

Objectives: Each student will read and research sources from current periodicals, books, or the Internet which relate to each of the topics listed below. Each article is to be summarized in one or two typed pages, including a paragraph on the student's reaction to the article. The reference information will be included at the beginning of the summation.

- Criteria:**
1. The summation will correspond to the topic assigned by the instructor (see list below).
 2. Student's summation will be a minimum of one to two pages (typed; can be single- or double spaced).
 3. Students should select articles written in the last five years, and articles should be from well-known sources.
 4. Each summation will include a summary (Introduction, Body, and Conclusion) and a response to the articles (one or two paragraphs). For your response to each article, you may want to keep in mind the 'Baloney Detection' questions in the attached handout: Is the article good science or biased 'junk science'? You may also want to apply critical thinking (also outlined on the handout and in your text).
 5. The reference will be listed at the beginning of the summation.
 6. A copy of the FIRST PAGE (only) of the article or Internet reference) will be placed directly behind the written summary.

Grade Weight: 3% each for a total of 15% of the final course grade.

- Topics:**
1. Water: Resources, Use in Turf / Green industry or agriculture
 2. Fertilizers in the Environment (Turf / Green industry or agricultural use)
 3. Pesticides in the Environment (Turf / Green industry or agricultural use)
 4. Wildlife and golf courses or wildlife and agriculture
 5. Wetlands and golf courses or wetlands and agriculture

Due date: Due dates will be identified in the class calendar.
(20 points off for each day late)

Current Events Articles: Working with Reports

In your assignments for this class, and in your exposure to media reports regarding environmental issues and potential environmental effects related to your work in the turf or green industries you will encounter a number of reports and articles related to controversial subjects. Unfortunately, writers sometimes try to bias public opinion in favor of their personal viewpoints, whether for philosophical, political or monetary reasons. The question for any reader, then, is how to separate legitimate science from data without any (or much) scientific validity. The astronomer Carl Sagan suggested a “Baloney Detection Kit” containing the questions below. As you read the articles for the assignment in this class, and other articles you encounter, consider these questions as a guide to detecting bogus analysis and ‘junk science’. Also, consider use of the steps in critical thinking, as abbreviated below.

Questions for Baloney Detection

1. How reliable are the sources of this claim? Is there reason to believe that they might have an agenda to pursue in this case?
2. Have the claims been verified by other sources? What data are presented in support of this opinion?
3. What position does the majority of the scientific community hold in this issue?
4. How does this claim fit with what we know about how the world works? Is this a reasonable assertion or does it contradict established theories?
5. are the arguments balanced and logical? Have proponents of a particular position considered alternate points of view or only selected supportive evidence for their particular beliefs?
6. What do you know about the sources of funding for a particular position? Are they financed by groups with partisan goals?
7. Where was evidence for competing theories published? Has it undergone impartial peer review or is it only in proprietary publication?

Steps in Critical Thinking*

1. Identify and evaluate premises and conclusions in an argument.
2. Acknowledge and clarify uncertainties, vagueness, equivocation and contradictions.
3. Distinguish between facts and values.
4. Recognize and assess assumptions.
5. Distinguish source reliability or unreliability.
6. Recognize and understand conceptual frameworks.

* also see your textbook.