



Writing an Environmental Law Essay

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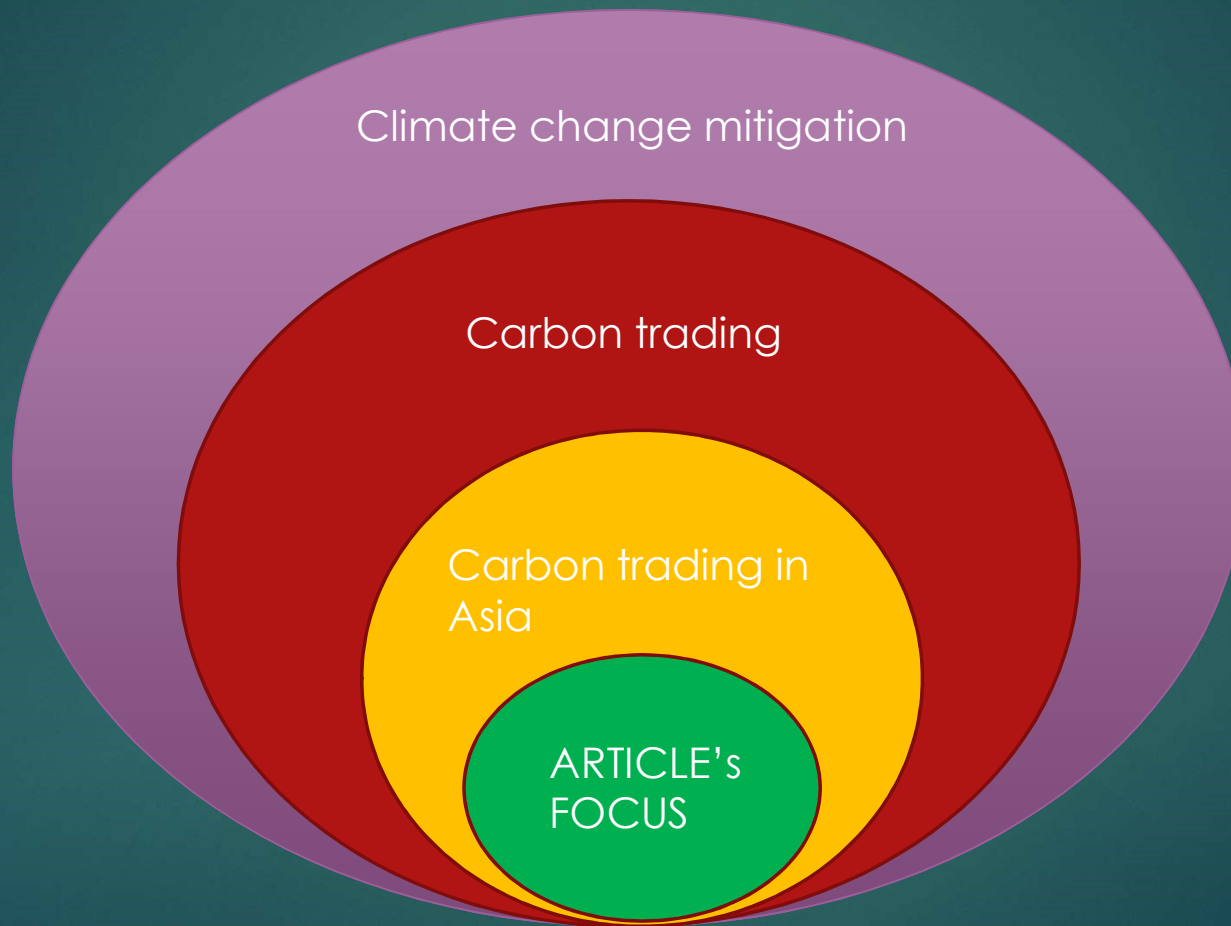
Overview

- ▶ Process of writing is no different from writing any other law-related subject
- ▶ Richness of environmental law
 - ▶ Tackling environmental problems
 - ▶ environmental problems engage various disciplines beyond law:
 - ▶ Science
 - ▶ Economics
 - ▶ Demography
 - ▶ Cognitive psychology
- ▶ Knowing the tragedy of the commons (Garrett Hardin)

