

Public Education Campaign

Public awareness of environmental issues is rising rapidly, as is interest in addressing these problems. For example, the majority of Americans now identify global climate change as one of their key issues of concern. However, there is still a lot of confusion about many environmental issues, resulting from misinformation, conflicting claims, or lack of clear explanations of technical information. Therefore most of us have a difficult time making good decisions with respect to the environment.

Your assignment is to **create a public education campaign to increase awareness and understanding of an environmental issue**. Your project should help to clarify a confusing or controversial issue or to educate people about the impacts of particular activities or decisions. This is an opportunity to explore a particular environmental issue in greater depth, and also to practice effective communication about a complex topic.

Although the format of this project is flexible, this project is the equivalent of a term paper and your efforts should reflect that. You will be evaluated on the quality of your information, clarity of your explanation, and overall presentation of materials.

You may work alone or in a small group (not to exceed 3 people). If you work with others, your project proposal and final report must include a clear explanation of each student's contribution.

Topic

Your public information campaign can cover **any topic related to environmental biology**. Think about the environmental issue that you are most interested in, identify a topic you would like to know more about, or scan the syllabus, your textbook, or the newspaper for ideas. You may focus on a Drew-specific issue, on a topic of national or global significance, on an environmental matter relevant to your hometown.

Although environmental science is by definition a broad, interdisciplinary field, effective public education campaigns are very focused in their scope and have a clearly defined message and target audience. Please talk to me if you are struggling to find a topic or to narrow your focus.

Format and Target Audience

Think clearly about your intended audience, which will be an important factor in your choice of format for your campaign. You are encouraged to be creative. Some possibilities for format (you are not limited to these options!):

- Informational poster campaign
- DrewTube video
- Guest editorial for the Acorn or your hometown newspaper
- Skit or activity for Drew Childcare Center
- Webpage
- Comic strips
- Executive memo for President Weisbuch or your Congressperson
- Brochure for visitors to Zuck Arboretum or Drew Forest Preserve
- Fact sheet for a Drew Department (Office of Residence Life, Dining Hall, etc.)

Sources

Good public information campaigns must be based on solid information. Your final project should include a bibliography of sources you consulted and cited. This bibliography can be part of the finished project or submitted as an addendum (determined by format of your campaign).

Deadlines:

- Tues., 9 Oct. Proposal (1-2 paragraphs)
Identify your specific environmental issue, describe your target audience and format of final product, and provide possible sources of information. Final projects will not be accepted without prior approval of the topic and format.
- Tues., 13 Nov. Draft of project (optional)
If you would like feedback on your project, I will comment on drafts received by this date. More complete and polished drafts will get more complete and useful feedback.
- Tues., 4 Dec. Final project + written report (if needed)
Note: depending on the format you choose, you may have to complete and implement your project before this deadline!