

POLITICAL SCIENCE 344
U.S. INTEREST GROUPS
SENIOR SEMINAR
FALL 2008

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays & Wednesdays 11:30-12:20 and by appointment

Organized interest groups are alternately maligned as “special interests” representing the elite and celebrated as a vocal and powerful reflection of citizen interests. Interest groups, or “factions,” have existed since the founding of our country and are every bit as controversial now as they were then. Whatever your view, there is little question that these organized groups have an impact on policymaking in America through their role in providing valuable information to policymakers and connecting citizens with their elected officials.

This course considers the role of organized interest groups in American politics and provides students with a background in interest group theory as well as exposure to the study of contemporary group strategies and tactics. We discuss theoretical explanations of group formation, compare competing theories that explain group success, examine group strategies of policy influence, and consider the impact of groups on American democracy.

Our study of interest groups focuses, in particular, on three questions. These questions encompass much of the academic research on interest groups and help guide our study this semester. I anticipate that most of the theses produced in this class will address one or more of the following questions:

1. Why and how do interest groups form and mobilize?
2. How do groups influence public policy and how successful are groups at influencing policy?
3. Do groups reflect the interests of American citizens or do they reflect the interests of elites?

TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIAL

Jeffrey Berry & Clyde Wilcox, The Interest Group Society, 4th Edition (2007) (BW)

Robert Alexander, The Classics of Interest Group Behavior (2006) (A)

Allan Cigler and Burdett Loomis, Interest Group Politics, 7th Edition (2007) (CL)

Andrea Lunsford. The Everyday Writer. (For reference on your writing assignments)

Additional readings available on Moodle reserve

GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS*

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Response Essays (8 of 10)	10 %	Ongoing
Seminar Leading (2)	5 %	TBA
Topic Proposal	C/NC	September 15
Research Question & Preliminary Bibliography	C/NC	September 24
Annotated Bibliography	5 %	October 1
Literature Review	10 %	October 8
Methodology Section	C/NC	October 15
Prospectus	10 %	October 29
Draft #1	10 %	November 12
Draft #2	C/NC	November 26
Final Draft	30 %	December 10
Poster	C/NC	December 10
Class Participation	20 %	Ongoing

Response Essays: Each week prior to class, you will write a 1-2 page typed essay in response to the assigned readings. The purpose of these essays is to facilitate your engagement with the reading material and to help prepare you for the day's discussion. I will collect your essays at the end of each class period. Each essay should do the following:

- Provide a 2-3 sentence summary of each of the assigned readings (What was/were the main point/s? What argument/s did the author/s raise?)
- Provide a 1-3 paragraph analysis of the readings. Identify one common theme between the readings assigned for the week and provide an analysis of the ways in which the various authors conceptualize or analyze this point. Ideally, this point of comparison and contrast will relate to your own research project.

Your grade for these essays is based on 1) the thoughtfulness of your writing, 2) your understanding of the arguments raised in the readings, 3) your ability to connect the arguments raised in the readings to other course material, 4) your ability to apply the information to your research project, and 5) the mechanics of your essays including presentation, spelling, grammar, etc. I will not accept late assignments but each student may skip two response essays without penalty.

Seminar Leading: Along with two or three other students, you will be responsible for leading 60-90 minutes of our discussion for two classes during the semester. Keeping in mind the main arguments presented by the author/s, your group will develop a series of discussion questions to help us work through the theoretical and practical implications of the reading. Your job in this is not to teach the

* ¹ Portions of this syllabus are adapted from Alisa Rosenthal's Fall 2006 POL 344 Law and Identity syllabus, Chris Gilbert's Spring 2006 POL 320 State and Local Government syllabus, and Mimi Gerstbauer's Fall 2006 POL 340 U.S. Foreign Policy syllabus.

material to us, but rather to help us engage with the ideas raised by the author/s. The group should prepare at least ten questions in advance and send a copy of them via email to the class by the Friday before the discussion (by 5:00).

