

Research Paper Assignment

Introduction

You must prepare a research paper on a topic relating to homeland security. A topic with particular emphasis on critical infrastructure protection involving the Water, Food & Agriculture or IT/Cybersecurity sectors would correspond more closely with the focus of this course, but you may choose to focus on other sectors or homeland security-related issues that are more applicable to your current or desired career, agency or discipline, or to your own academic research interests. Topic proposals are subject to my approval.

The length for the **body** of the paper should be approximately 12-15 pages (approximately 250-300 words per page, for a total of about 3,000-4,500 words), not including the Title Page (**with Statement of authorship**), Table of Contents, Abstract, Tables, Appendixes (if any), and References. Use standard formatting (margins, font, etc.). APA citation style should be followed throughout the paper. Keep in mind that overall length is just one criterion; the major criterion is the quality of the content. The paper must be submitted in the Assignment folder in LEO.

The topic proposal is due by the end of Week 3 on Monday night, September 30. The final, completed paper is due in the Assignment folder under the Research Paper folder at the end of Week 11 (Monday night, November 25).

You may earn up to a maximum of 100 points for the Research Paper, which will comprise 25% of your final overall grade for this course.

NOTE:

- You may re-use only a limited amount – 5% or less – of material from papers you have written for other courses at UMUC or at other institutions. You must also provide citation for that material in the body of the paper and in the reference list. Not doing so is considered self-plagiarism under APA guidelines (2010, pp. 16, 29, 170). If you feel that you have adequate justification for exceeding the 5% limit, discuss this in advance with the instructor, whose decision will be final.
- Quality of analysis is the most important criterion, not the exact word count.

If you have any questions about the assignment or the grading criteria, please post your question to **Q&A** for this assignment under the Research Paper folder. Please do NOT send an e-mail unless it is a personal question. Other students may have similar questions. All students should check regularly for any Q&A.

Academic Integrity

With this assignment, as with all others, you must adhere to UMUC policies regarding academic integrity. Avoid plagiarism, both intentional and inadvertent, and provide accurate documentation and attribution of the work of others. UMUC's policy recommends "carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material to be cited, quoted, paraphrased or summarized, and papers and research projects should acknowledge these sources in references." (Policy 150.25 - Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism).

You must also include at the end of your paper a statement attesting that you are submitting work that is original and that complies with standards for academic honesty. See the specifications below for the attestation statement. Also, you may not submit a paper that you have written for any other class.

I will use Turnitin to generate an Originality Report with a Similarity Index score to check all the papers for any possible plagiarism, or an excessive proportion of direct quotes and paraphrasing relative to your own work. If so, I will inform you of the results in my feedback. Even if you include citations and used quotation marks to avoid any risk of plagiarism, you should strive for a proper balance. It's necessary to cite, and occasionally quote from, appropriate sources to support your own arguments and assertions, but you should avoid simply copying-and-pasting large sections or paragraphs from the work of others to form a paper.

Learning Objectives

Through successful completion of this assignment, you will:

- Devise and execute a research strategy to produce a quality, graduate-level research paper.
- Use the electronic UMUC library resources effectively and integrate sources in support of your research position.
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate elements of the topic.
- Present the information clearly and logically in a well-documented research paper.

Scholarly Research

You are expected to use some scholarly publications in support of your topic (part of your research strategy). That means searching UMUC's online library databases for your sources. In other words, do not use search engines such as Google as your primary means to find sources. Do not rely on Wikipedia as a source.

You must develop your paper using **at least 10 high-quality references**. Of the 10 or more references, you must rely on and cite a **minimum of 5 scholarly and/or substantive government publications**, such as articles from academic journals, theses and dissertations, books or official reports. You should search

the UMUC Library databases for journals or government documents. You must also include 5 or more references from other well-respected sources, such as government, think tank, or professional association publications or Web sites.

Not acceptable: Introductory textbooks, or my weekly overview presentations.

Limit the number of secondary sources such as online articles from newspapers, popular magazines, or trade journals. A few are fine to supplement your primary sources, but don't overdo it. Also, limit informational web pages you use as sources to no more than two (2). Citing simple informational web pages for research—even official web pages from government agencies—is not generally appropriate for graduate-level research papers, as these web pages seldom include authors, publication dates, or citations, and they are often brief and more informational than substantive. Also, avoid relying on vendor-provided information (unless, for example, you are comparing and contrasting vendors' claims), and avoid the use of online encyclopedia or dictionaries.

Citation Tips

You must cite correctly and follow the standards in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) for in-text attribution of sources and for the reference list at the end. The UMUC Library provides some useful Web pages:

- APA: <http://www.umuc.edu/library/guides/apa.shtml>
- Tutorial, either HTML or Flash format:
<http://www.umuc.edu/library/tutorials/citation/>

If you'd prefer video tutorials on APA style, try this web site:
<http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx>. The tutorials are at
<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>.

