Case Study #1: Mill & Climate Change Refugees

Read the section on J.S. Mill in our text and the attached article from Huffington Post and the write-up from the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Regional cases for 2016, and then answer the following questions. **The completed assignment should be two pages long, (approximately 1400 words) using 12 pt. fonts and single spacing with one inch margins. Please follow the assigned format** as exemplified at the end of this document. Each answer should be separated, numbered and proportionate to the number of points possible. This study is worth a total of 60 points.

**Your completed assignment is due on the 19th of October.**

*Keep scrolling down after the background for some hints, further instructions, general suggestions, grading rubrics, and a sample completed assignment!*

1. **Paraphrase:** News articles presenting information often have particular slants that can be discovered through careful reading. Looking at the attached article from the Huffington Post, do you think that the author of the piece, Chris D'Angelo is in support of the federal award of $52 million for the relocation of the members of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Native Americans? Extract and paraphrase this argument regarding the justification for this plan. (do not include any counter-considerations or irrelevant information) (5 points)

2. **Asking the right questions:** What facts would you need to know about this case to make a reasonably informed judgment? In this section, note that you should be raising questions such as current numbers of the tribal members who will be displaced, current and historical data about the tribes, other potential climate change refugees, etc., but not questions about Mill. **Provide as a bulleted list and pose in question form.** For this assignment, you do not have to do all the research but you need to raise the kind of questions that would drive such a project. These should be research questions and as such should be concrete and answerable. As much as possible, no bias or prejudice should be evident and the questions should be non-normative (no “ought” or “should” questions). Think about facts that, if known might help determine how one should or could respond to the case. (15 points)

3. **Mill’s Position:** Pending the acquisition of all of this information, how do you think Mill would respond to this proposal; should the federal government have awarded $52 million for the relocation of the members of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Native Americans? Be sure to provide citations from Mill (primary source = Mill’s writings and does not include secondary commentary from Rosenstand or from me) to support your answer. In citing the quote, all you need do is indicate the page from the text (see example). Note that this question carries the highest weight in points. (25 points)

4. **Critical Objection:** Identify one key problem with Mill’s version of Utilitarianism as it applies to this particular case. (Hint: begin with one of the objections to Utilitarianism as a moral theory and then determine if that problem is illustrated by the case.) (10 points)
5. **Conclusion:** Where do you personally stand on this question of investing in federal funds to relocate these climate change refugees? Defend your answer without resorting to a repetition of points made in previous sections. (5 points)

**Background¹: Case Study #1**

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**A Louisiana Tribe Is Now Officially A Community Of Climate Refugees**

Since the 1950s, the Native American tribe has lost 98 percent of the land it calls home.²

02/12/2016 08:19 am ET | Updated Feb 15, 2016

Chris D’Angelo  Associate Editor, HuffPost Hawaii

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¹ Please note that you are not limited to the background offered. It is expected that you will do a bit more in-depth reading to develop your thesis. You may feel free to use any credible/reliable source as evidence for your arguments. Additionally you may use additional material from Mill to defend your answers. Please provide full citation for all research.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/climate-refugees-louisiana_us_56bbd5efe4b0c3c550501784>. 

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climate change. Many of its residents — members of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Native Americans — have been forced to flee. “What you see of the island now is just a skeleton of what it used to be,” Chris Brunet, a tribal council member and lifelong island resident, told The New York Times in a mini-documentary called Vanishing Island in 2014.

A recent federal grant, however, will allow the state-recognized tribe to resettle on higher ground, making it the first community of official climate refugees in the United States, according to Indian Country Today.

Late last month, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded $1 billion for resilient infrastructure and housing projects as part of its National Disaster Resilience Competition. On the list is $52 million for the Isle de Jean Charles tribe to relocate to a “resilient and historically-contextual community,” HUD wrote. Since the 1950s, the tribe has lost 98 percent of its land to rising sea levels, coastal erosion and flooding. Experts suspect the island will be completely submerged within 50 years, Houma Today reports.

