Sustainability Paper Assignment: (50 points)

What? You are expected to complete a short research paper of approximately 3-5 typewritten pages (1500-2500 words) in length focusing on a current problem or issue on the public agenda in Oregon. The purpose of this short paper assignment is to help you understand more about the setting of state and local politics and policymaking in Oregon. You will be using sustainability as your conceptual framework to guide your selection of a topic and your writing of a paper. Keep former governor Kitzhaber’s definition in mind:

What does sustainability mean? I define sustainability as managing the use, the development and the protection of our natural, social and environmental resources in a way and at a rate that enables people to meet their current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Topics? A wide variety of social, economic, environmental, and cultural problems and issues will fit this assignment. For example, Oregon’s controversial “death with dignity” law is the subject of Attorney General Ashcroft’s effort to formulate national guidelines that would make physician assisted suicide illegal and impossible. A short research paper would examine the current controversy, discuss the brief Oregon experience, and evaluate possible outcomes.

Or, Oregon’s Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and its administration by the PERS Board is the target of a burst of proposed legislation in the 2003 legislature. A short research paper would summarize the nature of the current PERS crisis and its origins.

Or, a short research paper would summarize the controversies over Oregon land-use law and the failed effort to revise its use through 2000 ballot initiative #7.

Or, consider the origins and impact of Oregon’s nation-leading joblessness; causes and implications of shortening of the K-12 school year (e.g. Hillsboro, May 23); growing demands on under-funded state and local social service agencies; growing hunger problem and the demands on the Oregon food bank; the nature and effectiveness of Oregon welfare programs in a period of economic recession; the Oregon Health plan—how it works and why it is in jeopardy; Oregon initiative process and what initiative efforts are now underway; the Klamath Basin water shortage and struggle; the funding crisis in Oregon’s K-12 system; the “local option” as a response to the K-12 funding crisis; economic development strategies—what happened to high tech? Oregon’s tax system—-who pays and who benefits; the polluted Willamette; the bridges and roads crisis; term limits and no term limits—what difference does it make? Oregon’s beach law and its effects; the State’s management and costs of the New Carissa; status and effects of Oregon’s “Bottle Bill;” etc. There are many additional possibilities. Your choice of topic should be guided most by your curiosity.
How? Your paper should follow the standard MLA format and should be single-spaced. If you need assistance in organizing your paper, visit the “writing desk” in the LRC. Please do not use footnotes. Instead identify the author of a quote at the end of the quotation and list your notes for sources at the back of the paper. You must include a bibliography at the end of your paper. **No bibliography? No credit.**

Sources? You must use at least three (3) different sources for your research including at least one electronic source.

When? **Topics must be selected no later than Wednesday, April 23.**

**Papers are due in my office, no later than 5pm, Friday, May 2.**