Students in Public exemplar details

Faculty, School and Subject Area: Humanities, SEED, Geography

Course Unit/activity: GEOG 70901 Theories in Environmental Governance (discontinued)

Course Unit Director/activity leader: James Evans

What is the assignment/knowledge product? (for full details see Wikipedia handout)
1. For your first assignment, you are being asked to contribute to an existing Wikipedia page related to the module. Your contribution should be a paragraph of around 500 words, supplemented by a commentary of 500 words. In addition to your paragraph, you are required to write a short commentary outlining why you chose this particular page, what changes you made and why. You might also like to reflect on the experience of using Wikipedia. **You should also paste your paragraph from Wikipedia into the document so that there is a fixed record of your work, and include a hyperlink to the Wikipedia page that you have altered**. This Word document should be submitted via Blackboard by the deadline.
2. For your second assignment you are required to create a new page on a topic related to the module (2500 words), again supplemented by a commentary (500 words).

Why was it introduced?
Appropriate to course topic?
Gaps on Wikipedia?
More stimulating?
Improve quality of work?
That guy who pops up on Wikipedia making appeals?
Valuable skill?

Where is it be published?
Wikipedia

What are the challenges (e.g. copyright)?
Intensive support required (see Wikipedia handout)

What are the student perceptions/responses/attainment?
Positive student feedback:
- "Wiki-based projects are challenging yet fruitful"
- "Very nice experience to have the honor to contribute to Wikipedia"
- "Help on the Wikipedia assignment was thorough to ensure everyone was on board"
- "I thought doing a wikipedia entry/contribution was different and exciting"
- "The wikipedia contribution assignment was a new academic space for me, exposing me to a whole lot intellectual technicalities"
- "Assessments were different and fun"
- "Wikipedia task was novel"

Negative student feedback:
- "I found the search for a topic for a wikipedia entry quite frustrating, in the sense that some of the broader theoretical issues on the course had already been covered in some detail"
- "I do feel that it would be better if at least part of the assessment involved a critical analysis of some of the theories we had studied"
- "Personally I would have found the first wikipedia contribution assignment a lot more enjoyable and a better learning experience if we had been put into small groups of 2-4 people and submitted it as a joint effort"
- "Topic selection for the assignments can be a bit daunting"
- "I found the wiki page task very restrictive. I found I was unable to create a page on topics that i enjoyed simply because, by chance, someone had already created a page online"
- "The second assignment became quite stressful as selecting a focused topic area for me seemed incongruous to the broadness of many of the concepts explored within the module"

Tutor reflection:
- Added 'buzz' to the course – topic selection discussion boards etc
- Topic selection issues actually expose students with deficient knowledge / enthusiasm for subject
- More interesting work
- Rewarding to get work out there
- Risky – no one complains about essays?
- Time consuming – more support required
- Topic selection is critical
- Very few technical issues
- Need to alter ILOs and marking criteria
- Higher quality work
- Poor quality work is purged quickly and not attributed
- Need to emphasise value of skill
- Interesting but more work…
- Translating to UG?

If published, how do you monitor use of the resource/s?

Any other comments
Examples:

- Contributions:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watershed_management#Governance

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metabolic_rift

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_sovereignty#Food_Regime_theory

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoengineering#Justification

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Reporting_Initiative#Global_Reporting_Initiative_and_the_Environment

- Pages:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_environmental_policy_instruments

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Urban_Neighbourhood

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorialisation_of_carbon_governance

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO_Accountability

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodification_of_water

GE70901 Theories of Environmental Governance

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****IMPORTANT****

Online submission:

Please submit both the page and the commentary through Blackboard as a single file, in PDF format, with your student number as its file name. The electronic dropbox can be accessed via the 'assessment' tab on the left of the course Blackboard page. Make sure you upload the file at least 24 hours before the deadline. Late submission will result in a mark of ZERO. Computer failure is not an acceptable excuse.

You will receive your feedback online through Blackboard 15 working days after submission.