The tutorials cover things like how to properly cite references, how to write a well-structured paper (e.g., using headings), and how to avoid plagiarism.

In addition, Wikipedia provides a listing of other references and tools to correctly format your references: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/APA_style.s Scroll to the External Links at the end. Note that for your own references, Wikipedia and online dictionaries will not count, since those are not primary sources. Scholarly, or substantive/authoritative primary sources are the standard for graduate school research.

Milestones for This Assignment

1. Select your topic.

Post your brief topic proposal/thesis statement in the discussion forum labeled **Declare Your Research Topic under the Research Paper**

folder by the end of Week 3, on Monday night, September 30. Topic proposals are subject to the approval of the instructor. Please do not post your proposal as an attached document.

2. Submit the final paper.

Submit to LEO: Submit the completed Research Paper as a Word doc (not as a PDF) in the Assignment folder under the Research Paper folder in LEO by the end of Week 11 on Monday night, November 25. Attach a document that is named in the format **First Initial + Last Name + Paper** for example: **NKlaszPaper**.

Late assignments will only be accepted with an approved extension.

If you would like some interim feedback on your assignment, submit a solid draft to the Workbook for the assignment in LEO and notify me by e-mail. I usually can provide feedback within a day or two.

Specifications for the Research Paper

Content Specifications

The contents and organization of the paper should include:

- Title page or cover sheet with a formal title for your paper
- A concise literature review to summarize published scholarship on your topic and explain the major debates or controversies, alternate approaches or schools of thought, and main focus areas of the literature.
- Main body (see below)
- List of References or Works Cited
- (OPTIONAL) Abstract, Table of Contents, Appendices for figures, tables, etc.
- Statement attesting to original work (see below)

Follow general APA formatting guidelines, with the exception that the document may be either single or double-spaced. I strongly recommend using subject headings in bold to organize the narrative and introduce transition points from one major topic or issue to another, and use paragraphing to break up and further organize the narrative in the body of the paper. I would also appreciate pagination (i.e., inserting sequential page numbers).

Good papers clearly present your research findings and analyze and assess those findings. At the graduate school level, you need to do more than report on your research; you must evaluate the significance and potential ramifications of the issue at hand. Where appropriate, you should also critique information you found in the sources you used. End your paper with a meaningful conclusion section. Conclusions summarize your evaluation of the topic or show how you proved your thesis statement. Conclusions do not present new information!

Support all statements of facts, assertions, and conclusions with credible sources. Cite the source, whether you are summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting directly. Follow the APA guidelines for quoting sources, including specific page or paragraph numbers in the in-text citations.

Only a limited amount of material should be quoted, summarized, or paraphrased from sources. I recommend a maximum range of 10-15% based on the Turnitin Similarity Index score. (I realize you won't be able to submit draft versions into Turnitin yourself before the due date to generate your own Similarity Report and make revisions, but I will provide feedback on your Turnitin results.) You are to provide original analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. If it appears too high a proportion of your paper is quoted, it will be subject to additional scrutiny. Evaluate the quoted material to determine if it is absolutely essential to carry your analysis forward (good!), or if you are using it in place of your own critical thinking (bad!).

Document File Specifications

The document must be a Microsoft Word .doc or docx file or a rich text format (.rtf) file. Other file formats are not acceptable. If your paper is supported by diagrams or charts or statistics, please incorporate them into the document in an appropriate place, whether in the body or in an appendix. Figures and tables from your sources must be properly credited, following the guidelines in the APA Publication Manual.

Statement Attesting to Original Work

You must also submit the following statement with your personal attestation on a separate page at the end of the document:

"This paper, examination, report, or the section thereof for which I have indicated responsibility, is my own work. Any assistance I received in its preparation is acknowledged within the report or examination, in accordance with academic practice. For any data, ideas, words, diagrams, pictures, or other information from any source, quoted or not, I have cited the sources fully and completely in the text, in endnotes, or in footnotes and bibliographical entries, as required. Furthermore, I certify that the material was prepared by me specifically for this class and has not been submitted, in whole or significant part, to any other class in this university or elsewhere, or used for any purpose other than satisfying the requirements of this class, except that I am allowed to submit this material to a professional publication, peer reviewed journal, or professional conference. In adding my name following the word 'Signature', I intend that this certification will have the same authority and authenticity as a document executed with my hand-written signature."

Signature _____ Date _____

Grading Rubric

See the separate Grading Rubric document posted under the Research Paper folder in the Course Content area in LEO.