

Writing Assignment 1 "A place called home"

Write a description of the place, town, or neighborhood that you consider home (if you have moved around extensively, pick your favorite place). Do not describe your dwelling, but rather the environs and social-ecological interactions that surround your home. The length is not to exceed two pages, so write logically and in complete sentences, but be concise. The assignment must be typed using Times, 12 pt font, and double-spaced. It is worth 100 pts. (10% of your final grade) and is due on September 20th at the beginning of class.

The first page must describe the geographic, ecological, and social setting (see suggested topics below), incorporating the main elements of social systems and ecosystems. The second page must list any environmental and/or social threats to the quality of life in this place called home that you have observed or heard about. Towards the end, indicate the extent of your personal "Ecological Footprint" in terms of acres. You should have obtained a value by answering the 15 questions on the web site, www.myfootprint.org (see instructions from last week's lecture). As you may have witnessed, the site can be a bit finicky, so be patient, and carefully choose your country and language to begin the quiz.

Address as many of the below points as possible, but do not feel constrained by or obligated to the list. Grading will be based on completeness, quality of the writing, and incorporation of relevant issues so far discussed in class.

1. What is distinctive about the environment of this (your) particular place? How would you describe it to someone from the other side of the globe?
2. What obvious connections are there between the environment and the people who live within it? How does the environment affect their livelihoods or habits? And how do people affect the environment?
3. Have you observed any examples of positive or negative feedback happening at this specific place? If so, describe them. Have they resulted in better or inferior living conditions for humans, plants, and animals?
4. What important resources of the community are found locally? Which come from a distant place?
5. What products do the people eat and where do they come from? Are there any local food products that are significant? Which products are shipped to other locations?
6. Where does all the waste go?
7. If you and other people who care about this specific place had to make recommendations as to reduce local ecological footprints, what would you suggest?