

Department of Political Science

Guidelines for Writing Essays and Research Papers

A research paper or analytical or interpretive essay will be judged by its ORGANIZATION, CLARITY, LOGIC and SENSE of EVIDENCE, as well as imagination and original thinking. The following suggestions should help avoid the worst errors with respect to the first four of these.

See also Guide to Citations of Electronic Source Materials

I. Topic

Note that a topic is not automatically a problem for investigation. You may begin by being interested in exploring a topic or theme, but by the time you write your paper, you should be able to show the reader: (1) what problems or questions of significance are suggested by the material you have been studying; (2) why the reader should be interested in these problems - that is, what light your work sheds on questions of more general interest; and (3) what questions have arisen in the course of your studies that need further investigation.

Note: The same paper may not be used for two courses without the explicit consent of the instructors of both courses. The purpose of such permission is to allow for the possibility of projects whose scope and research would be substantially greater than either required paper. If it is discovered that papers have been submitted to two courses without the consent of the two instructors, they will be automatically unacceptable.

II. Construction

Begin with a clear statement of the problem you are investigating and the questions you will be asking. This will help you to decide how to organize your paper and decide what is necessary for understanding the logic of your argument (and therefore relevant for inclusion) and what is not.

Explain generally what your sources are and why they are appropriate for your investigation. (Example: "An analysis of the party platforms since 1867 reveals the major political appeals made to the electorate. . .") Explain the limits of your study - the time period, the place, the case studies as well as the limitations of your sources - e.g. newspapers and parliamentary records, but no access to records of internal party deliberations.

Define key terms. Be particularly careful to define explicitly terms or concepts which are in everyday use (e.g., "nationalistic", "democratic", "self-government") in order that the reader will know exactly what you mean when you use them. Note that the "technical" usage frequently differs from everyday usage. The latter is often very loose, covering a multitude of meanings and connotations. Sort these out! A sophisticated paper shows awareness of the denotation of words (their explicit meanings) and their (laudatory or pejorative) connotations.

Use a variety of sources. Look for more than one point of view or interpretation. Particularly when issues are controversial and emotion-laden, be sure you have read more than your own favorite position. (Do not write a paper on Cyprus using only Greek sources, or a paper on the Israeli-Arab dispute using only sources available to one side). A good test of the breadth of your reading, your understanding of it, and your ability to work further with it is whether you are able to state the argument of each of the main "sides" in a way which would be recognizable and acceptable to its proponents. Distinguish between the description of each side's case and your critical analysis of it.

Where possible, use both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the texts of legislation, parliamentary records, speeches or statements, official reports, political party or interest group documents, etc. Secondary sources include analyses or interpretations in editorials, monographs, essays and other works of explanation and interpretation. Check the interpretations given in the secondary accounts not only against each other but against your own reading of the primary sources.

A sophisticated paper (1) presents a clear argument, thesis, or interpretation; (2) shows awareness of alternative explanations or interpretations; (3) explains why and how the preferred explanation was chosen and what the alternative explanations failed to account for; and (4) shows awareness of the possible limitations of the preferred explanation.

III. Form

Paragraphing. A paragraph is a unit of thought. It should have a main idea along with some development or elaboration. A concluding sentence either summarizes the thought or connects the paragraph to what follows. Coherent paragraphing is part of good organization. Check to see whether your paragraphs seem random. Avoid having many extremely long or extremely short paragraphs. The reader who is attempting to understand the structure of your argument frequently relies on your paragraphing as a guide.

Good diction (i.e. choice of words) consists of the deliberate selection of words that most precisely express your meaning. If you find that you are repeating a few general adjectives, examine each case to see whether you can find words which will make finer distinctions as well as give variety to your writing. A good thesaurus will be of assistance to you in such circumstances. Also avoid popular expressions which substitute for adequate, more precise words: e.g., "in-depth analysis" for profound or thorough analysis, "finalized" for completed or made final, "contrary wise" for on the contrary.