Albert Naquin, chief of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians, has been fighting to secure funding for 13 years and said the money will allow the tribe to reestablish community, something that — like their historic island home — is being washed away. “I’m very, very excited,” Naquin told Indian Country Today. “Now we’re getting a chance to reunite the family. ... They’re excited as well. Our culture is going to stay intact, [but] we’ve got to get the interest back in our youth.”

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Albert Naquin, chief of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians. For 170 years, the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw have occupied this remote island, surviving off the land as fishermen, oystermen and trappers.
What was once a 22,000-acre island, however, has been reduced to a 320-acre strip. As of 2009, only 25 houses remained occupied, down from 63 only five years prior, according to a report by Northern Arizona University.

Pat Forbes, the executive director of the Louisiana Office of Community Development, said in a release that the tribe’s people are on the front line of Louisiana’s coastal land loss disaster.

“This $48 million grant,” she said, “will allow the state to help them resettle their entire community to a safer place with a minimum of disruption to livelihoods and lifestyles. Together, we’ll be creating a model for resettlement of endangered coastal communities throughout the United States.”

The tribe will reportedly retain ownership of the island even after it relocates to its new community, which could happen as early as 2019.

Representatives of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Tribe could not be reached for comment Thursday.

While the Louisiana tribal members are reportedly the first official U.S. climate refugees, they are not alone in their struggles.

In Alaska, for example, climate change already affects more than 180 villages. Among the hardest hit is the Yupik community of Newtok, a village that the Army Corps of Engineers predicts could be completely underwater by 2017. The Yupik people have also been called America’s first climate refugees.

Watch the trailer for a new 32-minute documentary about the Native American community of Isle de Jean Charles, called “Can’t Stop The Water,” which was released on Monday.
Case #4: Climate-Change Refugees

According to the UN, approximately “22.5 million people [have been] displaced by climate or weather-related events since 2008.” It is predicted that by 2050, up to 200 million people from some of the most vulnerable communities around the world will be left homeless due to rising sea levels. But even today, coastal communities across the southern U.S., from the Gulf Coast to the Florida Keys, are responding to the devastating effects of increasingly common flooding.

A mere 80 miles from New Orleans lies the Isle de Jean Charles, also known as the “vanishing island.” The majority of the island’s residents belong to two tribes, the United Houma Nation and the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw tribe, which settled in the Louisiana bayou more than 170 years ago “to escape the consequences of the Indian Removal Act.”

Edison Darda, a long-time resident, explained his deep connection to the region: “My grandpa was here. My dad was here. I am here. We have been on the island for a long, long, long time. I still do … what I was doing when I was ten years old. We talk, we laugh, we catch some shrimp.” However, “since 1955, more than 90 percent of the island’s original land mass has washed away.”

Every new storm has brought increasing devastation. For example, Violet Hando Parfait and her family have lost their stove and computer to a flood; today, they cook their family meals on a hot plate.

Because the National Climate Assessment rates the Isle de Jean Charles as the “nation’s most vulnerable,” the island’s residents have been allocated $48 million in “federal tax dollars to move...[the] entire community to a new part of the country,” and this occurred before the flooding elsewhere in Louisiana in 2016. The money is part of a $1 billion federal-disaster resilience grant program aimed at improving infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change around the country. While places like South Beach and New Orleans will be protected by pumps and levies, a spokesperson for the Department of Housing and Urban Development says the island is a lost cause; relocation is far more sustainable. Officials have declared that the move will be entirely voluntary, but it is not clear whether residents will comply.

Some residents have been yearning for a life where their children don’t miss school regularly because of flooded roads – and they welcome the move. But others refuse to leave. Relocating would mean leaving behind the ancestors buried in the island’s cemetery. As Chief Alber Naquin put it, “[w]e’re going to lose all our heritage, all our culture...It’s all going to be history.” A relocation site for the Isle de Jean Charles residents has not been picked yet.

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3 http://appe.indiana.edu/ethics-bowl/cases-rules-and-guidelines/


Keep scrolling down for rubrics and a sample completed assignment!
General Suggestions for Writing Case Studies

How not to write your paper:

I. Focus & Relevance
Be sure that you understand the assignment and have understood each question. Your responses should be focused on the questions I’ve asked & not the questions you wish I had asked! It is important to weed out all irrelevant considerations or concerns that an economist or historian or political scientist might have but are not strictly speaking, ethical concerns. Look at the completed sample case study for some ideas.

