**A SAMPLE PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Topic:** Border Security and “The Fence” – Will it secure our borders?

**Thesis:**

In October 2006, President George W. Bush signed a measure calling for the construction of over 700 miles of physical and electronic fencing along the southern border between the United States and Mexico. This legislation has had a number of consequences affecting international relations, migration patterns (of both humans and animals), environmental impact, and interstate relationships. This paper will discuss the economic, geographic, and political factors leading to the construction of the fence, as well as examining its consequences (both intended and unintended) for those who live along both sides of the border with particular emphasis on the state of Texas, including impact on counties and local governments. In addition, specific policy recommendations will be made which are intended to improve security along the United States – Mexico border while having a more positive effect on trade and international relations.

**Project Design**:

This research project will be comprised of the following components:

1. A discussion of border security and events leading to the construction of the fence.
2. A discussion of the current political environment (both domestic and international) along the border.
3. A detailed examination of the legislation signed by President Bush
4. A critical analysis of the legislation’s impact (both positive and negative)
5. Suggestions for policy changes to enhance the effectiveness of border security while maintaining positive relations between the United States and Mexico both politically and economically.

**Methods**:

In order to effectively investigate the impact of border fence legislation, an intensive literature review will be conducted using government documents, peer-reviewed journal research, and reliable media sources (in print, video, and audio formats). In addition, a survey-based investigation of opinions and attitudes of those residents along the border most affected by this legislation will be conducted along with interviews of policy makers directly involved in the construction and/or implementation of this legislation (as available within the timeframe of this project).

**Product**:

This project will be compiled into a written report of approximately 5 pages in length with annotated bibliographical references.

**Final Project Part 2- FINAL POLICY PAPER GUIDELINES**

**Format**: Should be double spaced, using appropriate format, spelling, punctuation, etc. and internal citations in MLA or APA format. The library has online resources to assist you in understanding MLA or APA format for citations.

**Length**: Approximataely 5 pages double spaced with one-inch margins.

**Content Requirements**: Your paper should include the following:

1. A brief “Executive Summary” which outlines your central thesis and supporting arguments. Generally this is around a half-page long.
2. A clearly written introductory paragraph with a well-developed thesis.
3. Background and literature which outlines the social problem you are investigating and clearly shows why this problem requires a legislative or policy-based solution.
4. A description of your research methods and procedures, including any literature research, data analysis, and/or surveys you conducted. Your methods section should outline how your investigation was conducted and controlled (particularly if it is research based).
5. A discussion of your research findings and their implications for policy/decision makers.
6. A discussion of your recommendations for legislation or policy. Since this is the purpose of the paper, you should support all recommendations with evidence and should consider benefits, costs, and consequences/implications of your recommendations.

For instance, if you recommended that a new bridge be built between two communities, you would spend the bulk of your paper supporting the need for this bridge using literature, research, etc. Your recommendation to build a bridge should have clear benefits but will also come with costs to the taxpayer and possible implications on others in the community. The monetary cost is only a small part of your consideration. You should also consider unintended consequences and possible implications in your discussion.

Websites and other resources you might want to visit in preparing your paper (regardless of the type of paper you choose to prepare) include:

The El Paso Community College Library online web resources,

<http://www.epcc.edu/Library/vv/Pages/default.aspx>

El Paso Community College Library online report writing guidelines.

<http://www.epcc.edu/Library/Pages/CitingandTutorials.aspx>

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (Variety of resources on writing and formatting a research paper).

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

The Boston University Dept. of International Relations Website <http://www.bu.edu/ir/graduate/current/papers/policy/>