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**Discipline Awareness Project**

**Global Affairs**

People who are involved with global affairs are usually focused on learning about countries and their cultural, political, and economic characteristics. As a Global Affairs student, during my classes I have learned mostly about various inequalities (for example, income inequality), their causes and effects, and attempted to brainstorm possible solutions to them. Global affairs is an extremely broad field, and it includes professionals in different subfields. International relations experts are responsible for maintaining diplomatic relationships between different countries and promoting collaboration on multiple levels. Conflict analysis and resolution experts are responsible for mitigating various instate and interstate conflicts. Global economy experts provide independent economic analysis throughout the world and make predictions about the future of the global economy. Also, global affairs specialists are widely involved with various non-governmental organizations, advocating for equality and human rights throughout the globe. All these experts exchange their ideas at various conferences, as well as through printed and online sources, such as academic journals, as well as in newspapers and magazines. One of the most current topics of discussion and debate is methods of ending poverty in the world. Another current topic is climate change, its effects, and solutions to tackle the issue. Many IGOs and NGOs focus on sustainable development and ways to achieve resource efficiency. Also, human rights violations in the developing world are still widely discussed among professionals.

Some of key figures and organizations in global affairs include the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Institute for Environment and Development, the World Nature Organization, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International. Most of these organizations produce gray literature and trade publications. Examples of gray literature are annual health reports by the World Health Organization, or sustainable development programs by the World Nature Organization. Also, databasessuch as *ProQuest Environmental Science Collection*, *GreenFILE,* and *International Political Science Abstracts* provide a wide range of scholarly articles and research done in the field. *ProQuest Environmental Science Collection* is a multidisciplinary database which provides comprehensive coverage of the literature relating to environmental sciences dating from 1967 to the present. *GreenFILE* covers the connections between the environment and a variety of disciplines such as agriculture, education, law, health and technology.*International Political Science Abstracts,* produced by the International Political Science Association, provides non-evaluative abstracts of articles in the field of political science published in journals and yearbooks around the world. These abstracts are helpful in evaluating whether the article can be useful for the given research. *International Journal of Environmental Studies* can become a useful tool while conducting research related to environment, climate change, and sustainable development. *Southeast Asian Affairs* journal provides peer reviewed research on politics, culture, and economics of the countries in Southeast Asia. All mentioned sources were extremely helpful in retrieving articles for my research on water scarcity in South Asia.

Since global affairs is a very broad field, it incorporates various research methods, including interviews, content analysis (such as literature review or analysis of various policies), statistical research, empirical study, and theoretical analysis. Both quantitative (polls, questionnaires, and surveys) and qualitative (focus groups, individual interviews, and participation/observations) research are used widely in the field. One scholarly article in the field might incorporate a variety of research methods. An example of such source is a scholarly article “Water Policy, Climate Change and Adaptation in South Asia” by Marittika Basu and Rajib Shaw. The researchers use statistical research to examine water availability in South Asian countries, theoretical analysis to draw a connection between water scarcity and climate change, and content analysis of water policies to examine the framework in South Asia.

Academic genres used in global affairs field also vary. One of the examples of a genre used in the field is literature review, which discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period. A literature review can be just a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. The case study as a genre is also widely used in global affairs. A case study is an account of an activity, event or problem that contains a real or hypothetical situation and includes the complexities you would encounter in the workplace. Case studies are used to help you see how the complexities of real life influence decisions. As a Global Affairs student, I am often assigned to write proposals. The purpose of the proposal is to show how you intend to tackle the study and whether or not you have thought through the practicalities. The report is another genre especially popular among various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A report is an account given of a particular matter, especially in the form of an official document, after thorough investigation or consideration by an appointed person or body. Both students and experts in global affairs are expected to provide background information on the issue in their research, as well as explain why it is important to dedicate time to solving the problem, and provide possible solutions.

While working on this project, I realized how broad my field is and how many different ways there are to start a conversation about water scarcity. Also, now I clearly understand why ending water scarcity is so essential for eradicating poverty in the world. Many scientists today discuss water scarcity in the context of climate change. They assert that some countries experience water crises because of droughts or excessive flooding caused by climate change. Water is extremely important for agriculture; thus, when experiencing water shortages, developing countries are unable to produce enough food. Food and water shortages increase malnutrition and various disease occurrences. People become less productive, which leads to overall poverty in the country. By investigating the reasons behind governmental failures and learning new ways to combat water scarcity, we come closer to ending poverty in the world.