Choosing an environmental law topic

- ▶ Not just about climate change
- ▶ Other important environmental issues:
 - ▶ Unsustainable use of limited resources
 - ▶ Loss of biodiversity
 - ▶ Plastic pollution
- ▶ Research
 - ▶ Use academic resources
 - ▶ E.g. NUS library search engine: <https://libportal.nus.edu.sg/frontend/index>
 - ▶ Find good, well-written articles
 - ▶ E.g., Jacqueline Peele, Elen Stokes, Elizabeth Fisher, Benjamin Richardson, Beate Sjøfjell, Jolene Lin, Eloise Scofford

Choosing an environmental law topic



Writing the essay

- ▶ Decide on an approach
 - ▶ Is there a particular academic approach you will be adopting?
 - ▶ Doctrinal, empirical, etc
 - ▶ Do you want to adopt a particular perspective?
 - ▶ TWAIL perspectives, feminist perspectives
- ▶ Plan before you start writing
 - ▶ How do you want to use the information / research you have gathered?

**Guardian
Students**
Studying law

'Don't just vomit on the page': how to write a legal essay

Law lecturer Steven Vaughan explains why the best essays take discipline, editing, and teamwork

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**Matthew Jenkin**

Wed 24 Oct 2018 12.44  
BST



# Writing the essay

- ▶ Decide on your position
  - ▶ Do you have an argument? What is it?
- ▶ Do not





# Writing the essay

- ▶ Structure is key
- ▶ The importance of the introduction
  - ▶ The power of first impressions
- ▶ One possible approach to the introduction
  - ▶ Contextualise
  - ▶ Raising the main argument / position
  - ▶ Road-mapping



# Beate Sjøfjell, 'Why Law Matters: Corporate Social Irresponsibility and the Futility of Voluntary Climate Change Mitigation' (2011)

*European Company Law*, Vol. 8, Nos. 2-3, pp. 56-64

## 1 Corporate Social Responsibility and the Law

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encompasses an enormous complexity of debate and private and public initiatives. This article deals with one section of the debate, with the definition of CSR commonly accepted by business and legislators as the starting point.

CSR in a sustainable development perspective could be seen as dealing with and bringing together two inter-related issues: firstly, legal compliance and secondly, the company's responsibility for going beyond such compliance, with the legal rules forming the floor and the voluntary part of CSR being a striving beyond that – a race to the top. In that sense CSR would encompass and form a bridge between hard law, soft law and ethical obligations. Certainly there is no doubt about the necessity of companies acknowledging their societal role as all-important components of our societies. We have little hope of achieving overarching societal goals such as that of a sustainable development without the contribution of companies. The limitations of existing regulation, including notably environmental law, necessitate a different approach to involve companies as part of the solution to pressing challenges such as climate change. CSR in the sense just indicated could have been the different approach, merging the legal and ethical obligations of companies and the people involved in them.

However, the business lobbyists have captured the CSR concept and ensured that the definition legislators subscribe to is that of CSR as a voluntary activity... As this article will argue, defining CSR through delimitation against legal obligations is deceptive and detrimental to the development of a sustainably and socially responsible business and has contributed to giving CSR a bad name.

This article goes on to address several of the problems associated with this voluntary CSR concept, forming an argument to show why law matters and specifically why company law has to be involved in addressing the necessity of getting companies to contribute to climate change mitigation. The article concludes with some reflections on the CSR contribution to a truly responsible business debate.

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Context

Argument

Road-mapping

Defining key terms

# Writing the essay

- ▶ The Body
  - ▶ A modification of CRuPAC
  - ▶ Have a topic sentence
  - ▶ Refrain from merely describing - have a purpose to every paragraph
- ▶ Conclusion
  - ▶ 'Say what you said'
  - ▶ Tie everything together
  - ▶ Optional: can incorporate an interesting (but inconsequential) point
- ▶ Have sub-headings

# General tips

- ▶ The importance of referencing
  - ▶ Must reference:
    - ▶ Cases
    - ▶ Legislation
    - ▶ Academic journals / textbooks
  - ▶ Question to yourself: Can and should this sentence be supported by an authority?
  - ▶ Be precise in supporting your arguments
    - ▶ ~~“Some academics argue...”~~
    - ▶ ~~“Many comment that...”~~

# General tips

- ▶ Editing is a key process
  - ▶ Read and reread
- ▶ **Team Work** →
- ▶ Research never stops
  - ▶ Almost
- ▶ Read good writing
- ▶ Finding your 'voice'



Any questions?