II. Format
You should copy & paste or re-type only the first part of the question (the portion in bold type). Please number each response corresponding to the assigned questions. Papers should be 2 pages, using 12pt. fonts and 1 inch margins all around. There should be an extra space separating your responses to each question. Again, please reference the completed sample case study and follow the format exemplified.

III. Tone/Voice
Ever since George Carlin pointed out that “using your own words” would result in a private and hence meaningless expressions, I’ve had to give up on the phrase, however a certain degree of originality is still important. Your task is to explain a concept as if you were the Teaching Assistant for this class. If you simply repeat the text or my lecture, you haven’t helped your imaginary student. You need to clarify the argument/concept in a way that demonstrates that you really understand it and can express the same ideas in a way that is different than has already been explained by the text or by me.

IV. Adequate and Balanced Defense of Your Argument
In question three, you are asked to make an argument using the philosopher we’re studying. You should be clear in your thesis early in the paragraph. It is important to ensure that your application is consistent with the philosopher’s theory and that

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4 Please note that these guidelines are for my class assignments. Individual instructors may have other format preferences and you should consult with your teacher for the details before completing your assignment.
you support that application with a well-thought-out defense. You should include counter-considerations that are relevant to that theory and could impact the philosopher’s conclusions.

V. Quotes
Quoting is a way of supporting your interpretation of an argument or theory. Relevance to your response and to the question asked is critical. Quotes can be edited but be careful not to take the quote out of context, thus altering the intent of the author. The length of the quote must be appropriate to the length of the assignment; short papers require shorter quotes. All quotes must come from the original author’s works, neither from the secondary commentary of the author of our text nor from my lectures or power points. Quotes need only be cited with the page in our text where it was found (see sample completed assignment). You may not use quotes that I’ve already used in my lectures or power-point slides! No quotes should come from sources such as wiki-quotes, intelli-quotes, brainy-quotes, Mill-quotes, etc. as these are insufficiently scholarly and often include misquotes.

VI. Length
Part of the criteria for success is effective use of the space allowed. If you write a single page for a two page assignment, you have not satisfied this criterion. However, this is not an invitation to use the additional space for stream-of-consciousness or irrelevant information not pertinent to the assigned issue. If you are having difficulties with the length, it is usually because you have not recognized or developed sufficiently the various issues involved. Conversely, if your draft is too long, you need to whittle it down to just the relevant essentials, perhaps editing out the anecdotes or redundancies; more is not always better! I am very willing to help if you submit drafts sufficiently before the due date.

VII. Rough Drafts
I have invited all of you to bring rough drafts of your completed assignment in for a preview reading. I do not offer re-writes after I have graded your papers. Rough drafts are brought in during my office hours or by appointment and I only read them in person - with the student present. Please do not submit rough drafts electronically nor should you drop them off in my box. I support pro-active measures that encourage preparation and thought and with rough draft readings, both the student and I should benefit with the end result being a better final draft. If your work satisfies my criteria (see rubrics following) for “A” level work, and if the draft is formatted and printed in final draft format, I will sign off on the draft, guaranteeing those students somewhere between 100% and 90% of the points possible for this assignment. Your cut-off for rough draft submissions is 24 hours prior to the due date; I will read no rough drafts the day of or the day prior to the due date.

Keep scrolling down for rubrics and a sample completed assignment!
Standards (Rubrics) for Grading Case Studies

The excellent paper (100-90% of points) will exhibit the following qualities:

**Question 1:**
- Conclusion is clearly identified in the first sentence.
- Major supporting premises are identified.
- Relevant and critical minor supporting premises are identified.
- Argument has been presented with good logical flow.
- Paraphrase has eliminated all irrelevant or unnecessary information.
- Paraphrase is original and not merely a verbatim repetition of original argument.
- Argument is clearly understood and consistent with the author’s intent.
- No critique, analysis or irrelevant commentary is provided.

