you will cover one chosen area: (A) a historical look at the institutions, politics, demographics, etc. that led to this overall policy concern in California that is supported with empirical evidence in the form of data presented in figures that would make Tufte proud – the person who chooses this broad coverage area will also be responsible for putting the White Paper together and a four page introduction and four page conclusion/summary of other students’ work, (B) the Munger Triangle approach on how to think about government intervention on your topic, (C) the Mintrom approach to thinking about potential governmental failure when intervention in your policy topic occurs, (D) the Mintrom approach of comparative institutional analysis on how to intervene in your policy area, (E) the Hill/Myatt microeconomic and/or Mintrom analysis of markets/market failure approach to thinking about public policy in your issue area, and (F) a cost-benefit approach to thinking about government intervention in this policy area.

I will use the rubric contained on the next page to score your assignment and assign it a grade. Pay careful attention to what this rubric is asking for and the further instructions offered below.

Note that this assignment is a highly collaborative effort. Thus the final grade you receive upon it based half on your section of the paper, and half on the grades earned by others in your group on their sections. Thus I suggest sharing drafts of your section with others in your policy group and getting, and offering feedback on it.

Instructions

You should structure your section of the White Paper as an essay with an appropriate cover page, introductory section that describes what is in the essay, section headings that cover the requested material, and a concluding section. You will need a reference list at the end and citations must be in APA style (http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/apagd.php). Tables and figures should be included in an appendix to the essay and they do not count toward your eight-page limit. I will not read beyond eight pages. (Your cover page and reference list is not part of this eight-page limit.) Other than these constraints, including the mandatory components described below, the remaining form of the write up is up to you. The person working on (A) will compile your references into a final reference list for the entire paper. They will also compile your figures/tables/charts into an appendix for the entire White Paper.
Grading Rubric for Final Policy White Paper  
PPA 220B, Spring 2012

Excellent = 10, Good = 9, Acceptable = 8, Needs Improvement = 7, Poor = 6, Absent = 0

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<th>Required Content</th>
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<td>Development and organization: appropriate introduction and conclusion, organization of section (or entire paper for (A)) clearly described in introduction and done as stated</td>
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<td>Writing mechanics: grammar, word choice, and sentence structure</td>
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<td>Presentation: appropriate and attractive format</td>
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<td>Citations: accurate citations and listing of references using APA style</td>
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<td>Integration of your section into all of White Paper</td>
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<td>Command of the material/knowledge of the subject (Five times other values): how well do you do at covering the approach assigned to your section</td>
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<td>45</td>
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Your Total Score (100 Possible)

Your Grade

Grades of Others in Your Group

Average Grade of all Others in Your Group

Your Grade * .5

Average Grade of Others in Your Group * .5

FINAL GRADE