

Grading of Writing Assignments

Dr. Sohn

Prose Explanation / Rubric

Explanation of Grading of Written Assignments

Your grades for your written assignments are made up primarily of three components: **Research**, **Writing**, and **Ideas**. The three are weighted in that order.

You can go a long way with meticulous **RESEARCH** into our readings, perfectly formed footnotes, and perfectly formed reference lists. No outside sources for abstracts or final essay, and minimal outside sources are allowed for journal entries (more details in class). I provide a style guide to help with footnotes, reference list, and some basic comma issues. But that will not take you to an A or A+.

Your **WRITING** should be well organized, coherent, grammatically correct, and follow a certain political science model. The political science model entails writing in a way that is to the point, direct, succinct, active voice, avoids passive voice wherever possible, avoids generalizations, and stays very grounded in the readings (and their details, where appropriate). You will learn and develop writing skills in this model as we move through the semester. You are not expected to know it in advance.

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IDEAS means that, once you have effectively and accurately explained the main argument or take-home message of our reading(s) using the political science model just mentioned, you can then move to the third step, which is to develop your own analytical ideas about what really matters in the readings. That is, what should the reader of your abstract/journal/essay take home as the central point from your essay about the readings? (Journals include personal engagement; more details in class.)

When you have effectively achieved strong skills in all three areas, research, writing, and ideas, you can expect an A+ grade on written assignments in this class.

I do not grade on a curve. If you put the time and effort in and learn these skills, you can get a good grade in my class.

Notes:

- (1) If you do not want to spend the semester working on analytical reading, writing, and speaking skills and discussion of texts on the course topic of interest, you do not have to do so. You must do the reading to succeed in the class for both discussion and writing purposes. When you do, class is fun! However, your schedule may not permit it in all semesters. You can consider joining one of my upper-division, discussion-heavy courses (or graduate seminars if you are a graduate student) in another semester.
- (2) If you have writing issues that you know about with regard to grammar, syntax, style, English language, etc., I recommend going to the **Writing Lab** (address at end of each of my syllabi) with your first few written assignments to get comments from the lab before turning them in to me. **You are also welcomed to bring them to office hours for feedback on your writing. Please make use of them.**

-- Dr. Sohn