

Two paper assignments from Dr. Anselm Staack of the University of Alaska Southeast

Paper Assignments:

You will write two papers. Since many of you will find the same material, the emphasis is on how well you utilize those sources to make the argument of the paper's subject. Feel free to share them among yourselves if you so choose. The purpose of this exercise is for you to demonstrate your ability to argue a timely, relevant, difficult public finance issue from two opposing points of view, with credibility. In the public arena your work will be subject to much more open review. In your career you will likely have the opportunity, or need, to work for both sides. *It is imperative that you understand and be able to articulate both sides of an argument with clarity. The better you understand your opponents argument, the better you can support your own.* No public finance decision is an isolated intellectual exercise.

Effort alone is not enough - you must show your ability to understand both the practical aspects and the political landscape while presenting credible, verifiable outside sources and an "intellectually honest" argument. Intellectual honesty in these terms means that you there is a logical flow from your facts to the result; and your ability to address those facts that may be counter to your argument. Your conclusions and assertions should not require an "ideological bent", a "leap of faith", and / or depend on the "inherent bias" of the reader to come to your conclusion. **This is not about "spinning" an argument to fulfill a political ideology or objective - it is about a learned, honest self-exercise in open thinking.** It will require a combination of research, understanding of the material, creative argumentative skills (something you use in the public arena every day), and a skillful display of your argument in writing.

Paper #1 - Argue that there is a "Fiscal Gap" in Alaska and its effects.
Due Friday, March 10, 2006.

Paper #2 - Argue that there is really no such thing as a true "Fiscal Gap" in Alaska; that it's all a matter of semantics, etc. *Due Friday, April 14, 2006.*

- You can use any class materials and any other sources you can find
- Minimum of 8 pages text (illustrations, charts, bibliography are extra), maximum text 15 pages