

Delta State University
Sociology 421
Fall 2004

Writing Assignment No. 5

Due: Monday, October 11

Instructions: Prepare a two page essay on the topic identified below. Be sure to develop an explanation or argument in your essay. See the link from the course home page for tips on writing an effective essay.

Topic: The video *Cadillac Desert: An American Nile* examines some of the choices that must be made in order to support the growth and concentration of industry and population in the western United States. In particular, the video focuses on the arid southwest, and the effects that damming the Colorado River has had on urban areas such as Las Vegas, as well as the area's fragile environment. Draw on the discussions in *Our Common Future* on energy, industry and urbanization to assess human efforts to control rivers in the western U.S.

What sorts of problems arose in the cases presented in the video, and how do these reflect problems identified by the World Commission on Environment and Development? Using information presented in *Our Common Future*, suggest actions that might be taken that would lead to more sustainable outcomes in the case of the Colorado River, which is completely controlled by humans.