**Question 2:**
- All items are listed as normatively neutral questions. No immediate bias is evidenced and no questions center on what “ought” or “should” be the case.
- All critical questions have been raised given the space allowed.
- Questions are relevant to the case and would be likely to be relevant to the philosopher/theory being applied to the case.
- Questions are likely to drive effective and informative research. The questions should be factual and answerable (at least in terms of probabilities or projections backed up with historical data).
- Questions are not phrased in terms of what will or could happen but what has happened; remember one cannot gather data from events that have yet to occur.
- Questions are grammatically correct and are presented in a bulleted list.

**Question 3:**
- A clear thesis statement is made in the first sentence.
- Argument is focused on the key issues.
- Argument is clear and well organized.
- Argument is consistent with the assigned philosopher’s theory.
- Argument is effectively supported with relevant reasoned discussion.
- Sufficient detail from the philosopher’s theory is provided.
- Argument is effectively supported with relevant quotes from the philosopher’s primary work & all quotes are cited properly. (Note that in the example to make the most effective use of space allowed, endnotes were used; endnotes do not count as part of the 2 page limit.); Quotes are not too numerous or disproportionate to student’s original discussion, are of appropriate length, are pulled from sufficiently scholarly sources, are properly cited and quotes are not those which have been used in lectures or on power point slides.
- Responses reflect thoughtful and detailed consideration of not only background material provided but also a further familiarity with the events and history surrounding the issue.
• No immediate personal bias is evidenced.

**Question 4:**
• Core objection/counter-consideration is clearly identified.
• Issue raised is reflective of the details in the assigned case study.
• Objection/counter-consideration is reflective of issues or problems with the assigned philosopher’s theory in application to the case.
• Objection is directly relevant to the case made in response to question three.

**Question 5:**
• Thesis is clearly stated in 1st sentence
• Reasons offered in support of thesis reflect a thoughtful and fair approach to the details of the case and the details of the assigned philosopher’s theory.
• Discussion is not repetitive of any previous section.

**Overall Impressions:**
• Study presents evidence of a thoughtful and deliberative approach.
• Language is clear and explanations/arguments are original
• Effective use has been made of space allowed
• Study reflects careful consideration of background material provided.
• Study reflects that the author has explored the issue beyond the background material provided
• The study is scholarly, with effective use of the essays and relevant philosophical theory.
• There is good logic flow from one response to another – issues raised in earlier questions must link logically with responses to later questions.
• Assignment format has been followed.

**Good (89-80% points)**
The good paper will demonstrate all the above qualities but perhaps to a lesser degree or, will demonstrate some of the above qualities excellently, but not all of the qualities will be presented at a consistently high level.

**Satisfactory (79-70% points)**
The satisfactory paper will present all of the above qualities but not as strongly as the good paper or, some qualities may be stronger with some not as strong. Insight is not usually present.

**Needs Work (69-60% points)**
This paper is weak on many of the desired qualities.

**Really Needs Work – Pretty Much Unacceptable (59-0% points)**
This paper presents few if any of the desired qualities.

Keep scrolling down for a sample completed assignment!
Case Study #1: Mill, Arizona & House Bill 2281

1. **Paraphrase:** This film presents a condemnation of AZ House Bill 2281 which the makers of the film charge as targeting the teaching of ethnic studies in AZ high schools. The film argues that the funding of ethnic studies in the high schools is a critical and significant contributor to student success and fulfills the needs of underrepresented students that are not otherwise met in the conventional curriculum. Further it is argued that those supporting AZ HB2281 are motivated by a poor understanding of the ethnic studies program and at the very least a callous indifference to the needs of those underrepresented students. Lastly, it is argued that AZ HB2281 is tantamount to censorship.

