**Assignment 1:** Topic Selection & Stakeholder Analysis

**Assignment Summary:** In this assignment, you will

1. Choose your case study topic
2. Identify relevant stakeholders
3. Analyze how these stakeholders are affected by and would respond to the issue

**Course Learning Outcomes Assessed:**

* **Differentiate** between scientific and religious approaches to knowledge by identifying their methods, assumptions, and limitations.
* **Identify** and **distinguish** between positive (descriptive, fact-based) and normative (opinion-based, value-driven) claims.
* **Analyze** how values and evidence shape public responses to socioscientific issues.

**Assignment Purpose:** The purpose of this assignment is to serve as a formative assessment, allowing both students and the instructor to gauge progress toward key learning outcomes while instruction is still ongoing. Through topic selection and stakeholder analysis, students will begin exploring how different groups interpret and respond to science-based societal issues. This assignment is designed to help students develop the skills needed to identify competing values, distinguish between scientific and non-scientific reasoning, and understand how various perspectives influence public debates. The instructor will use student responses to adjust instruction as needed and ensure alignment with course objectives.

**Part 1: Choose your case study topic**

You may select one of the suggested case study questions provided, or you may propose your own. If you choose to write your own question, **you must receive instructor approval** before beginning your project.

Your case study question must:

* **Present a clear public or policy-relevant decision** that is grounded in scientific evidence or understanding.
* **Allow for multiple valid perspectives** from different stakeholders, such as educators, parents, policymakers, scientists, or religious leaders. *Your case should explore how different groups might view and respond to the issue.*

**Cosmos & the Age of the Universe**

1. Should the Big Bang theory be required in public school science curricula?
2. Should religious perspectives be taught alongside the Big Bang in science classes?
3. Should we continue to invest public funding into studying the origins and scale of the universe?
4. Should we prioritize the search for extraterrestrial life in our space exploration goals?

**Earth Science & Evolution**

1. Should the scientifically established age of the Earth be required in public school science standards?
2. Should evolution be a required part of the science curriculum in secondary schools?
3. Should Bluebonnet Learning-style curricula, which include Bible-based content in elementary instruction, be permitted in publicly funded schools, and what effect could this have on students' science education?
4. Should schools be allowed to include religious explanations about Earth's origins in science courses?
5. Should museums and public science institutions include religious viewpoints in exhibits about Earth's history and evolution?

**Human Biology & Medical Advances**

1. Should embryonic stem cell research be allowed and funded by the government?
2. Should public schools be required to teach comprehensive reproductive science, including fertilization, pregnancy, and miscarriage?
3. Should parents have the right to opt their children out of lessons on human reproduction in public schools?
4. Should antibiotic use in agriculture be more strictly regulated to slow the spread of resistance?
5. Should patients be denied antibiotics if their illness is likely viral, even if they insist on treatment?

**Part 2: Stakeholders**

Identify **at least four different stakeholders** relevant to the question you selected in Part 1 (e.g., educator, parent, policymaker, scientist, religious leader). For each stakeholder, respond to the following:

* How would this stakeholder likely be **affected by** the issue?
* How might this stakeholder **respond** to or **take a stance on** the issue?
* What **arguments** would they make in support of their perspective? *Make sure to label these arguments as scientific, religious, political, ethical, etc.*
* What **values** (e.g., economy, education, public health, tradition) seem most important to this stakeholder, and how do those values influence their position?
* Are there any **shared concerns or areas of potential compromise** between this stakeholder and others?

**Part 3: Teamwork Worksheet**

Groups should assign each member a project role. **Each group** should fill out the *Teamwork Table* and provide a rough meeting schedule.

**Rubric Checklist**

This assignment will be graded based on the following checklist. To receive full credit on the assignment, each group must complete the Assignment 1 Form, which includes:

o Instructor approved case study question.

o At least 4 unique stakeholders identified.

For **each** stakeholder, answer the following questions:

o How would each stakeholder likely be **impacted by** the issue?

o How might each stakeholder **respond** to or **take a stance on** the issue?

o What **arguments** would each make in support of their perspective? *Make sure to label these arguments as scientific, religious, political, ethical, etc.*

o What **values** (e.g., economy, education, public health, tradition) seem most important to each stakeholder, and how do those values influence their position?

o Are there any **shared concerns or areas of potential compromise** between each stakeholder and others?

o A completed Teamwork Worksheet.

o A completed meeting schedule, including dates, times, and goals.

**In addition, students need to complete the following individual work:**

o Complete the teamwork evaluation for Group Assignment 1.