

FINAL PAPER GUIDELINES

The final project is an opportunity to synthesize the issues that you have analyzed in your project papers throughout the term.

Note that the Final Paper is optional. If you choose not to do the project, one half your score on the Applications Paper will be counted (since the Applications Paper is worth 100 points compared to 50 points for the Final Paper). Historically, on the average, scores have been a little higher on the Final Paper than on the Applications Paper (although that has not been the case for everyone). Therefore, completing the Final Paper may be advantageous for some but is not necessary for those who are satisfied with their Applications Paper Scores. If you complete the Final Paper and score higher (in percentage terms) than on your Applications Paper, your Final Paper will count. However, if you complete the Final Paper but have a lower percentage score than you did on the applications Paper, the Applications Paper will still be substituted. That is, there is no penalty for writing a Final Paper that receives a lower percentage score than that received on the Applications Paper:

ILLUSTRATION					
Situation	Applications Paper Score	1/2 Applications Paper Score	Final Paper Score	Score Counted	Total
Final Paper not done	86	43		43	129
Final Paper done, higher score than Applications Paper	86	43	47	47	133
Final Paper done, lower score than Applications Paper	86	43	44	43	129

Please note that papers containing the term “etc.” are likely to be viewed with considerable skepticism!

The paper should contain three sections:

1. A brief **executive summary** (no more than one double spaced page) in which you summarize the contents of this report. This summary should help a busy reader decide whether it would be useful to read the entire report. Although you may choose a different approach, the executive summary might take the following form:
 - a) Brief discussion of the venture.
 - b) A brief statement of your tentative assessment as discussed in section #3 below.
2. **Replies** (no more than three double spaced pages in total) to substantive comments (as appropriate) and questions raised in the project proposal and/or your applications paper. This includes both responding to outright questions and to comments such as “It is not clear....” If you do not receive comments on your Applications Paper on time, you can (1) invent questions that you anticipate someone reading your Proposal and Applications Paper might have and/or (2) discuss the idea with a friend and respond to questions that he or she can identify. If you did not receive significant comments on the proposal and applications paper, you can “make up” reasonable questions that you suspect that a reader may have.

3. A **tentative assessment** (no more than three double spaced pages) of the prospects, contingent on specific findings of the research discussed above, for your venture. Some “prototypical” conclusions might be:
- a) “Based on everything seen so far, it appears that the venture has strong potential for the following reasons.... [Discussion] Questions remain about the following issues, which would need to be assessed through research.... [Discussion].”
 - b) “Although the product would appear to fill a serious need and may have good commercial prospects, the feasibility of the product is subject to the following very serious limitations and/or complications..... [Discussion] The following research is needed to help assess prospects, problems, and complications....”
 - c) “Although the product seemed a promising idea when proposed, the following complications suggest that the idea is not feasible (in the current market or with current technology for the following reasons....” [Discussion].

A draft of the evaluation form for the final project is available on the course web site but is subject to revision.

A podcast on the “Projects” page on the course web site discusses the content of the Final Paper in more detail.