Discussions sometimes happen spontaneously, but most of the time it takes careful planning on the part of the discussion leader. You should have specific topics to discuss in mind and should lead the discussion by posing a variety of questions to the class. Some things to keep in mind:

- You should be prepared with a number of different questions in case the class answers them faster than expected.
- You should not spend the entire class period talking “at” your classmates, but rather should work to encourage them to discuss the readings.
- Sometimes it takes a few seconds (or minutes!) after you ask a question to get a response. Short periods of silence are fine; sometimes people just need time to sort out their thoughts.
- Feel free to use different methods of encouraging discussion: break people into small groups, give people a question on which to write for a few minutes, use role playing scenarios, plan an activity or simulation, use a media clip or short news article, etc.
- If no one answers your question, think about rephrasing the question to make it easier to understand.
- Sometimes it is useful to start with “easy” questions (either fact-based questions from the book or broad “how do you feel?” questions) to get people talking and then move into the more challenging and/or thought-provoking questions.

Your grade is based on 1) the development of relevant and provocative discussion questions, 2) discussion leadership (asking questions clearly, facilitating discussion, asking appropriate follow-up questions, engaging all members of the class), 3) effort devoted to making discussion interesting and accessible to classmates, 4) clarity of discussion questions provided in advance (including spelling, grammar, and style), and 5) ability to work with a group. I will evaluate your group as a whole based on these criteria and will ask each group member to evaluate the group performance based on these criteria. I will take your individual assessments into account in determining your grade.

Thesis: Throughout the semester, you will complete several assignments designed to assist you in the research process and prepare you to complete your final draft. These assignments, along with your final draft, comprise 65% of your course grade. Failure to complete any major component of the course may result in failing the course as a whole, regardless of performance on the completed components.

- Thesis topic proposal
- Research question and preliminary bibliography
- Annotated bibliography
- Literature review
- Methodology
- Prospectus
- Rough draft 1
- Rough draft 2
- Final draft

Each of these assignments is described in more detail at the end of this syllabus. Because these assignments (and the thesis, more generally) comprise such a large portion of your grade, it is essential that you fully understand the expectations of each assignment before the assignment is due. I will do my best to make those expectations clear, but if you have questions, it is your responsibility to bring those

questions to me so that I can help you understand the assignment before it is due. Please use me as a resource for these assignments. I am happy to meet with you to discuss your project during office hours, or to set up an individual meeting with you outside of my office hours.

Students are not allowed to re-do assignments or make up missed assignments for credit. All late thesis-related assignments will be docked 10% for each day or portion thereof they are late.

Participation: Your participation is an integral part of this class. Learning requires much more than me simply shoveling information into your open minds. It is an active process that requires you to take the reins in asking questions, seeking out information, working collectively to achieve understanding of complex problems, and critically examining your assumptions about how the world works. My role in this process is to guide and encourage you, but I can not do that without your participation. Participation includes attending class on time, completing the assigned readings, contributing to class discussions with thoughtful comments, and listening attentively to me and to your classmates.

- I consider your completion of the assigned readings to be your ticket of admittance to class. You cannot participate meaningfully in a discussion of the readings if you have not completed them. In the event that you have not completed the readings, I may ask you to leave and you will be counted as absent for the day.
- Your contribution to class discussion will come in many forms: active participation (leadership) in small group activities, asking questions about the course material in class, contributing meaningful comments and observations in large group discussions, answering questions I pose to the class, etc.
- Listening is a valuable skill. It is important that you learn to hear and respond to the comments made by your classmates as well as to my comments, so always look for ways you can engage with comments from a previous speaker. This means that you should not be talking when other people are speaking.

COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Attendance: You are an adult and therefore, you do not need to notify me when you miss class and you do not need to explain your absences to me. Please do not send me an email asking if you “missed anything important in class”! If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. If you have any questions about your notes, please see me during my office hours. Missing class during the semester *will negatively affect your participation grade* regardless of the reasons for the absences. Because this class only meets thirteen times, missing more than **two** classes during the semester may result in an F for the course.

Academic Honesty: Gustavus Adolphus College standards for academic honesty apply in this class. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the College Honor Code. Your decision to remain enrolled in this class will serve as your agreement to abide by the following statement for each assignment you submit: *“On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”* Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any thoughts or ideas that are not your own, even if you are not directly quoting a source must be attributed to their source through in text citations. Plagiarized work will be given a zero, cases will be reported to the dean, and the incident may be grounds for failing the course.

