This course offers students the opportunity to research, articulate, and argue for their positions on one or more major issues that are a source of international and intergenerational conflict in the contemporary world. The writing and discussion will be through the University's computer network using state-of-the-art conferencing software, VaxNotes. Background lectures will be given on the topics which students research in depth. Prerequisites for the course are micro and macro economics. All computer work will be explained through class handouts -- there is no computer prerequisite.

Grades in the course will be based on two parts. Half the grade (50%) will rest on written work through computer telecommunications. The other half will be based on two exams, a mid-term worth 20% and a final worth 30%. The mid-term will be given on March 21st.

Students will be presented with a wide range of alternative views through the choice readings and guest lecturers of different persuasions. Several of the guest speakers will participate, in a limited fashion, in the computer-seminar closest to the topic of their talk. Seminar topics will be similar to the issues raised in the readings below.

The following readings are reprinted in a Kinkos packet. A more extensive suggested set of readings for each seminar topic will be found in VaxNotes.

INTEREST RATE THEORY, DEBT AND DISCOUNTING THE FUTURE
"Debt, Equity and Own Rates"
"Irving Fisher's Theory of Interest" by Joseph Conrad 1959
"Social and Political Consequences of the Debt Problem"
"The Secondary Market for International Debt" George Anayiotos
"How Might Debt Interact with Disinflation to Produce Depression?"

IS POPULATION GROWTH A PUBLIC GOOD OR BAD?
"Tragedy of the Commons" Garret Hardin
short popular articles on population
Malthus First Essay (selections)
Engels "The Myth of Overpopulation"
Julian Simon "World Population Growth: An Anti-Doomsday View"

THE RESOURCE QUESTION
"The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth" Kenneth Boulding
"Economics of Resources" Robert Solow
"... Issues Concerning a Stead-State Economy" Herman Daly
"...On Global Modeling" Donella Meadows (MIT Alumni Rev)
"Entropy Law and the Economic Problem" Georgescu-Roegen
"Humanity at the Crossroads" Paul and Anne Ehrlich