Wikipedia Assignments

Wikipedia background and principles

Wikipedia is, as the name suggests, a wiki and an encyclopedia. A wiki is a central website from which a number of people can post and edit content collaboratively in a simple text editor. There are a number of different types of wikis, with Wikipedia being one of the most well known.

A primary principle of Wikipedia is that it is peer-edited by a community of volunteers—anyone with internet access can edit or add to existing Wikipedia posts, or create an entirely new entry. Most changes go live automatically without a prerequisite review. However, since Wikipedia is self-governing, errors will usually be corrected, or changes reversed, by another member of the community. Through referencing and peer editing processes, Wikipedia aims to provide information that is reliable, accurate, neutral, and verifiable. Since Wikipedia is meant to function as an encyclopedia, it has some rules governing content. For example, a topic must be 'notable', meaning that it has received significant coverage in the mainstream media and/or academic publications, and that it must present work that has already been published and recognised, rather than unpublished information or original research. To familiarise yourself with appropriate Wikipedia conduct, please review the five pillars at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Five_pillars.

Students are likely familiar with controversies about the use of Wikipedia in academic writing and controversies about plagiarism. While this is a real concern, Wikipedia is also a place where people can collaboratively add to a publicly accessible resource. In this way, Wikipedia can also be seen as democratisation of knowledge, in which the act of generating content functions as "an exercise in clearly and succinctly explaining difficult concepts to an uninitiated audience" (citation from Wikipedia page).

The following assignments have been created with this intention, so that students will be producing work that will be publicly available and contribute to the online resources available on the topic of environmental governance.

Creating an account

1- Go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page in your web browser.

2- If you have not already set up an account, click on "create account" in the top right corner of the webpage.

3- Create a username- we suggest that you use your name from your University of Manchester email address (_____@student.manchester.ac.uk), but you may choose another if it is already taken or if you are concerned about privacy.

4- Once you are registered, you can use Wikipedia immediately.

Setting Up Your User Page

The User Page provides a personal space for Wikipedia users, where they can publish additional information about themselves. They can also be used to practice formatting, which should not be done on live Wikipedia entries. These pages are public, and other Wikipedia users can theoretically edit them. However, this is not considered good practice, and the pages are not listed in the Wiki search. To access your (or anyone else's) User Page, you just need to search "User:Username".

To set up your User Page:

1- Once logged in to Wikipedia, click on your username on the top right menu of the webpage (there should be a little icon next to it).

2- Click the link for "Start the *User:Username* page".

3- You will see a text box which is similar to the text editor you would find when composing an email or writing a blog post. You may write anything here that fits within appropriate Wikipedia conduct (i.e. nothing offensive or brand advertisements).

4- Choose your final text and any formatting you want for your User Page and click "Save page".

Experimenting with Wikipedia Editing (Style and Format)

When editing your User Page or any article, you will be working in the Wikipedia mark-up language. It might look a bit off-putting if you are not used to it but it is not difficult. Most of the operations you would want are available in the toolbar on the top of the text box, similar to Microsoft Word.

Experiment with all of these functions on your User Page so you have an understanding of how the text editor works. While you are doing this, you should occasionally click "Show Preview" on the bottom of the text editor to see what your changes would look like as a live Wikipedia page.

The most important functions for the following assignments are creating headings, subheadings, links, and citations.

Headings and Subheadings: Open the "Advanced" toolbar by clicking on it. You can then choose the different levels of headings from the drop-down menu.

Links: To link terms to other Wikipedia articles or external pages, use the link icon in the main toolbar and enter the details in the form provided.

References: To add a reference footnote to your text, click on the "Cite" menu and choose a template (eg. Cite book). Fill in the form and click insert. To display your references, create a level 2 heading "References" at the end and type <references /> underneath, this will automatically create a reference list.

Structure and layout of entries

Although the content of your work is the most important part of the assignment, you should follow the Wikipedia structure and layout as much as possible.

