

Midterm Paper

DUE: Wednesday, October 29th, 2008

Physics of Contemporary Issues

HNRS 1500

Fall 2008

Adam Johnston

Your task for this midterm paper is simple. Write a report on one of the following current events, and explain the physics necessary to understand fully the current event of your choice. You should provide a level of explanation that Adam's sister can understand. (This is the most important criterion for your paper.)

You may choose any topic you'd like, *but* you might want to schedule an appointment with Adam to discuss your ideas. The main objective here is to explain the physics of a contemporary issue and how it is important to the situation at hand. More specifically, your paper should explain:

1. Why is this issue important?
2. What is the current issue? (You have some liberty to paint this a bit, but you must use the *New York Times* as a reference, in addition to other sources of your choosing. A few good ones would include *Scientific American*, *New Scientist*, etc. One way to start is to simply browse through recent periodicals.)
3. What are the physics of the issue? (This is what will set your paper apart from other sources of information.)

Questions:

Should I cite my work?

Yes

What sources of information should I use?

The *Times* for sure, but to understand the physics you will likely need to refer to other sources. In fact, it would be hard to imagine a paper without at least two outside sources besides the *Times*.

How many pages?

Enough. Probably more than 5, but fewer than 10.

How is this going to be graded?

A grading rubric is on the back of this page.

Grading rubric for midterm and final	Score	Evaluation
	4+	This project was completed with an extraordinary amount of effort. Not only were all aspects of the project completed accurately and completely, but this project showed extra insight and clarity. This score is received on a small minority of projects.
	4	This project was completed accurately and completely. Any errors in this project are mostly insignificant. Essentially, this score is reserved for projects that reflect total integrity and accuracy, and are generally more sophisticated than the average project. The student learned more from this project than most students in the class. You addressed and explained clearly specific physics issues and incorporated them into their proper contexts.
	3	This is a good project. It was complete and generally accurate; and, though it might contain errors, the point of the project is well conceived. This student put an adequate amount of work into the project and it is evident that s/he learned something from it. You addressed some physics and some contemporary issues clearly.
	2	This project is mostly complete, but it might be missing a major component of the assignment. Or, this project might have many substantial errors in it. While the student completing this project probably learned something from it, s/he also may have missed some important points.
	1	This project probably has some major flaws. This may be due to incorrectly completing the project, or just a large-scale lack of effort. This score is usually received by only a small minority of projects
	0	This project was not completed, or did not satisfy enough project requirements to receive credit.