**Choose and answer two of the three critical thinking essay questions below. Each essay should be *at least* three-fourths of a page long, single-spaced. Support your opinion with statistics and facts and clearly state why any known opposing viewpoints do not sway your opinion. Use class notes, the text and/or other research to support your opinion. Each essay is worth 15 points. Please provide a Works Cited at the end of the paper with all appropriate information (use MLA). Your essays must be typed and are due on the day of the exam. Please read the rubric (in red) and include all required points in your essays.**

1. Compare the water supply issues in the western portion of the United States with those in countries like India and Iran. Are water shortages due to too many people or too much consumption? Explain the causes of shortages in each area in your answer.

**Audience**: You are an employee of the EPA’s Section on Water issues in the United States, explaining to your boss how different causes require different solutions and recommend a possible solution for the U.S.

 This essay will be scored using the following guidelines:

* Explanation of the issues in the Western U.S., in India, and in Iran and how they differ – 9
* Clear statement of the primary cause of the U.S. issues (population or consumption patterns) – 3
* Clarity of writing - 3
1. Do you favor using nuclear power or do you believe using this energy source should be discontinued?
Background: There is a divide in opinion on this issue. Due to the problems experienced at the Fukushima Power plant in Japan as a result of a powerful earthquake in March 2011 and the ensuing tsunami, Germany is now moving toward phasing out nuclear power; Japan started moving away from nuclear but is now rethinking that change. Other countries are unwavering in their support, such as France which has been committed to nuclear power electricity. The arguments in favor of nuclear as a source of our electricity are strong. The problems associated with continuing to use nuclear also are very significant.

**Audience:** Because you just completed this course in Environmental Science, your town council has asked you to provide it a recommendation on whether to permit the construction of a nuclear power plant in the community.

This essay will be scored using the following guidelines:
* Statement with a clear recommendation on whether the community should build the nuclear power plant to provide its electricity or not. – 3 points
* Factual support for your recommendation. Be sure to include a discussion of what countries are using nuclear power and why some countries are planning to phase out their nuclear power plants. Also include a statement of why you are not swayed by the facts supporting the other position. – 9 points
* Clarity of writing – 3 points
1. Is biological diversity (biodiversity) a renewable or a nonrenewable resource? Why could it be seen either way? Be sure to include the benefits of biodiversity as a resource in your answer as well as examples of the impact of the loss of species.

**Audience:** Be yourself explaining to your instructor your logic in the answer to this question.

(Rubric continued on the next page)

This essay will be scored using the following guidelines:

* A clear statement of your opinion on whether biodiversity is a renewable or nonrenewable resource (or neither or both). – 4
* Factual support for your opinion with examples of species’ conditions (e.g., threatened or endangered or not at risk) and the impact of that condition on its ecosystem. [Do not use Yellowstone and the wolf for this question, since you used it for a question in the last exam.] - 8
* Clarity of writing - 3