2. **Asking the right questions:**
   - What is the population distribution by race/ethnicity of AZ high school students?
   - How much does the ethnic studies program cost per student compared to the general courses taught and how many students as a percent of the total school district population does it serve?
   - What impact has the institution of ethnic studies programs had on the students who participate in terms of completion, transfer and continuing success post-graduation in AZ and nationwide?
   - Are there statistical correlations between drop-out rates and unemployment, homelessness and crime?
   - What portion of tax revenue is spent on crime prevention and mediation in Arizona?
   - Are there estimates of lost tax revenue due to unemployment and homelessness in Arizona?
   - How have the students in the ethnic studies program performed on standardized tests as compared to the general population of students in the district?
   - Was there an increase in school violence or public disturbances linked to racial tension during the period the program was taught?
   - To what degree is the contribution of non-white persons included or recognized in current curriculum?
   - What was the ethnic/racial background of the students who participated in the program?
   - What is the ethnic/racial background of those who serve in the AZ House?
   - What is the ethnic/racial background of voter turnout in AZ as a proportion to total population?
   - Is the public funding of AZ schools very limited or decreasing & how does AZ per student spending compare to other states in the US?
   - Have there been significant changes to the tax revenue or apportionment towards education in the state of Arizona & how does the percentage of proportionment compare to other states in the US?

3. **Mill’s Position:**
   There are three main reasons why Mill would have rejected Arizona’s House Bill 2281. First, Mill was a utilitarian and thus would weigh the moral worth of this bill in terms of outcomes and the number of people affected. From such a cost-benefit analysis, it appears that though the ethnic studies programs may have been more expensive and served a smaller population of students, the outcomes were significant in terms of greater retention and graduation rates, better scores on standardized exams, higher transfers to colleges, and a significantly more motivated student body who felt empowered to work towards issues of social justice and equal opportunities for Latinos. Under the old system, one must consider the cost of educating students who fail or drop-out. The waste of finite public resources, combined with the social cost
of high school drop-outs in terms of quality of life, higher incidences of crime, unrealized potential and lost productivity cannot be disregarded.

Secondly, Mill held there is a connection between education, a just society and the greatest good or ‘happiness’ as he called it. For Mill, happiness involved free will, empowered action, a sense of pride and most importantly, a kind of higher rational dignity. (p.266) He argued, “The present wretched education and wretched social arrangements are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all.” (p.267) If it can be adequately shown that the ethnic studies do contribute to such qualities for a significant number of students – and anecdotal evidence supports this – then this is just the sort of program of which Mill would most approve. Many of the participants reported a significant change in their understanding of how their ancestors contributed to this country and that they had gained a real sense of empowerment and optimism about their own future.

Finally, as a classic libertarian, Mill was opposed to excessive government intervention. (p.256) He wrote, “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.” (p255) There appears to be little evidence to support that there was an active harm incurred through the teaching of ethnic studies. Contrarily, there is good evidence that an ethnically diverse curriculum is pedagogically defensible. The Arizona state legislators’ move has effectively curbed a cherished practice of academic freedom which is clearly consistent with Mill’s position on governmental overreach. Encyclopedia Britannica defines academic freedom as, “…the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure.” In order to justify this Bill, the legislators needed to demonstrate positive harms such as proving a clear link between an increase in racially motivated violence and the program. Mill argued strenuously against censorship in On Liberty, “If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.” It seems clear that, in this case, there are greater harms in censorship and the erosion of freedom than there are gains made in the name of consistency and standardization. When one includes the books that were also banned, this looks like a bad Bill likely to result in worse consequences.

4. **Critical Objection:** The utilitarian credo demands acting to promote the good for the greatest number of people and does not require that the needs of the minority be met unless it can be shown that doing so will serve the greater good. Here, a problem of sheer numbers is clear. Public school funds are always limited and special programs do tend to cost more per student and serve fewer students as a whole. Public schools across the nation are largely in a situation of economic triage – determining how to serve the majority of those who can succeed with moderate efforts expended, while allowing those who won’t succeed without significant intervention to languish while also sacrificing the programs geared towards the upper tier of most excellent students. It might seem that the cash-strapped state of Arizona might make the same argument other schools have been forced to make regarding music, art, and language courses.

5. **Conclusion:** I believe these programs need to be supported – as an addition and enhancement of students’ educational opportunities. The argument thus far, has been presented as a bit of a utilitarian false dilemma: either serve the majority at the sacrifice of the minority or serve the minority, thus diminishing the good to the majority. My answer is to serve all, and in doing so, increase the good for current and future generations. The means by which this can be accomplished is to increase school funding as AZ is one of the lowest states in per student spending in the nation. The small sacrifice of proportionately increased taxes for each would produce a far greater benefit for so many students and, ultimately the entire state.