Spelling. Errors will be attributed to poor spelling, not to typography. If your spelling is poor, have a friend (whose English is good) check your paper or make use of your word-processing programme's "spell-checker". When in doubt about the spelling of a particular word, always check the dictionary. Foreign words are always underlined or written in italics: *supra*, *in extenso*, *Weltanschauung*, *la dolce vita*, *fin de siècle*. If, however, they have become a normal part of English usage, they are not underlined: *fiancé*, *ombudsman*, *status*.

IV. Technical Apparatus

Provide a title page.

Number your pages consecutively.

Use standard and uniform margins of one and one half inches at the left (in order that binding not interfere with readability), and one inch on the other three sides. (This permits space for comments, questions, and corrections. Leave a blank page at the end for the same reason).

Length of the paper. If there is a limit on the number of pages, adhere to it. (This limit assumes numbered pages, conventional margins, and double-spaced typing). The writer, not the reader, must do the necessary pruning.

Use of quotations. Quotations must be an aid to an argument, not a substitute for one. There are two forms for direct quotations. Short quotations are placed in quotation marks within the body of the text. Direct quotations of longer than about three lines are indented, single-spaced, and omit quotation marks. Both types are, of course, properly cited. All quotations must be exact in wording, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use excessively lengthy ones, as a rule. If you must emphasize some part of the quotation for purposes of illustrating a point of analysis, you may put it in italics or underline it, provided that you indicate immediately following that the emphasis is yours:

Example: "Of the three objectives of our foreign policy the first is the critical one" (emphasis added) OR (emphasis in the original).

If there is a mistake in logic, grammar, or spelling in the original, interpolate "[sic]" to assure the reader that you are quoting correctly. Every addition to the original must be enclosed in square brackets. If your typewriter lacks them, use a pen.

Documentation. The cardinal rule of all academic work is honesty in the use of the research or ideas of others. This is facilitated by proper attribution of sources.

A bibliography or list of references gives the reader a quick index to the research on which the paper is based. All works mentioned in

citations or footnotes must be included ; works not cited should only be included if they were specially valuable in preparing the paper.

Citations serve four major purposes:

1. They identify the sources for information, other than that which is common knowledge. Thus the fact that the French Revolution began in 1789 need not be cited, but the fact that the liberals won 43% of the popular vote in the most recent elections should be.

2. They identify the sources of all interpretations, theories or, insights borrowed from others. Note: means that not only direct quotations but also paraphrases of the interpretations of others must be cited. If a theory or concept is so generally known as to be part of the fund of common knowledge (e.g., the concept of class warfare) it need not be cited (in this case, to Karl Marx). However, if your analysis hinged upon an examination of the usefulness of this concept, or an interpretation of it, then it probably should be cited to the precise pages in Marx, and possibly other authors who have used it in different ways.

3. They provide the reader with the necessary tools for a thorough and critical evaluation of your work. Citations permit the reader to check the accuracy of quotations and of your understanding of the materials. Sources may be inaccurately quoted, or a technically accurate quotation may be misleading when taken out of context. Exact references allow the reader to put the concept or quotation back "in context", and to assess it independently. For many types of research, this is the nearest one can come to replicating the work, that is, repeating the investigation to see whether one arrives at the same conclusions. Citations are therefore analogous to the requirement that scientists include the method of an experiment so that others may repeat it to test the validity of the results.

4. They provide fellow researchers with the tools necessary for further utilization of your work. The citations and the bibliography are the technical apparatus which allow cumulative effort. Unless specifically told by your instructor to ignore a part or all of this apparatus, you must assume that it is required.

Statistical tables, diagrams, and tabular presentation of analytical concepts frequently are important aids in presenting essential information or ideas. Unless they are presented properly, however, they are useless. First, the exact sources of all the factual material in

the table must be noted at the bottom of the table (e.g. Source: United Nations, Statistical Office, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, 1957, 436), Second, tables, diagrams and tabular presentations must always be explained in the body of the text. The relevance and interpretation of such tables are not clear to the reader unless you make them so. Third, if you yourself use some statistical technique, explain clearly what you have done and why.

