What are they?
The purpose of the position paper is to allow you the opportunity to explore in greater depth an issue or idea introduced in the lecture and/or readings by taking a position and arguing for its support. For example in the first week of the course core themes are introduced including sustainability and the human-environment relationship. You could argue that there are good examples of sustainable development in a particular region/country, or you could argue that a particular place presents a warning for the hazards of not thinking about sustainability in the way humans interact with their environment.

How do I do this?
First you'll need to find a topic/position that really interests you or inspires you. No sense doing something that you find completely uninteresting!!

You will need to support whatever position you decide to take with evidence. This evidence is not what you think is correct or what you have heard is the case. Instead, you must support your position with research already conducted so you'll need to find a minimum of three sources from scholarly or professional journals/newspapers, sources. Your textbook does NOT count as a source nor does Wikipedia.

The only other restriction is that you can only write on topics/themes covered up to/between due dates. In other words, if you decide to write the first paper you can write about any topic through week 6. If you write the second paper you can write on anything discussed between week 6 and week 11. And if you write the final paper, you can write on any topic covered from week 11 through week 15.

I cannot accept any late papers. And all papers must be submitted on paper, to me directly, in class (not left in my box, or slipped under my door, or emailed to me).

What structure should my paper have?
After you've developed a position based on a topic we've been discussing (good idea to run it by me to make sure you're on the right track), you'll want to develop a clear thesis in which you assert this position. This is usually the final sentence in your introductory paragraph. Example:

In this paper I argue that eco-tourism in Latin America is one of the few industries that can successfully bridge the demands of economic growth with sustainable resource use.
Your introduction should also tell the reader where your paper is headed, what they can expect to be reading about.

Every paragraph that follows your introduction should support your thesis statement/position. These should draw heavily from your research and should include direct quotes or paraphrased statements. As you write each paragraph ask yourself, “Why is this important? Why am I including this?”

Another final tip: read your essay out loud before turning it in. Listen to it—does it make sense? Is it logical? Is it well-organized? Am I clear about my position?

Proofread!!! I will deduct points for poor grammar and spelling mistakes. These are huge distractions for your reader and really serve to discredit your authority as a writer.

The paper should be about 4-5 pages long (standard formatting, see below).

**When are they due?**
You have three opportunities to turn in a “position paper.” You only need to complete two papers, so you can complete only two, or you can complete all three and drop the lowest score. You can only submit 1 paper per due date, so plan accordingly.

Due dates: Week 6: April 4th, Week 12: May 16th, Week 15: June 6th

**How will I be graded?**
Each paper is worth 50 points with the following rubric as the guideline I use for assigning those points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>REQUIRED</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>Topic is related to topics covered in the first five weeks of the course.</td>
<td>50-45 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic is geographic; has a spatial focus.</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 points Paper is structured on an argument; a position is taken and is supported in a logical fashion.</td>
<td>44-40 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic is related to topics covered in the first five weeks of the course.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 points Paper is well organized, including use of proper grammar and free of spelling errors.</td>
<td>39-35 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence is presented to support topic</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>At least 3 outside sources are used; sources are from academic or journalistic sources.</td>
<td>34-30 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence is presented to support topic</td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>Works cited page follows APA, MLA or Chicago Style guidelines.</td>
<td>29-0 F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Potential topics
I encourage you to develop your own position/topic. However, I am including a list of possible topics for each chapter. These are by no means comprehensive. Just another reminder—get those topics/positions approved by me before you start writing!! Don’t waste time on a topic only to discover later isn’t really a good fit for the discipline of geography or is not a well-developed position.

The two biggest pitfalls students face in writing these papers are: 1) the topic isn’t spatial; it doesn’t fit into the discipline and 2) no position is argued instead it’s largely descriptive.

Paper #1:

CHAPTER 1

• The failure (or success) of a specific civilization or society because of poor (or sustainable) management of the environment.
• Southern CA (or any other area) is a vernacular region.
• Actor-network-theory: accurate or inaccurate?
• National parks (and other protected areas) reflect a nature-culture dualism.
• The origin/diffusion of a particular cultural expression.
• Ullman’s transferability and complementarity applied to a particular resource/product.

CHAPTER 2

• Argue how a local cultural practice diffuses to become a global phenomenon.
• The use of the haka by the New Zealand All Blacks is/is not cultural commodification.
• The “heritage industry” is Euro-centric and problematic for developing countries.
• Globalization has meant a rise in meat consumption that is negative for the environment.
• Globalization has meant the spread of democracy, or it has meant greater cultural conflict.
• Folk cultures are endangered by globalization (choose a specific example).
• The globalization of American culture is a form of coca-colonization.
• Globalization is creating new cultural forms as seen in glocalization.