N.B. This differs from the guidance given in the module handbook!!

For editing an existing article, this means inserting your paragraph in the right place, choosing an appropriate headline style, and properly citing your sources. Your changes should then automatically appear in the table of contents / references list. There is no need to overcomplicate this with too many different sections and subsections. Typically, an entry will have a lead section that serves as an introduction, a table of contents, a body with different sections defined by content, and an appendix that includes references.

Lead section: The lead section should briefly summarize the most important points covered

in the article in an accessible and interesting manner. It should also outline the boundaries of the topic if relevant. The article's subject is stated as early as possible in the first sentence, and placed in boldface.

Table of Contents: The table of contents will be automatically generated once your article has more than 3 headings.

Body: There are different levels of headings, Level 1 is for the title of the page (generated automatically and never part of the article itself), Level 2 is for a section within the article, and Levels 3-6 are for subsections. The sections should be used in a standard way, so that they are consecutive and do not skip levels. Each (sub)section consists of paragraphs separated by a single blank line. Lists of bullet points should be minimised here.

Appendices: There is a range of appendix sections for articles. The most important one is the "References" section, which lists all the citations used. Other ones you might want to consider adding are "See also", which lists and briefly describes related Wikipedia entries, or "Further Reading" which recommends external publications cited in the same style as the references.

For more details on these sections you can check http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style_%28layout%29 but don't get bogged down by all the details.

A simplified tutorial on editing posts can be found here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Wikipedia:Tutorial

First Assignment (11th November):

For your first assignment, you are being asked to contribute to an existing page related to the module. Your contribution should be a paragraph of around 500 words, supplemented by a commentary of 500 words.

3. Find a page that you think needs improvement. You can discuss your choice via Blackboard.
4. Draft your contribution: we recommend you do this in your normal word processor (Microsoft Word etc). This allows you to edit and redraft more easily, and you will need to insert your paragraph into your commentary page anyway. You can then work on the formatting for Wikipedia on your User Page, but please be aware that you should not copy the entire original article into there as this is against Wikipedia conventions.
5. Publish your edits:
   - In your chosen article, click on the "edit" tab on the top right.
   - You will now see the article in mark-up language. Scroll down to find the location where you want to insert your paragraph.
   - Insert your paragraphs by copying / pasting it from your User Page or word processor.
   - Format your edits (if you have not yet done this in your User Page): use the correct header levels, insert citations and links (see section on layout), always use the preview function to check
   - Before saving, summarise your edit in the "edit summary" box. This is important as it allows other users to track your changes.
   - Save your page once you are sure that you are finished.
6. Write your commentary in Word: In addition to your paragraph, you are required to write a short commentary outlining why you chose this particular page, what changes you made and why. You might also like to reflect on the experience of using Wikipedia. **You should also paste your paragraph from Wikipedia into the document so that there is a fixed record of your work, and include a hyperlink to the Wikipedia page that you have altered**. This Word document should be submitted via Blackboard by the deadline.

A note on making changes in existing paragraphs: you might feel that the article you have chosen also needs pervasive changes in existing paragraphs. You are welcome to do this if you feel confident. If you do, please record these changes in your commentary. However, your main focus should be to create a new section or paragraph that clearly adds to the information content of the article.

Second Assignment (16ᵗʰ December):

For your second assignment you are required to create a new page on a topic related to the module (2500 words), again supplemented by a commentary (500 words).

1. Choose a topic that is not yet covered: make sure it really isn't there yet by checking synonyms and related articles. You can discuss your choices and ideas on Blackboard. A good thing to do is to use the Article Wizard here to test the strength of your proposed

contribution:

- Type the name of your new page into the search box, then click on the link "*You may create the page "xx", but consider checking the search results below to see whether it is already covered.* You will then be re-directed to the new page.
- Click on the "Article Wizard" link in the 3rd bullet point.
- Follow the step-by-step instructions to see the requirements for a good article. Make use of the help links that are offered here.