There are currently two basic citation styles in common usage in political science. The more traditional or "humanities" style uses footnotes to reference every citation. The newer "author-date" style simply inserts the author, date and page number(s) in brackets in the main text. Both styles are discussed in detail in the following sections. Regardless of the style you choose, footnotes are used to give descriptive or technical material useful but not essential to the understanding of the paper. This type of footnote should be used sparingly. In the end, what is to be cited is a matter of judgment and experience. But remember: a failure to cite may be interpreted as an attempt to plagiarize.

V. General Stylistic Rules for References and Citations

It is a sad truism that there is no universally accepted reference style. It may even seem to you that each instructor has his or her own style. Some rules, however, are observed by all. Whatever the style, references must be CLEAR, PRECISE, and CONSISTENT. Inconsistencies are wasteful of the reader's time. Incomplete, unclear and imprecise entries are more than useless - at times, they are even harmful because they may provide a false aura of reliability. You must always remember that the technical apparatus of your paper is a service you render to your reader and that, consequently, the convenience of your reader must always be kept in mind.

Two methods for referencing sources are outlined and illustrated in the following pages. You may choose either style unless specifically instructed otherwise. For more detailed information on these styles, consult the most current edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writer of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* in the reference section of the library.

A. Humanities Style i. Bibliographies

Bibliographical entries are listed alphabetically, by the author's last name, which appears first for each identification. Titles are either underlined or italicized. Single spacing is used within a given bibliographical entry and double spacing between entries. All but the first line of a bibliographical entry are indented:

Book: Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History; Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its*

Prospects. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961.

Multiple Volumes: Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1955- 1956. 2 vols.

or (if you use only one of these two volumes):

Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs*. Vol. 2: *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1956.

If a book has two or three authors, only the name of the first author is inverted. If the book has more than three authors, only the name of the first author is mentioned, with the added notation, et al.:

Cantor, Norman F. and Richard I. Schneider. *How to Study History*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967.

Hoffman, Stanley et al. *In Search of France. The Economy, Society, Political System in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Edited books: Stern, Fritz, ed. *The Varieties of History, from Voltaire to the Present*. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956.

Wright, Gordon and Arthur Meja, Jr., eds. *An Age of Controversy: Discussion Problems in 20th Century European History*. New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964.

Translated books: Curtius, Ernst Robert. *The Civilization of France, an Introduction*. Translated by Olive Wyon. Vintage Books. New York: Random House, 1962.

Subsequent editions: Chitwood, Oliver Perry. *A History of Colonial America*. 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1931

Books written by the same author are listed in sequence. They are alphabetized according to the first important word of their title (and not necessarily the first word, if that work is an article, for instance). Although it is acceptable to repeat the author's name in each case, it is more customary to replace that name by a series of five underline marks in the second and following listings:

Figgis, J.N. *The Divine Right of Kings*. Harper Torchbooks; the Academy Library. New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965.

_____. *Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625*. Harper Torchbooks; the Academy Library. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960.

Articles or chapters in an edited book have a slightly different style. Note that it is the title of the journal or book that is italicized (underlined), not the article title.

Article: Tannenbaum, Edward R. "The Goals of Italian Fascism," *The American Historical Review*, 54 (April 1969): 1183-1204

Chapter in

edited book: Macartney, C.A. "Hungary." In *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*. ed. by A. Goodwin. London: Adam and Charles Black,

1953.

Article in

encyclopedia: *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1989 ed. S.v. "Dialectical Materialism," by Robinson Crews.

Where bibliographical material is lacking which cannot be provided through the consultation of specialized reference works, you should indicate that it is unavailable by the following abbreviations: np: np, nd. (no place of publication: no publisher, no date of publication).

Places of publication, if not well known or likely to lead to confusion, should include province, state or country. Thus, while Chicago is sufficient and London is assumed to stand for London, England, you should write: London, Ont.; Don Mills, Ont.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J. and either Cambridge, Mass. or Cambridge, England.

Finally, some other types or sources that may require bibliographic entries are illustrated below:

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Documents: Social Science Research Council. Annual Report, 1968-69. New York: S.S.R.C., 1970.

Great Britain. Parliamentary Debate (4th Series). (Commons). Vol. LXII 1903.

U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly on S.1312, The Failing Newspaper Act. 90th Congress, 1st Session, July 12, 1967.

