

L911 Seminar Project: Scenarios for Problem-Based Learning in Your Major

The “seminar project” assignment in Contemporary Perspectives is intended to draw connections between the current global issues that we are studying in the course and the knowledge and skills that you have developed in your professional major.

This semester, in place of the academic research assignment that we traditionally use for the seminar project, we will be creating “problem-based learning” scenarios that connect a global issue with a specific world region and with issues that are relevant to your professional major.

Your assignment for Monday, September 19th is to develop a proposal for a problem-based learning scenario that connects one of the global trends listed below to a real-life (or realistic) scenario or problem related to your professional field in **one** of the countries in your assigned world region.

Global trends:

- Global warming / climate change
- Islamic extremist terrorism
- Rising oil prices / dwindling oil reserves
- “McWorld” or cultural Americanization
- Global AIDS pandemic
- “Graying” of the world’s population
- Advances in genetic engineering

Problem-based learning is based on real-life “ill-structured” problems or scenarios. Students enter the problem as

Region assignments by schools: (go to the BBC News website to get a list of the countries included in your region--the address is news.bbc.co.uk)

SAD: Africa

SBA: Americas (excluding U.S. and Canada)

SDM: Asia-Pacific

SET: Middle East

SSH: South Asia

Your short proposal (about 1 typed page?) should address the following questions:

- What are the details of the scenario? (where is it located, what are the parameters, what is the “problem” to be solved?)
- How is it connected to one of our specified global trends?
- What professional role would the author of the project be playing?
- Who would be the client or audience for the project?
- What would be the “deliverable” for this project?

On September 19th, everyone will bring their proposals to class and we’ll meet in groups according to schools. Everyone will introduce their proposals and then vote for the one that they would like to be developed as the official assignment for their major/school.

The authors of the chosen proposals will then have three weeks to develop their scenarios. They will meet with me and with faculty in their majors to work out all of the details of the scenario, to create a list of resources for their topic, and to produce a grading sheet indicating how the student work for that scenario should be evaluated. The authors of the chosen proposals will also play a role in assessing the student responses to their scenario.