

**CHEM 336/TOX 336 Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology  
Spring Semester 2004**

**Instructions for the preparation of the opinion paper**

The opinion paper is an essay that is to be prepared based on any article of environmental interest that you find in a newspaper or magazine, dated April 1, 2004 or later. Please check with your instructor as to the suitability of the article that you propose to write about.

Your essay should comprise the following parts:

- a synopsis of what the article actually says, whether or not you agree with what the author wrote
- a brief discussion as to why the issue that has been raised is environmentally important
- a critique as to whether the newspaper or magazine article accurately reflects conventional scientific views. As examples, did the article make sense – chemically, toxicologically, epidemiologically? Did you agree with the author's position? Why or why not? Did the author have an "axe to grind" that made him/her use emotive or other unscientific arguments?
- You should try to find, if possible, the scientific article on which the newspaper or magazine article was based. Did the author of the newspaper article render the original article faithfully?

You should expect to look up additional scientific articles as background. The latter articles should be taken principally from scientific journal and review articles, rather from other magazines. Be especially careful in quoting internet sources, many of which are not peer-reviewed and whose accuracy may therefore be doubtful. Be aware of the problem of plagiarism: any ideas that are not your own must be referenced, and any words that you quote verbatim must be presented in "quotes" and referenced.

Your paper should be prepared in the following format:

- 1.5 or double spaced, 12 point font, standard margins
- properly referenced using a standard format (you may want to use either *Environmental Science and Technology* or *Journal of Biological Chemistry* as your models). Any internet source must be acknowledged with the author, article title, full internet address and the date on which it was accessed.

Your paper should have an introductory statement as to the purpose of the work, and an brief Abstract of no more than 150 words. **You must also hand in a copy of the newspaper or magazine article on which your opinion paper is based, to help me evaluate your work.**

The object of this exercise is to show whether you can read an article about environmental science critically. It does not matter whether or not you agree with the author – or with me. What does matter is that you can express your ideas clearly and logically, and back them up with literature precedent(s). To that end, writing style will be included as part of your grade.

**The due date for this assignment is Tuesday July 13, in class**