

OCN 401 — BIOGEOCHEMICAL SYSTEMS — FALL 2014**Writing a Successful Outline**Components of an Outline:

- Title (should be the title of your paper)
- Major headings according to major sections of your paper
- Minor headings beneath each major heading as appropriate

Objectives of an outline:

- To gather and organize your thoughts
- The successful outline will provide you with a road-map to writing your paper
- Various levels of detail are possible. The more detailed the outline, the more straightforward will be the conversion from outline to paper.

Helpful items to include in an outline:

- Under each heading, include a phrase or sentence summarizing the main point(s) to be made under that heading; these would be your ideas for your topic sentence(s); e.g.,

Topic Sentence Idea: Sources of P to ocean

- You can include the actual topic sentence(s) that you will use to start the paragraph(s) under that heading; e.g.,

Topic Sentence: The main source of phosphorus to the oceans is riverine particulate matter.

- You may want to note which reference(s) will provide information to substantiate points under a heading
- You may want to note figure(s) and/or table(s) you plan to use in a particular section, and the source (citation) from which these derive

An example of an Outline, in proper outline format, follows on the next page. Some important points:

- Your outline should follow the structure suggested in the example that follows.
- However, this is an example only! Your outline may have fewer headings than are shown in the example, or it may have more.
- The content of your essay, and the organization of your essay, will dictate how many major headings, minor headings, and/or sub-headings are optimal.
- Be creative in your choice of headings. These not only will guide the reader through your paper, but may provoke the reader's interest in your paper.

Example Outline Format

(Note: You can use any format and headings you like)

Title of Paper

I. ***Introduction***

- A. *Introduction to the topic*
- B. *Objectives of this paper*

II. ***Background***

- A. *Overview of the field of study*
 - i. sub-heading-i
 - ii. sub-heading-ii
 - iii. subheading-iii

Possible topic sentence(s), sources to be cited, possible figure(s) and/or table(s) under headings and/or sub-headings, as appropriate

- B. *Significance of the field of study*
Minor heading and sub-headings as above

III. ***Paper Topic #1***

Minor heading and sub-headings as above

IV. ***Paper Topic #2***

Minor heading and sub-headings as above

V. ***Paper Topic #3***

Minor heading and sub-headings as above

VI. ***Conclusions***

- A. *Summary of results and discussion*
- B. *Conclusions drawn*

Outline Rubric

Strong	Satisfactory	Weak	Criteria	Comments
			Proper use of outline format	
			Proper use of headings, e.g., the hierarchy from major- to minor- to sub-headings is consistent with the material indicated under each	
			Organization: Arrangement of headings makes sense, guides the reader	
			Inventiveness and appropriateness of heading names: Do the headings clearly signal what the content will be, and are they interesting enough to engage the reader?	
			Completeness: Outline covers the full gamut of the paper, from Introduction to Conclusions, with the body of the paper sufficiently fleshed out that the reader has a comprehensive idea of the design and content of the paper	
			Mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation, font size, neatness	
			EXTRA CREDIT: Quality and appropriateness of topic sentences	
			EXTRA CREDIT: Quality and appropriateness of citations; proper citation format used?	
			EXTRA CREDIT: Quality and appropriateness of suggested Figure(s) and Table(s): Is it clear how they will support the points the paper will make? Are they legible? Are they interesting?	

Student Name:_____

Reviewer:_____.

Outline Grading Categories and Points

Evaluation Category (pts)	Requirement	Possible Points	Points Awarded
Format (2)	Use outline format	1	
	Use 11 pt (PC) or 12 pt (Mac) font	1	
Content (13)	Proper use of headings and subheadings	5	
	Overall organization	5	
	Completeness	3	
Extra Credit (10)	Include possible topic sentences	5	
	Include references for specific sections	2.5	
	Describe or show possible Figures and/or Tables to be used within specific sections	2.5	
Total points		15	
Total points w/ extra credit		25	