

**An extended project following the politics of fiscal policy good for Universities located in a capital city from Nita Rinehart of Evergreen State College**

***FISCAL POLICY PROJECT***

Choose a fiscal issue—budget or tax—that is under consideration during the current session of the Washington State Legislature. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Extension of hi tech tax breaks
2. Restoration of 2003 budget cuts, especially human services
3. Higher education funding tied to economic development
4. Funding the home health care worker contract.

Follow your issue closely. Attend at least two hours of a public hearing on your issue. Interview a person involved in your issue.

Pay attention to any media coverage of your issue.

Write a 6 – 8 page paper analyzing your issue. Prepare a 5 minute oral presentation of your issue.

***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, JANUARY 12***

Turn in two copies of a one-page statement of the issue you have chosen to follow. Include the reason/s for your choice, what you find most interesting about your issue, and why you believe it is important. I'll return one copy to you with comments and I'll keep one copy. This is not a rough draft. Ideally, this should serve as the first page of your project. (If you cannot complete this assignment by the 12<sup>th</sup> because of lack of information due to the cancellation of the opening class—that's ok. I'll accept your onepage statement by email if you get it to me by 5:00 p.m. Monday, January 19.)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, JANUARY 26***

Turn in two copies of a 2-3 page analysis of the persons interested in your issue. Who supports your issue and why? Who opposes your issue and why? What is your assessment of the various arguments for and against?

***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2***

Turn in two copies of a 2- 3 page summary of EITHER your interview OR the public hearing you attended.

***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9***

Turn in two copies of a 2-3 page summary of EITHER your interview OR the public hearing you attended.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Attend in person so that you get a sense of the entire proceedings. TVW gives you only the camera's perspective and you cannot get a complete sense of what's happening. If your issue does not command the full two hours of the hearing, you can still get perspective on your issue by how much time is allotted to it. And you will learn something from observing a complete hearing.
2. Pay attention to who wields power over your issue.

3. How is testimony on your issue handled? Does everyone get to speak? What is the response of legislators to the testimony?
4. What testimony strikes you as persuasive? Why?
5. Based on the hearing, what do you anticipate to be the outcome of your issue?

#### INTERVIEW

1. Schedule your interview well in advance so you aren't caught short near the end of your project. If you are scheduling by phone, begin by identifying yourself by name and asking to speak with the person who does scheduling for the person you want to interview. Be clear about your objective.
2. Choose a person to interview (at least one, but feel free to choose more than one) who is knowledgeable on your issue or who has a serious interest in your issue (or both).
3. Because people involved in the legislative process are incredibly busy during session, your interview will likely be only about 15 minutes.
4. Think about what you want to learn from the person you interview. What is most puzzling to you about your issue. How do they think it will turn out? To whom or what do they think you should pay most attention to?
5. Generally, open-ended questions are best for eliciting information, but if your person starts to ramble have some prepared questions handy to get back on track.
6. See if they are willing to predict the outcome of your issue. Who or what do they see as determining the final outcome?

#### ***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23***

Hand in two copies of your final project. Use your previous assignments as the basis for your final project. Include a reflection about what you have learned from the project.

#### ***ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, MARCH 8***

Present a 5 minute summary of your project to the class and guests. Be prepared to answer questions about your project. Remember that an oral presentation is very different from a written presentation. Think about sharing the most interesting parts of your project and what you learned.