

Delta State University  
SOC/COD 521  
Fall 2004

## Writing Assignment No. 2

**Due:** Monday, September 20

**Instructions:** Prepare a two page essay on ONE of the topics 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:** Choose ONE of the following topics for your essay:

(1) In the video "On The Edge: A Wake-Up Call," the panelists carry out an extended discussion on different systems of knowledge, and debate the value of science (e.g. "it deals in trivial problems") vs. other ways of knowing. If we wish to build a sustainable society, is science part of the problem or part of the solution? What are some alternatives, and what would sustainability mean based on a scientific (or alternative) rationality?

(2) In the video "On The Edge: A Wake-Up Call," the panelists suggest that one of the roots of our current crises is excessive commercialization. They provide examples of commercial interests altering the way we use forests, fisheries and agricultural lands, the influence commercialization has on consumption patterns, and the interaction between commercialization and population growth. Explain the relationship between commercialization and sustainability. If we want to build a sustainable society, what role should commercial interests play, and how might we enforce any boundaries we set on rampant commercialization? What might be some of the unintended consequences of reining in commercialization?