United Nations, Security Council. Report on the Situation in the Congo (S/CL.4/246, Sept. 12, 1960). United Nations, N.Y., 1960.

Newspapers: The Montreal Star, July 17, 1970.

Le Devoir, 1950-1955.

The Times(London), May 13, 1926.

720Book Reviews: Maurice Pinard, Review of Revolution and Counterrevolution: Change and Persistence in Social Structures, by Seymour Martin Lipset, Canadian Journal of Political Science III (March 1970), 173-174.

Unpublished

Materials: Smythe, Oliver C. "Duplessis and Civil Liberties: A Causal Model." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 1962.

Interviews: Personal interview with Postmaster-General Eric Kierans, Ottawa, July 28, 1970.

ii. Footnotes

In the humanities style, all references or citations take the form of footnotes. The form of a first reference to a given work is directly related to that of the bibliographical entry for the same work, except that it provides more definite information as to the page (or pages) to which it specifically refers. The principal differences from the bibliographic style are: (1) there is no inversion of the author's name since alphabetization is not observed in footnotes; (2) the indentation style is reversed from that practiced in the bibliography; and (3) punctuation is such that all items of a single reference are together, and not broken by periods. To facilitate comparison, the footnote style for a number of the works listed in the previous section will be given here in the order in which they appeared above.

1. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History; Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospect* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce, and World, Inc, 1961), 28.

240 2. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, 2 vols.*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1955-1956), 2:12.

or:

2. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 12.

3. Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, *How to Study History* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967), 137.

4. Gordon Wright and Arthur Meja, Jr., eds., *An Age of Controversy: Discussion Problems in 20th Century European History* (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964), 177.

5. Ernst Robert Curtius, *The Civilization of France, an Introduction*, trans. Olive Wyon, Vintage Books (New York: Random House, 1962), 128n.

6. Oliver Perry Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1931), 438.

7. Edward R. Tannenbaum, "The Goals of Italian Fascism," *The American Historical Review* 54 (April 1969): 1203.

8. C.A. Macartney, "Hungary," in *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. Goodwin (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 125-26.

9. *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1989 ed., S.V. "Dialectical Materialism" by Robinson Crews, 1104-5.

Second references to a book, and all following ones, need not be as complete as the first reference. Only the author's last name need be given, unless you are using works by two authors with the same last name (e.g.: Harold A. Innis and Mary Q. Innis) and the book's title can be shortened, replaced by *op. cit.* (work already cited), or even dropped entirely. All other bibliographical indications can be deleted:

23. Stern, *Varieties of History*, 92.

or:

23. Stern, *op. cit.*, 92.

or:

23. Stern, 92.

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NOTE: These abbreviations must never lead to confusion. If you are using more than one work by the same author, you must use the short title form when referring to each of these works, even if you use another form for all other works.

Loc. cit. is used instead of *op. cit.* when it refers to an article. Short-form titles or no title at all may also be used, but the same rule about keeping things clear is applicable here as well:

24. Tannenbaum, loc. cit., 1190.
or:

24. Tannenbaum, "Goals of Fascism," 1190.
or:

24. Tannenbaum, 1190.

When two references to the same work follow one another, the second of the two is replaced by the abbreviation *ibid.* (the same as immediately above) in italics or underscored, except for that part of the reference which changes:

25. Mumford, *City in History*, 554-55.

26. *Ibid.*, 502.

27. *Ibid.*

This last refers also to page 502. Note also that, since *ibid.* is an abbreviation for *ibidem*, the period which follows it is kept even when it does not close the sentence.

28. Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 71.

29. *Ibid.*, 72.

This last refers to page 72 of the second volume. Otherwise it would be given as follows:

29. *Ibid.*, 1: 72.

Note that, if you find yourself using too many consecutive *ibidem*s in your paper, you might question whether you could not lump footnotes together. You might also wonder if you are not following someone's work too closely.

Footnotes, as their name indicates, are usually placed at the bottom of the page of text to which they refer. They may, however, be placed at the end of the paper, beginning on a separate sheet with the title "Endnotes".

