

Legislative Process (POLS 438)

Spring 2009

Paper Guidelines

Your papers should be finished, polished products that represent a substantial investment of intellectual effort. **STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN YOUR WRITING!** A strong paper is the product of many revisions that go beyond minimal expectations, but truly explore the topic under study. Revise and edit your paper several times so that it truly expresses the best statement of your ideas.

Please double-check to ensure that all of the following tasks have been completed:

- The paper contains few grammatical and spelling errors.
- Use any appropriate citation method for source material (i.e., APA, Chicago, footnotes, etc.).
- On a title page, include your full name (as it appears in the official university records).
- Attach the paper via d2l's Dropbox feature in MS Word or compatible format before the deadline.

Paper Specifications:

Double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides.

Use a standard 12-point font.

Except tables and graphs that you create to present your data, **DO NOT USE IMAGES OF ANY KIND!**

Students must cite every source from which they got any idea. Please minimize your use of quotes. Instead, paraphrase the ideas. Use any standard citation method (e.g., MLA or APA) with which you are familiar (as long as it includes sufficient information to locate the text). Use that method consistently throughout the paper. If possible, please use the American Political Science Association method, which is similar to APA.

Paper Guidelines:

All papers must reflect a *formal* presentation of your ideas. Begin each paragraph with a thesis statement. Use the rest of the sentences to support or explain the thesis. Typical paragraphs contain between three and seven sentences. Craft each sentence carefully. Use noun-verb construction. Use headers where appropriate (e.g., to indicate sections); adopt the section outlines that I have provided as your headers. Use active voice (Do not write "There are three reasons..." Instead, "Three reasons exist for ..."). Use appropriate punctuation. Avoid first and second person (e.g., "I" and "you"). Omit unnecessary words. Do not use contractions (i.e., "can't"). Avoid using lists; do not include bulleted items!

Avoid using quotes, except when absolutely necessary. Never use long quotes. Do not use colloquialisms or slang (e.g., "a lot of," "a big reason," "He is a big believer in ..."). Avoid emotional statements and verbs (e.g., "I believe ..." "She feels ..."). In scientific writing, we use thinking verbs, like "argue," "contend," "maintain." Be aware of homonym confusion (i.e., "there," "their," or "they're," "an" or "and," "weather" or "whether," "to" or "too," "formerly" or "formally," "roll" or "role"). Write out numbers ten or less (i.e., "nine" not "9"). Wherever appropriate, use transition sentences. Avoid ending sentences with prepositions (e.g., "to," "in," "with," "for"). Avoid run-on sentences. Whenever a sentence has an "and," see if it could be two sentences. Whenever possible, use shorter sentences. When referring to individuals, use their last name (never their first name). Use proper capitalization (e.g., Republicans, Democrats, Congress, and President).