Unit 3 Team Assignment (60 Points)

While you are working with your team, please use the Team Area located under Unit 6.

Your Team Assignment is due at the end of Unit 3. As you begin working with your team, gaining a clear and in-depth understanding of each member's experience, strengths, and challenges will be invaluable to you. In your private team Discussion area accessed from the Team Area (below Unit 6), you will start this process.

- Two teams will discuss the advisability of having the United States' tax policy as taxing social security benefits separate, but related, from income taxes. That is, to help fund our country and to pay off some of our debt, social security benefits will have a very significant progressive tax. If one's income reaches a certain level, then the tax on any social security taxes received will reach an 80% tax. Thus, only 20% of the social security taxes received from the United States government during the year will be kept by high income tax payers, on the federal income level. The 20% remaining may actually be taxed away by many states, so the high income taxpayer may not be able to keep any of those social security benefits received. The argument for this approach is that social security benefits can be viewed as a welfare program for older Americans. If a person's income is sufficient, he or she would not qualify under this welfare program (much like the welfare program for younger people). One team will be an advocate of this method while the other team will favor the present system, where social security taxes are treated as other income so that all taxpayers receiving those benefits would be able to keep most of those benefits.

- The other two teams will discuss the advisability of having the United States adopt a flat tax system, rather than our present progressive tax system. Our present system has caused significant controversies and contains many “favors” (deductions or tax credits) for certain activities. Having a flat tax system, with few or no deductions, would be easily applied. One team will be an advocate of having a flat tax system in the United States while the other team will favor the present progressive tax system, with deductions and tax credits for various items and activities.

All teams will complete a double-spaced paper, not to exceed 3 pages in length (not counting the title page or the reference page), by the end of Unit 3. The title page should state the team’s task and list the team members. The use of proper grammar will be assessed and included in the grading process. Please make sure to identify a team leader to submit the final version of the paper to the Team Assignment Dropbox under Unit 3.
Team Tools:

- Teams should be conducting a majority of their work in the team area (below Unit 6), so if your instructor needs to provide additional support, seeing the notes in the team area or Chat space may be helpful.
- Your team also has a team-specific area in Doc Sharing, an email group list, and a private synchronous Chat area, if you choose to use them.

**Team Assignment Paper Rubric**

These papers are related to specific issues or cases, and will vary somewhat in length. In all cases, papers must be well-referenced and in APA format. The papers will be evaluated using the following rubric.

At least 20% of a Focus Paper grade is related to composition that includes organization, writing style, and mechanics. Often, composition issues also impact the grading of the assigned Focus Paper topic content because composition impacts the effective presentation of your ideas and material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Content, Focus, Use of Text/Research, and Organization</th>
<th>Analysis and Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Writing Style, Grammar, and APA Format</th>
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<tr>
<td>90–100%</td>
<td>Response successfully answers the assignment question(s); thoroughly uses the text and other literature; and includes a strong thesis statement, introduction, and conclusion. The main points of the paper are developed clearly. All arguments are supported well (no errors in logic) using outside sources as assigned. Sources are primarily academic journals, with thoughtful use of web sources. References are applied substantively to the paper topic. Paper skillfully addresses counter-arguments; does not ignore data contradicting its claim; and refers to sources both in-text and in the reference page.</td>
<td>Response exhibits strong higher-order critical thinking and analysis (e.g., evaluation). Paper shows original thought. Analysis includes proper classifications, explanations, comparisons, and inferences. Critical thinking includes appropriate judgments, conclusions, and assessment based on evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Grammatical skills are strong, with typically less than one error per page. Paper demonstrates correct use of APA when assigned. Writing is appropriate to the assignment, fresh (interesting to read), accurate (no far-fetched, unsupported comments), precise (say what you mean), and concise (not wordy). Project is in 12-point font. Narrative sections are double-spaced. Project is free of serious errors; grammar, punctuation, and spelling help to clarify the meaning by following accepted conventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80–89%</td>
<td>Response answers the assignment question(s) with only minor digressions; sufficiently uses the text and other literature. Provides a good thesis statement, introduction, and conclusion that require some revision but that form a good basis.</td>
<td>Response generally exhibits higher-order critical thinking and analysis (e.g., evaluation). Paper shows some original thought.</td>
<td>Internally, each section has good organization. Transitions found between and within sections are mostly clear and effective. Generally appropriate to the assignment, accurate (no far-fetched, unsupported claims), precise, and concise. Includes a title</td>
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<td>Score Range</td>
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<td>70–79%</td>
<td>Response answers the project assignment(s) with some digression; sufficiently uses the text and other literature; and provides a thesis statement that needs revision. The introduction and conclusion do not set up or close the paper very effectively. Paper shows too little original thought (strings of citations that are not developed to support the thesis). Main points are adequately defined in only some areas of the paper; points may be over-emphasized or repeated. Some arguments are supported with outside research, but others may not be. Writing relies too heavily on personal experience or one source. The paper does not meet the source requirements. Some obvious counter-arguments are ignored or not well-refuted.</td>
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<td>60–69%</td>
<td>Response answers the assignment question(s) but digresses significantly; insufficiently uses the text and other literature.</td>
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<td>0–59%</td>
<td>Response insufficiently answers the assignment question(s); insufficiently uses the text and other literature.</td>
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Writing develops the main points clearly. Paper supports most arguments concretely (no logical errors) using outside sources as assigned. Some sources are non-academic with over reliance on web sources. References are not always clearly tied to development of ideas. Writing does not ignore data contradicting its claim, though the refutation may need additional support. Paper refers to outside sources in the text and reference page.

