Contemporary Issues assignment:

You will often need to organize and defend your thoughts about a particular issue. It is important to be able to do this clearly and well.

Identify a controversy or issue related to your chosen EID, or choose an EID-related controversy from among the ideas below, and write a 2- to 3-page paper, double-spaced. In your paper, you should explain the controversy (including enough background to make it clear), take a position, and defend your position with evidence. Your paper should include an introduction, a statement of your thesis or position, a logical presentation of your evidence, and a conclusion. You should also include references (use the format of your choice). References don’t count in the page length.

Please see these websites:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/02/; http://www.powayusd.com/projects/edtechcentral/writingwstyle/structure.htm; for guidance on how to structure an essay, and follow the rules and suggestions the authors of the websites lay out.

According to the Purdue website (above), an essays should have:
- A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.
- Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Body paragraphs that include evidential support.
  - Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).
- A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.

The Purdue website also points out that there is an art to essay writing, and suggests that “a bit of creativity” is also required!

Writing an essay without “I”

For your controversy paper, you will have a thesis statement. Try to leave "I" out of it.

Example: instead of
"I believe the United States government should not fund stem-cell research because such research is not ethical, cost-effective, or medically necessary",
simply say
"The United States government should not fund stem-cell research because such research is not ethical, cost-effective, or medically necessary."

Then present the evidence for your position. Don't forget you may also need to show how the evidence refutes a common alternative position.

Why leave out “I”? When we use “I”, we are often presenting our beliefs. We all “know” that our personal beliefs are true. I’m hoping that by leaving out “I”, it will be easier for you to see what evidence is needed to support a particular assertion.
Controversy ideas and examples:

**Political:**
Emerging/reemerging infectious diseases are being framed as security problems. For example, UN Security Council Resolution 1308 (2000) put HIV/AIDS into the security debate by stating: “the HIV/AIDS pandemic, if unchecked, may pose a risk to stability and security.”

Does this framing help or hinder controlling these problems in national and international political, social and economic venues?
Is it a good idea to remove the discussion of policy issues from the biomedical and public health practitioners and place it in the hands of the diplomats, the military or the intelligence community? Why or why not?
Does making emerging disease a security issue focus attention on the needs of the economically and militarily stronger countries and not on global health?

Are emerging/reemerging diseases a credible threat, or is the current concern been inflated as a ploy to extend funding for medical countermeasures – research, new vaccines and therapeutics?

**Medical:**
Do emerging infectious agents play a role in:
- Multiple sclerosis (*Chlamydia pneumoniae* and HHV-6)
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Psychiatric illness, or emerging disease caused by a virus?

What is the controversy arising from medical doctors diagnosing people with intractable Lyme Disease, Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, and other syndromes as suffering from a psychiatric illness? Explain the controversy, take a position, and defend your position.

**Ethical:** There is a high prevalence of HCV in jails and prisons (12-35% according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates). Why? Should there be a legal obligation to provide access to medical care for these prisoners?

**Beliefs and prejudices:** People believe many odd things, ranging from cases of prejudice about the origin of a particular EID (see our textbook for ideas and examples), to conspiracy theories (AIDS not a virus; WHO purposely spreads AIDS with vaccines; etc.). Choose such a belief or conspiracy theory to write about, and critique it. Here’s one I recently came across, for example:

“Over the past ten years, more than 100,000 people in the United States and in Europe have complained about a strange and devastating skin disease known as Morgellons. The medical community is divided between those who dismiss it as a psychological disorder and those who regard Morgellons as an emerging disease deserving further study.

'This issue would normally be confined to scientific medical journals if the Pentagon and federal "law-enforcement" agencies were not so actively engaged in hiding it from the public. In the first part of his investigation, Hank Albarelli reports on a controversy which leads straight to new weapons experiments of the most secret order.” [http://healthmaven.blogspot.com/2010/06/morgellons-victims-across-us-and-europe.html](http://healthmaven.blogspot.com/2010/06/morgellons-victims-across-us-and-europe.html)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADING CRITERIA</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THESIS</strong></td>
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<td>The essay has a clearly-explained thesis.</td>
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<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
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<td>The essay is organized and well structured (there is an introduction, thesis statement, a body consisting of supporting paragraphs presenting evidence to support the thesis, a conclusion, and references). The order of the ideas and paragraphs makes sense in developing your arguments. <em>Note: you are not tied to some magic number of paragraphs; use the number of paragraphs you need.</em></td>
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<td><strong>PARAGRAPHS</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Paragraphs are organized, unified and coherent. Each supporting paragraph has a controlling idea (which may be expressed in a topic sentence). In supporting paragraphs, the topic idea helps further the thesis. Transitions help the paper flow smoothly.</td>
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<td><strong>STYLE</strong></td>
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<td>The essay is written in a professional style and tone appropriate to the audience, topic and purpose. Words are appropriate and well chosen. Writer avoids jargon, slang, and sexist language. Writer avoids directly addressing the reader or using rhetorical questions (example: “Have you ever wondered…”). Writer leaves out unnecessary verbiage (examples: “I believe,” “I think,” “I feel,” “In my opinion,” “it goes without saying,” “in conclusion”).</td>
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<td><strong>CONTENT</strong></td>
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<td>The writer includes enough well-chosen information to support the thesis. Arguments are developed logically and clearly, and the writer uses objective evidence, not unsupported opinion. The writer presents evidence from reputable sources and gives the sources. <strong>The writer stays focused, avoiding vague generalities &amp; unnecessary background.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GRAMMAR, SPELLING, MECHANICS</strong></td>
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<td>Writer doesn’t make mistakes in grammar (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, agreement, etc.), spelling, and mechanics (margins, format, etc.).</td>
<td><strong><a href="http://wps.ablongman.com/long_faigley_penguinhb_1/7/1976/505968.cw/index.html">http://wps.ablongman.com/long_faigley_penguinhb_1/7/1976/505968.cw/index.html</a></strong></td>
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