2. Create your new article in your personal page: this way you can edit the article and try out the formatting without risking interference. It would still be advisable to put a disclaimer on your page saying that this is work in progress. Although the content of your contribution is the most important part of your assignment, you should follow basic Wikipedia layout (see below).

3. Transfer your article to a new live page: create a new page by typing the name of your entry into the search box and click on the link "*You may create the page "xx"* to create your page. Copy and paste your article from your User Page.

4. Again, check and finalise all of the formatting using "preview", and save only when you are sure you are finished. Important: keep this final edit of your new page on your User Page so that there is a record – as soon as your publish your article, it is open to edits from the Wikipedia community.

5. Write your commentary in Word: you are required to write a short commentary outlining why you chose this particular page, what changes you made and why. For the second assignment, the commentary should also discuss how you have responded to the feedback from the first assignment. **You should also paste your page from Wikipedia into the document so that there is a fixed record of your work, and include a hyperlink to the Wikipedia page that you have created.**

6. **Submit both the page and the commentary through Blackboard as a single file, in either Word or PDF format, with your student number as its file name. The electronic dropbox can be accessed via the 'assessment' tab on the left of the course Blackboard page. Make sure you upload the file at least 24 hours before the deadline. Late submission will result in a mark of ZERO. Computer failure is not an acceptable excuse.**

Support:

The primary source of support for the coursework will be the blackboard site. Please use the resources there as much as possible, and post questions concerning Wikipedia and topic selection on the appropriate threads. *All queries and questions should be posted on Blackboard*, as in most cases the answers will be useful to the entire group. If you are really stuck with Wikipedia, please contact Brian via email Brian.Rosa@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk and he will help.

Feedback:

You will receive your feedback online through Blackboard 15 working days after submission, and I will give general feedback on the first assignment in week 9. If you would like to discuss your work in more depth please feel free to email for an appointment.

Some notes on choosing a topic:

The module you are taking is called *Theories* of Environmental Governance, and although we use real world examples to explicate concepts and approaches, the emphasis is on THEORY!

Your contributions to Wikipedia need to reflect this focus.

For the first assignment (contributing to an existing page) this focus can be achieved by adding to an existing entry on some concept or approach, or by adding a theoretical element to a page on an applied example or policy.

For the second assignment (creating your own page) it may be necessary to focus on a concept or approach. The reading for each week can be used to get ideas for possible subjects. For example, there may be concepts or ideas that you are interested in, but that I have not unpacked fully in the book. Ideally, you would not develop a page about a person, policy, or an event, though this may be appropriate if the content is primarily conceptual.

Support for topic selection will be through Blackboard. The discussion thread can also be used by you all to identify who is doing what topic in case there is a clash or overlap. On this note, please don't go away and create 10 pages on things you *might* like to do, as this will cut down the choice for others... let's work collaboratively!

Previous topics:

Examples of some previous work can be found on Blackboard under the assessment tab. There are links to work that is on Wikipedia:

Contributions:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watershed_management#Governance

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metabolic_rift

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_sovereignty#Food_Regime_theory

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoengineering#Justification

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Reporting_Initiative#Global_Reporting_Initiative_and_the_Environment

Pages:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_environmental_policy_instruments

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Urban_Neighbourhood

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorialisation_of_carbon_governance

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO_Accountability

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodification_of_water

Complete list of page topics from 2010-11:

New Environmental Policy Instruments

Environmental Governance in Brazil

Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods

The Commodification of Water

Social Ecological Systems

The Cities for Climate Change Protection programme

Politics of energy transformation

Theories of Practice

GIS and environmental governance

Environmental Regulation of SMEs

Territorialisation of carbon governance

Command and control

Type II partnerships

Political Economy of Climate Change

Commodification of nature

Ecolocalisation

Urban resilience

Civic environmentalism

Green Urbanism

Governing oil spills in the US

Information deficit

Green experiments

Climate Governance

Transition Management

Europeanisation