B. The Author - Date Style

i) Citations

The author-date style dispenses with all of the foregoing rules concerning footnotes because footnotes are only used to make substantive comments that would be inappropriate in the main text. All references to other works, whether in the main body of the essay or in a footnote, take the form of a citation in brackets in the text. The basic form consists of the author's last name, the year of publication followed by a comma, and page or range of pages in question. The page references may be excluded if you are referencing ideas discussed throughout the source work; except in these (rare) instances, you should indicate with page numbers exactly where you found the ideas or words in question. The following examples illustrate various situations that may occur.

A 1-page citation: (Smith 1990, 57)

A page-range citation: (Smith 1990, 57-8)

Two authors: (Smith and Jones 1990, 121-7)

More than 3 authors: (Smith et al. 1990, 121-7)

Reference to a footnote (Smith and Jones 1990, 164 n3)

Reference to a volume

and page number: (Smith and Jones 1990, 2:105-7)

When several references are made in the same paragraph to the same source, it is acceptable to use a full author-date citation for the first reference and page citations, e.g. (101-5), for subsequent references. If all references are to the same page in the source, only one full author-date citation is required.

It often happens that an idea has been mentioned in more than one work. Where this occurs, the multiple references are listed in chronological order and separated by semi-colons. If the multiple works are all by the same author(s), the name is not repeated. If page numbers are not included, commas rather than semi-colons are used to

separate the different works. Finally, if the reference is to the works by the same author(s) in the same year, the years of publication are separated by adding small-case letters, e.g. 1990a, 1990b, etc. The following examples illustrate these possibilities:

Different authors: (Smith and Jones 1990, 120-7; Smith and Wessen 1992, 156-9)

Same authors: (Smith and Jones 1990, 120-7; 1992, 190-201)

Same author,

no pg. numbers: (Smith and Jones 1990, 1992)

Same author, same year: (Smith and Jones 1990a, 1990b)
(Smith and Jones 1990a, 120-7; 1990b, 561-7)

Citations for direct quotations should be placed immediately following the quotation, regardless of whether the quotation is placed in the body of the text or separated out and indented. Citation for ideas not directly quoted should be placed close to the idea itself and at a point where it is least likely to

disrupt the flow of thought. Typically, this occurs just before a period or other punctuation mark but there are exceptions:

Many authors (Smith and Jones 1991; Black and Blue 1992) have argued that...

There are occasions when leadership may fail (Smith and Jones 1990, 156-7), yet...

ii) Reference Lists

Because the author-date style gives only limited information on sources in the body of the essay, it is especially important that a complete list of references be included at the back of the essay. It is customary to begin the list on a separate page, with the heading "References" (rather than "Bibliography"). Entries are listed in alphabetical order and, for authors that have more than one entry, in chronological order. Unless prohibitively long, all authors should be listed (unlike citations where "et al." can be used for more than three authors).

The format for entries follows the basic rules described for bibliographies in the humanities style, but with one crucial exception: the date of the publication is listed immediately following the name(s) of the author(s). The reason for this is that citations are listed in the main text by author and date; listing author and date first in the list of references therefore makes it easier for the reader to find the full information for any citation that appears in the text of the essay. Where more than one publication appears for the same author in the same year, they are identified by small Roman letters, in alphabetical sequence attached to the year of the publication. The following examples illustrate this style:

Book: Cantor, Norman F. and Richard I. Schneider. 1967. *How to Study History*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

Edited book: Wright, Gordon, and Arthur Meija, Jr., eds. 1964. *An Age of Controversy: Discussion Problems in 20th Century European History*. New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead and Co.

Journal article: Tannenbaum, Edward R. 1969. "The Goals of Italian Fascism." *The American Historical Review* 74 (April): 1183-1204.

Chapter in edited book: Macartney, C.A. 1953. Hungary. In *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Goodwin. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Multiple works in the same year: Smith, Fred. 1990a. "The Legislative Process in France." *American Journal of*

Political Science 35 (March): 701-21.

Smith, Fred. 1990b. "Further Thoughts on the Legislative Process in France." *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (December): 1505-21.

or

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_____. 1990b. "Further Thoughts on the Legislative Process in France." *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (December): 1505-21.