Analysis includes adequate classifications, explanations, comparisons, and inferences. Critical thinking includes adequate judgments, conclusions, and assessment based on evaluation and synthesis of information.

Project is in 12-point font. Narrative sections are double-spaced. Project contains some generally minor grammatical and punctuation errors, with few misspellings. Citations generally follow APA guidelines (perhaps one or two minor errors).

Sentences are occasionally wordy or ambiguous; tone is too informal. Grammatical skills are inadequate; clarity and meaning are impaired, with typically 3–5 errors per page. Paper contains numerous grammatical and punctuation errors. Misspellings are more frequent, but they are the sort spell checkers do not catch, such as “effect/affect.” An attempt at APA citation was made, but there are multiple errors larger than a misplaced period. Narrative sections are not double-spaced.

Sentences are generally wordy and/or ambiguous; tone is too informal. Grammatical skills are inadequate; clarity and meaning are impaired, with typically 3–5 errors per page. Paper shows inadequate use of APA format.

Sentences unclear enough to impair meaning; tone is inappropriate and/or inconsistent. Grammatical skills are incompetent for college level, with typically six or more errors per page. Paper shows unacceptable use of APA format.
Unit 4 Team Debate (20 points)

As soon as Unit 4 starts, your team leader will need to post your final team paper to the “Team Discussion Debate” area under Unit 4 for the entire class. A total of four team papers will be posted in the Debate Discussion. Your team is to evaluate, discuss, and debate the Final Paper of the other team discussing your particular topic during Unit 4. Those posts during Unit 4 will constitute 25% of the Team Assignment points.

Unit 4 Peer Evaluation Form (15 points)

Do not forget to complete a Peer Evaluation form! Working in a team environment is common in many organizational settings today. Sometimes it takes a little time to get acquainted and develop team cohesion. However, the practice of team dynamics is worthy of your focus and attention. You will assess your team members and they will assess you using the feedback form. The professor will not share your peer evaluation feedback with others; you may choose to ask teammates to share their perceptions with you so you can improve your team contribution.

Everyone has responsibilities in team leadership. Do not simply rely on others to carry the load. It is important to share responsibilities and be accountable for the success of all team endeavors. Again, thanks for taking the time in executing this Peer Evaluation document.

Every team member will submit the evaluation form to the Peer Evaluation Dropbox by the end of Unit 4.

There are three grades associated with each team project. Each student will receive the points earned by the team for the project submitted. In addition, each student will receive a second grade reflecting individual contribution to creating the project and a third grade for individual contributions to the associated discussion. Fifty percent of the total points available for the team assignment are associated with the team submission, 25% of the total points are associated with quality of individual contribution, and 25% of the total points are associated with the team debate. For example, if the team project in total is worth 60 points, then the Gradebook will reflect 30 possible points (50%) for the team project, 15 possible points (25%) for team contribution, and 15 possible points (25%) for Team Debate.