

## Research Paper

Spring 2014

Rather than complete a final exam you will complete a research paper based on current political issues facing California. What will make this different from a paper written for a history or political science class is that you will write a paper using a geographic lens, i.e. you will think about California as a geographer would.

You will need to pick a topic of interest and explore some of the causes, consequences, and possible solutions or alternatives to your geographical issue. You may want to limit your research paper to a specific region of California. We will discuss ways to build a research topic in future classes, but let me know immediately if you are struggling with a topic or idea.

*Some possible topics:*

- Environmental issues (water quality, desertification, pollution, etc.)
- California's prison system
- Crime
- Immigration
- Population growth
- Energy supplies
- Industry and economy
- Globalization
- Race/ethnicity relations
- Education
- Poverty

Your paper should be **4-6 pages** in length and should incorporate **at least one map** that supports your thesis. Please only exceed 6 pages if it is crucial to the development of your paper's arguments and ideas.

***Your paper will be graded based on 100 possible points as follows:***

- 10 points – The paper is on time, proof-read, typed, double-spaced, has 1" margins, paginated, and stapled (no folders or report covers please)
- 50 points – The paper is well written. It has an introduction with a clearly expressed thesis. There are supporting paragraphs for every point made in your thesis statement and your conclusion is relevant to your thesis.
- 20 points – Maps and any other figures or pictures are used correctly, presented neatly, and have their sources cited.
- 20 points – Sources and documentation used are relevant and at the college level and are properly cited in the bibliography or "works cited" section of your paper. You must have at least five sources that are at the college level and are not from textbooks or an encyclopedia

*Plagiarism is a serious offense. In fact, we in academia view it as worse than murder. Any time you present someone else's ideas as your own, either intentionally or not, you are guilty of plagiarism and will receive a zero on your paper. When in doubt, cite.*

***Papers and maps will be due at the beginning of class, Wednesday, May 28, 2014.***