Term Paper General Comments

1) Avoid direct quotes!
   - Restate the key points in your own words to make a more concise, coherent argument.
   - I don’t want to see someone else’s writing, I want to see yours!

2) Avoid colloquial writing (informal voice).

3) References
   - List all your references at the end of your paper (refer to the papers in the reader for formatting examples)
   - Whenever you give facts or figures in the text, GIVE A REFERENCE! (i.e. where did you get them?). You can refer to the reader for examples, but some basic formats are like this:
     Blah blah blah (Smith, 1998).
     OR
     Blah blah blah ¹. Then your literature cited would have:
   - You generally should not include the page number in your text references, just the author name and year (if using the first format above).

4) Be CONCISE! Make your point and move on (don’t repeat the same point/idea again later). I usually gave a “compress” comment on your paper if there were specific sections that needed to be more concise.

5) Don’t editorialize! We all have our opinions about particular topics, but the goal of this assignment is to **objectively summarize the facts** (or even current scientific theories) on an issue. Do not make assertions that you can’t back up with facts/evidence!!! Always consider BOTH sides of the issue before you start making conclusions!

6) Think about the possible solutions that have been proposed. Are there any caveats or side effects to them? Are there alternatives? Compromises?

7) Be careful about websites as sources of information. There are many sites that have credible information, but web content is not peer-reviewed and therefore can be subjective, incomplete, biased, or just plain wrong! Be wary…

8) TIP: Have someone else read your paper aloud to you. It’s an easy way to pick up on awkward phrasing and grammatical errors.