

Final Paper Assignment Overview

Business, Politics, and Public Policy PS 1283, Fall 2007

Topic descriptions due October 22

Group presentations November 26-December 5

Individual papers due December 7

Goals and Requirements

The purpose of the final project is to sharpen your research and analysis skills while also allowing you to explore in greater depth a non-market business situation that interests you. Each group will research a non-market issue and make a presentation that provides an overview and analysis of the issue as well as an assessment of the strategic options available to various interests. The individual papers will take the form of a 10-12 page strategy memo and each group member will write from the perspective of a different interest involved in the issue.

The project will require you to do the following three tasks:

1. To research the issue, interests, institutions, and business environment.
2. To analyze the situation by using and/or *extending* class frameworks.
3. To formulate and propose a strategy for the organization.

In terms of research, you will need to gather the relevant facts and background information about the issue and the non-market environment (e.g. Four I's). You will need to characterize the interest group environment by finding information about relevant advocacy groups, and you will need to research the relevant institutions (for example, if Congress is the relevant institution, who are the legislators and committees involved?)

Guidelines for Topics

Good, manageable topics are specific. Broad topics of interest can usually be recast at the company or organizational level. For instance, "trade barriers" by itself is much too broad a topic for the project, but a study of how a Chinese pencil company should address Mexican trade barriers or how a Mexican pencil maker should use trade law to hinder Chinese imports is better, as it is more narrowly focused and more easily manageable.

Examples of topics:

- How should the American Medical Association (or American Trial Lawyers Association) try to influence proposed legislation capping medical malpractice awards? (How should a regulator in the Department of Health and Human Services deal with this problem?)

- ❑ How should Sony Pictures respond to the opportunity for movies-on-demand on the Internet and the increased threat of piracy resulting from broadband?
- ❑ How might Phillip Morris and its parent company Altria Group cope with changes in the tobacco industry and in consumer and political attitudes towards its products?
- ❑ What should the Sierra Club do about the Bush administration's lax enforcement of and proposed changes to energy and environmental policies?

Topic Descriptions

Each group must submit a 1-2 page description of your proposed topic. The description must include the following:

- A brief explanation of what the issue is and why it is important
- An initial four I analysis (this can be in a table).
- How the topic relates to the course concepts and frameworks.
- Which interest each group member will write about in their individual paper.

In gathering information for your prospectus, you should rely primarily on reputable published sources. I recommend that you first consult the business sections of major newspapers or business oriented publications for topics, such as:

- *Wall Street Journal*
- *New York Times*
- *Washington Post*
- *The Economist*
- *Business Week*

Once you get started, you may also want to consult:

- Company web sites
- Interest group web sites
- LexisNexis
- Congressional Quarterly publications (e.g. *CQ Weekly*, *CQ Almanac*, *CQ Researcher*)
- National Journal publications