Midterm Essay Assignment

In a well organized, fully documented, and analytical essay of 7-10 double-spaced pages, please answer the question posed here:

Describe a moral, social, environmental or political problem that can and should be addressed by a **polis**, a political entity at a local, regional, national or international level. Propose ways in which the problem might be addressed by the **polis** and analyze your proposals critically. Include ethical/religious perspectives in your analysis.

It is recommended that you draw upon the class discussions, films, current events, assigned readings and your more general knowledge to substantiate your argument. All sources must be referenced.

I suggest that you begin with an analytical outline. This would include the following elements:

- **Thesis** (that answers the question above)
- **Bridge** (that introduces key concepts and aspects of our historical, political, and social context)
- **Examples** (each section presenting a thesis statement, further context, and support whether from the CSM or other materials/stories/discussions from class)
- **Restatement** (explaining what you’ve learned from this exercise, as well as new questions that this assignment has provoked in your own thinking and experience of current events)

A solid essay will present at least two perspectives: one, that which you presently hold; two, that of someone whom you imagine to be living quite differently than you; and perhaps others that represent the complexity of relationships out there in the world. A “perspective” is **much** more than a mere opinion. It is an argumentative position based on your feelings, experience, our readings, current events, and the numerous life stories that we have heard or observed so far. There are lots of names and faces that we can meaningfully attach to our Christian ethical and globalization considerations.

You should not set up a straw man to be knocked down, but genuinely inhabit and argue honestly for at least one point of view (POV) other than your own. You are welcome to then refute that point of view—if you were unable to refute it, it would probably not be the “other” POV, after all—during the course of presenting your own conclusions on the topic. All POV presented should be well supported by argument and, if possible, references.

If you find that your essay is too short, try giving more examples or making your arguments more thorough. If you find that your essay is too long, sharpen the focus! But I think you will find that it’s difficult to fill ten pages.

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* This includes problems of war and peace: “It is clear that war is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means.” (Karl von Klausewitz, *On War*)

† This Greek word is sometimes translated by the English *polity*: “an organized society, such as a nation, having a specific form of government.” (*American Heritage Concise Dictionary*, Houghton-Mifflen, 1994)
You are seniors. I expect senior-level work. Proofread your essay. Have a coursemate read and critique it. You must, of course, follow standard bibliographic and reference format. See the Chicago Manual of Style, which was introduced in your 1st Year Seminar class, and is always for sale at the bookstore.*

For the essay rubric, see http://www.bluffton.edu/~bergerd/classes/LAS400/rubric.html. See also my hints for writing Capstone essays at http://www.bluffton.edu/~bergerd/classes/LAS400/essayHints.html.

As with any written assignment, feel free to work with the Writing Center staff, or call upon me during office hours, or engage one another in preparation—up to the point when you begin writing. Your classmates may, indeed, offer the best and most helpful feedback. Good luck—some great essays come out of CVGC.

**The legal boilerplate**

This essay is due by 8:30 AM on Saturday, February 28, by e-mail to bergerd@bluffton.edu, in Microsoft Word format. Paper copies will not be accepted, but you may submit your essay on a floppy disk or CD as an alternative to E-mail. This counts for 20% of your final grade. Late papers will lose one point (of 20) per calendar day, unless I have granted an extension prior to the due date. Copies turned in on disk must be in my hands (not just my mailbox) by Saturday, February 28, or they will be considered late.

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* Any standard bibliographic and reference format is acceptable, so long as it is complete.