Proposition of Fact-100 points (with a possible bonus 25 points)

Assignment Instructions:

Description: a typed, two to three page written paper arguing the validity of a proposition seeking to explain the existence/non-existence of a past, present or future proposition. Along with paper you may be selected by the class to give a brief 3-4 minute oral presentation explaining the position in your paper.

You may develop any one of three types of factual claims. Your claim may explain an historical precedent (past), a causal or correlative relationship (present) or a prediction about a future situation (future). All propositions must be controversial and therefore, arguable.

Some examples:

PAST:
America was first discovered by Celts in the first millennium B.C.
Life existed on Mars 3 billion years ago.
The shroud of Turin held the body of Jesus Christ.
The People’s Republic of China has consistently used slave labor in the production of trade goods.
Women have historically been underpaid by comparison to men.
Paul Revere did not make a midnight ride warning that the British are coming.
Tiger Woods achieved more success at his age than any professional golfer in history.
Thomas Edison did not invent the light bulb.
Franklin Delano Roosevelt was aware of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor.

PRESENT:
Current stock market performance is being caused by investment in technology.
Concealed fire-arms permits are decreasing crime.
The full moon does not make people crazy.
Moderate amounts of red wine increase health and well-being.
NAFTA is causing the loss of a significant number of American jobs.
United States inaction is hastening the corruption of the Russian democracy.
Incarcerating criminals promotes recidivism among ex-inmates.
Advertising results in over-consumption of scarce global resources.
Drug Courts are reducing crime.
The green revolution is decreasing world hunger.

FUTURE:
Puerto Rico will be the 51st state.
Spinal cord cell regeneration will be achieved within the next ten years.
Orange Coast will shift to a 15 week semester by the year 2015.
The next Pope will be of African descent.
Social Security will not provide benefits to current contributors under age 25 when they are 65.
The next breakthrough in computer chip technology will utilize biochips made of living matter.
The 21st century will see hydrogen replace fossil fuels as a transportation fuels.
Rogue nations will be the likeliest threat to global stability in the next decade.

Your paper may choose one of the propositions you created in the previous proposal assignment. Your proposition will be supported by a series of claims, grounds and evidence, and warrants using Toulmin’s model. Each of these parts of your argument should be appropriately labeled.

CLAIM - a single statement advanced in support of the proposition

GROUNDS- a statement made about persons, conditions, events or things that presents evidentiary support and provides a reason for a claim. You need to pay particular attention to the matter of accuracy of quotes and attribution of sources. (See samples in paper below) You must use quoted material primarily, not you summarizing.

WARRANT - a general statement that justifies using the grounds as a basis for the claim. The warrant should reflect the reasoning process in the grounds. You need to label the warrant as to the type of reasoning utilized. (Reasoning by generalization, analogy, sign, causation, authority or parallel case-GASCAP) Again, pay particular attention to the samples in the paper below.

BACKING - any kind of support that provides more specific information for the grounds, i.e., source qualifications, etc. See example below.

Keep in mind that you are simply writing a paper that supports a position with reasons and specific evidence. The difference is that you are labeling the parts of your argument as a part of your paper and explaining and identifying the reasoning in your paper. The labels will seem new to you but keep trying to identify them. Call me or come in and see me for help.

Your paper will probably start with a bit of background on the controversy or any necessary background that sets up the proposition. Then state the proposition you intend to prove. Once the proposition is clear, you can begin to develop claims to support your proposition.

PROPOSITION OF FACT SAMPLE PAPER

Background of controversy: One of the world's major problems is poverty. Controversy exists about the best means of poverty reduction. One possibility is the use of microcredits or microloans. First utilized by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, these extremely small loans ($100-$200 - made primarily to women to create enterprises of small scale) have a good record of success and repayment. Research leads to the following argument:

Proposition of Fact: Microcredits reduces poverty.

Claim 1: Microcredits has reduced poverty in the third world.
**Grounds 1A:** A solid track record exists. According to "Can Microcredits Work in the United States?" by Nitin Bhatt; Gary Painter; Shui-Yan Tang in the Harvard Business Review, November/December 1999 "In the past few decades, microcredit programs have been used throughout the Third World to promote grassroots entrepreneurship. The programs, which provide small-business loans of as little as $50, have helped literally millions of low-income people improve their material well-being. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, for example, has disbursed a total of more than $1.5 billion to about 2.4 million borrowers, with a default rate of less than 3%. Such figures have helped to convince many that poor people aren't necessarily bad credit risks."

**Warrant 1A:** Improving material well-being is a good sign of poverty reduction, and multiple cases establish a reliable pattern of reduction. (Sign/generalization)

**Grounds 1B:** It also works in Africa. Proof is provided by The Economist (US), Jan 13, 2001 in the article "Africa's women go to work; Africa's need for microcredit. (How to lend small sums to poor Africans to set up small businesses)" "Microcredit-lending small sums to poor people to set up or expand small businesses-is an effective way to alleviate poverty. The poor cannot usually borrow from commercial banks, because they lack collateral. Loan sharks lend without security, but often at interest rates of 10-20% a day. Hawkers who borrow from sharks to buy a day's stock often have to hand over most of their profits. Failure to repay can result in broken legs. Micro-lenders try to satisfy poor people's hunger for credit less brutally."

**Warrant 1B:** Microcredit has provided the means for poverty reduction. (Causation)

**Claim 2:** Microcredit is being used in the US to reduce poverty. **Grounds 2A:** Though results are mixed, initial efforts do reflect poverty reduction. This is evidenced in "Can Microcredit Work in the United States? (Small lending amounts) (Statistical Data Included) in the Harvard Business Review, November/December 1999 Nitin Bhatt; Gary Painter; Shui-Yan Tang. "Microcredits success overseas has caught the attention of U.S. policy makers, business leaders, and charitable organizations. They see it as a way to reduce poverty in disadvantaged communities at home. But so far, the results of microcredit programs in the United States have been decidedly mixed. On the one hand, U.S. microcredit programs have helped many poor but ambitious borrowers to improve their lot. The Aspen Institute's study of 405 micro-entrepreneurs indicates that more than half of the loan recipients escaped poverty within five years. On average, their household assets grew by nearly $16,000 during that period; the group's reliance on public assistance dropped by more than 60%."

**Warrant 2A:** Even with "mixed results" more than half in the study is a majority demonstrating that poverty is reduced in more cases than it is not reduced. (Generalization)
**Grounds 2B**: The basic principles are the same and seem to transfer the effect of reduced poverty to the US. This can be seen in Business Week, Feb 28, 2000, "A Lending Hand. (Microloans help erase poverty through entrepreneurship)" "Success for Micro-lenders is lifting someone out of poverty." Says Jason J. Friedman, vice-president of Iowa's Institute for Social and Economic Development: 'Economic development is not just about high tech and large projects. It's also about beauty salons, alteration shops, and auto repair.'

**Warrant 2B**: The basic principles remain the same. (Parallel case)

**Conclusion**: While some criticism is apparent, it also seems that microcredits and microloans have been used in both the third world and the US to reduce poverty.

**Sources cited**: (YOUR SOURCES CITED PAGE WILL CONTAIN MORE SOURCES)

"Africa’s Women Go to Work; Africa’s need for microcredit (how to lend small sums to poor Africans to set up businesses)" The Economist January 13m 2001 pg., 78

"A Lending Hand". (Microloans help erase poverty through entrepreneurship) “Business Week, Feb 28, 2000, pg. 157