# Final Project\*Environmental Health\*2025

*What will I be doing?*

Digging into the primary literature around a topic within the field of Environmental Health! What topic are you curious about? What would you like to learn more about or what is a topic that relates to this course that we did not have time to cover?

*Why will I be doing this?*

The purpose of this assignment is to both develop your knowledge regarding a topic within the field of Environmental Health that you are curious about and to help you develop your reading and thinking skills by gathering, documenting and interpreting information.

*How will I start?*

Your first step will be to locate three primary literature (peer reviewed journal) research papers or articles related to your topic. Before settling on a topic make sure you can actually find a set of three research papers that relate to your topic, to one another and that sound interesting to you! Note that you do not have to understand everything about each research paper but you do have to understand enough about the paper to make it worth reading and writing about. (\*See suggestions at the end of this paper on how to locate possible articles.)

*What kinds of articles will I need to look for?*

The research papers you choose will need to be recent (published within the last 5 years). Environmental Health is a rapidly changing field and anything much older than that will be less useful. Please make sure at least two of the research articles are actual research articles (look for an introduction, methods, results and discussion section). One can be a more general review article. Some of these journals might have other kinds of articles like short “Summary” articles or “Opinion” articles which may not be appropriate. If you have questions about the suitability of an article be sure to ask! Note: Web sites can be very helpful for background information on your topic (mainly look for .gov or .edu sites) but they are not primary research papers. Please don’t choose research papers simply because they are short or an easy read! Those will give you less material to work from as you respond to the questions below.

*Can I use ChatGPT or another AI to help me write? What writing style should I use?*

Since this assignment is meant for you to personally explore the research articles that you are reading and are not meant to be simply a summary of the articles, you should feel free to write somewhat casually and use your personal perspective (“I noticed…”, “I found…”, “I struggled…”). You will be graded on how much I see and hear YOU in your responses, and how much you show me that you have learned in the course and are able to connect with the material you are reading. I will not grade you on how perfectly polished or sophisticated your writing is! In other words, ChatGPT is not a great fit for this assignment!

*What format will I use to write this project up?*

You will create a google doc that you will share with me as you **start your work**. **I should be emailed a link to your ongoing drafting by Friday January 24 so I can check up on your progress if I choose to!** (This is in part a nudge to make sure you do not start this project the day before it is due-which is rarely a good approach.)

*What will I hand in on the last day of class before 5pm? (Yup, there are new “campus rules” on handing in assignments late!)*

**1. An Introduction that describes why you chose the topic you did in a paragraph.** (Approximately 200 thoughtful words. Fewer words might work if you are careful and concise but to really provide me with the level of detail that I am looking for I would aim for 200 or more.)

What topic did you choose and why did you choose it? Do you have a personal connection to the topic? Describe how and/or why? Did we touch upon the topic in this class or another class? Describe. Please feel free to use the first person perspective and say “I chose this topic because…..”

**2. Your responses to the questions below for EACH of the three papers you chose. You might want actually paste these questions into your doc and reply to them!**

**Research article #1**

* What was the title of the article? (exactly as it appears at the top of the paper)
* What is the name of the journal in which the paper was published?
* What year was it published?
* Where does the first author work? (the first one listed under the title)
* In your own words, describe what this paper was about (or what you think it was about ☺). (2-3 sentences)
* Describe how challenging the paper was for you to read? What concepts or sections of the paper were difficult to understand and why? What concepts or sections were more accessible to you as a non-specialist? (Be specific, don’t just say the methods section or the results section, be sure to specify what part of the methods section or results section.) (Approximately 200 words.)
* Connect this paper to the materials from the course in as many ways as you can. Did the researchers connect with concepts we covered in class? Did they use any techniques or research approaches we learned about? What kind of a study was it? How was it structured? Does it have tables or figures that reminded you of tables or figures you saw in other papers we read? Did they use terms we covered in class? Be specific and explain. (I’m purposefully leaving my expectations for length open in this section!)

**Research article #2**

Respond to the same questions above for your second research article.

**Research article #3**

Respond to the same questions above for your second research article.

**3. A Conclusion that addresses the questions below in several paragraphs.** (Approximately 400 thoughtful words.)

Now that you have read three research papers or articles, reflect on your topic and what you have learned while sharing a little bit of an overview of the three papers. This section might be where you do more synthesis and analysis! How were their approaches the same or different? Did they relate to each other? Why or why not? Did the authors make similar or contrasting points, use different techniques or emphasize different ways of looking at an issue? Even if you are not confident of your observations, do your best to dive a bit! As you look at your articles together are there connections to the course you see that you did not notice when reading the papers individually.

How has your perspective on your topic changed after reading the three papers? Are you less concerned, more concerned, more confused, more clear? What do you understand differently after having read the papers? What questions did reading the papers raise for you? Again feel free to say “I….”

NOTE: It is important that you allow yourself some time to reflect and ponder and digest what you have read in order to do some of the writing of this section! Also, note that you do not have to respond to each of these questions individually-they are just questions to get you thinking!

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\*Suggestions for Finding Articles

This journal has some nice “collections of articles” that some of you might find interesting. <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/curated-collections>

Environmental Health Perspectives (all articles are open access) (same journal as above but has individual volumes)

<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/loi/ehp/group/d2020.y2024>

International Journal of Environmental Health Research (only some articles are open access)

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showOpenAccess?journalCode=cije20>

Environment and Health Journal (ACS) (all articles are open access)

<https://pubs.acs.org/loi/ehnea2/group/d2020.y2025>

One Health Journal

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/one-health/issues>

Emerging Infectious Diseases

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/>

There are definitely others…! If you use Google Scholar play around with your search terms and let me know if you are not finding articles to satisfy you. If you are a first year student feel free to ask questions☺!