CHAPTER 11

• Ecotourism is a sustainable (or is not) form of development.
• Neoliberalism has hurt the development of LDCs (or has benefited).
• Describe a project that would help a country meet one or more of the MDGs and make the lives of the extremely poor better.
• Choose an example of small-scale development—microloans or solar stoves, fair trade, etc.—and argue its benefits.
• Argue how institutional factors prevent development (you could choose one or more).
• Argue that income inequality is a serious barrier for development.
• The way in which development is defined is biased and should be changed (the normative nature of defining development).
Paper #2:

CHAPTER 3

- Raising the status of women in a society leads to lower fertility rates.
- Countries facing aging populations should embrace immigration.
- Food insecurity is not a function of “overpopulation.”
- Guest worker programs—another form of indentured servitude.
- The hypocrisy in U.S. immigration policy—the Cuban example.
- The colonial past drives current patterns of migration.

CHAPTER 4

- Linguistic differences have led to conflict in....
- Bilingualism in the U.S. should be promoted to increase American’s global connections and understanding.
- Cultural homogenization follows the dominance of English.
- Pidgin, creole languages and the assertion/preservation of identity.
- African American English is a language of resistance and should be recognized.

CHAPTER 5

- Trace the origins, diffusion and current landscapes of one of the world’s major religions
- The geography of megachurches in the U.S. and/or the world.
- Renewalism is replacing mainstream Christianity in the U.S.
- Sacred space is both religious and secular.
- The contested religious geography of Jerusalem.
- The sanctification of secular space in America.

CHAPTER 7

- The nation-state leads to extremism and can be connected to conflicts in Europe and other parts of the world.
- The conflict in Catalonia, Basque country, or another part of the world as an expression of political geography.
- Rwanda was not an ethnic conflict, but one of political control and territory that used the language of nationalism.
- Although they share an island, the Dominican Republic has better environmental policies than Haiti.
- Centripetal or centrifugal forces in the United States.
- Brexit will be good/bad for Europe/UK.
- Security landscapes create greater conflict and insecurity.

For Position Paper #3:

CHAPTER 9

- Organic farming is a viable form of sustainable agriculture.
- The gene revolution has helped/harmed farming.
- Factory farming harms the environment and is a public health concern.
• The problems of the U.S. producing a lot of grain, but not for food.
• Choose a form of sustainable agriculture and argue for its implementation in commercial production.
• Globalization has produced a “nutrition transition” that is harmful to the environment and to public health.
• Urban agriculture is a solution to the global food crisis.

CHAPTER 10

• Using a specific place as an example support or disagree with Staple Theory.
• The impacts of post-Fordism have been largely beneficial to developing countries.
• The Japanese model of industry vs. Fordism.
• EPZs are beneficial/harmful to developing countries.
• The downside of China’s SEZs.
• Technopoles are (are not) incubators of innovation that bring great benefit to cities/regions/countries.
• Evaluate Joseph Schumpeter’s “creative destruction” theory to explain the new geographies of industry.

CHAPTER 12

• Nuclear energy is a viable solution to reducing greenhouse gasses (or choose any other alternative resource: wind, solar, geothermal...).
• Fishing beyond sustainable yields is creating a crisis in our ocean ecosystems.
• The U.S. needs to end its fossil fuel reliance.
• Coal is a particularly environmentally destructive form of fossil fuels and should be avoided.
• Hydropower is a problematic alternative to fossil fuels, but could be done “right.”
• Carbon farming is a viable alternative to commercial farming that would greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CHAPTER 8

• Los Angeles is a “world city” and will continue to grow and thrive.
• Gentrification is good/bad for a city.
• Cities should/should not use eminent domain to re-develop “blighted” areas.
• Patterns of racial segregation in Los Angeles were crafted by redlining and blockbusting.
• Suburban sprawl is dangerous to the environment.
• The informal sector is an important means for the urban poor to get ahead.
• Cities should work to “densify” their neighborhoods to reduce carbon footprint.
• Urban parks make cities more “livable.”
• There should be more mixed-use development to make cities more livable and to reduce their environmental impact.

Sample Paper Format:

Jane Doe
Geography 2: Human Geography
Spring, 2018
May 10, 2018
Thesis (position) should be the last sentence of your introduction. Be sure it is connected to the material we've covered as well as forming a clear argument (position).

Each paragraph that follows your introduction should provide evidence to support your position. Any sources you quote in the paper should be cited in parenthetical form: (Glaeser, 25).
CITING YOUR SOURCES: APA Reference List—Basic Citation Entries and Examples

**Books**

**Basic Form**

Author, A.A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location: Publisher.


**Edited Book, No Author**


**Edited Book with an Author or Authors**


**Articles in Periodicals**

**Basic Form**


**Article in Journal Paginated by Volume**


**Article in Journal Paginated by Issue**

**Article in a Magazine**


**Article in a Newspaper**


**Online Sources**

**Article from an Online Periodical**

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**Article from an Online Periodical with no DOI Assigned**

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**Online Newspaper Article**

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### Online Magazine Article

**Basic Form**


### Chapter/Section of a Web document or Online Book Chapter

**Basic Form**


### Audiovisual Media

**Movie**


**Song/Music Recording**

**Basic Form**

Writer, A. (Copyright year). Title of song [Recorded by B.B. Artist if different from writer]. On *Title of Album* [Medium of recording: CD, record, cassette, etc.] Location: Label. (Date of recording if different from song copyright date)

**Sample Reference List**

**DOES ONLINE TUTORING WORK?**

**References**