Cell Phones: Please turn off your cell phone before class. If a cell phone rings during class time, the owner will be asked to bring a treat to share with the entire class during our next meeting to compensate us for the distraction.



Grade Dispute: Any grade disputes must be submitted in writing to me no later than one week after the assignment is returned.

Special Accommodations: If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may have an effect on your ability to complete assigned course work, please contact Laurie Bickett, the Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center. She will review your concerns and decide with you what accommodations are necessary. Upon receipt of documentation from her, I will be happy to work with you.

The Writing Center: At the Writing Center, you'll work with a peer tutor one-on-one: you can talk frankly about your writing concerns and receive on-the-spot feedback. The Writing Center is not a proofreading service; rather, it is a peer teaching facility that helps you clarify your thinking, structure your papers, develop evidence, hone your style, and practice self-editing skills. Please call x6027 for hours and locations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Assignments due on Wednesday (Tuesday for Draft #2) are due to my office (Old Main 204-A) by 1:00 pm. Other assignments are due in class. No email attachments, please.

Week 1: Welcome to Fall Semester

Monday (9/1): No Class

Week 2: Introduction: What is an interest group?

Monday (9/8)

Read: A-1; A-2; BW-1; Johnson Thesis (Moodle) *or* Becker Thesis (Moodle) (@ 60 pages)

Week 3: Interest Groups in American Politics: Group theory

****Schedule an individual meeting with me this week****

Monday (9/15)

Read: A-4; A-5; BW-2; CL-3 (@ 60 pages)

Due: Topic proposal (1 page)

Week 4: Group Formation and Maintenance: Incentive-based theories

Monday (9/22)

Read: BW-3; A-9; Olson Article (Moodle) (@ 90 pages)

Library: Sources (with Julie Gilbert, librarian)

Wednesday (9/24)

Due: Research question and preliminary bibliography (minimum of five sources)

Week 5: Group Formation and Maintenance: Incentive-based theories and entrepreneurs

Monday (9/29)

Read: A-10; A-11; CL-2 (@ 75 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 1

Library: Access (with Julie Gilbert, librarian)

Wednesday (10/1)

Due: Expanded annotated bibliography (minimum of fifteen sources)

Week 6: Group Formation and Maintenance: Patrons

Monday (10/6)

Read: A-12; CL-5; CL-16 (@ 70 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 2

Library: Access (with Julie Gilbert, librarian)

Wednesday (10/8)

Due: Literature Review (5-10 pages)

Week 7: Group Influence and Strategy: Parties and campaigns

Monday (10/13)

Read: BW-4; BW-5; CL-7; CL-8 (@ 80 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 3

Wednesday (10/15)

Due: Methodology (2-4 pages)

Week 8: Group Influence and Strategy

****Schedule an individual meeting with me this week****

Monday (10/20): No Class: Fall Break

Week 9: Group Influence and Strategy: Inside and outside lobbying

Monday (10/27)

Read: A-15; BW-6; CL-17; BW-8 (@ 80 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 4

Wednesday (10/29)

Due: Prospectus (8-14 pages) – Copies to me and to peer reviewers

Week 10: Group Influence and Strategy: Inside and outside lobbying

Monday (11/3)

Read: BW-7; A-7; Schattschneider Reading-Chapters 1 & 4 (Moodle); CL-15 (@ 80 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 5

Library: Evaluation and ethics (with Julie Gilbert, librarian)

Week 11: Group Influence and Strategy: Coalitions, niches, and issue networks

Monday (11/10)

Read: BW-9; A-18 (pgs 259-272); A-19; CL-12 (@ 80 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 6

Library: Evaluation and ethics (with Julie Gilbert, librarian)

Wednesday (11/12)

Due: Draft #1

Week 12: Assessing Group Influence: Economic biases

****Schedule an individual meeting with me this week****

Monday (11/17)

Read: BW-10; Schattschneider Reading-Chapter 2 (Moodle); CL-4 (@ 60 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 7

Week 13: Assessing Group Influence: Political and structural biases

Monday (11/24)

Read: A-17; CL-13; CL-18; Skocpol Article (Moodle) (@ 55 pages)

In Class: Discussion Group 8

Tuesday (11/25)

Due: Draft #2 – Copies to me and to peer reviewers

Week 14: Presentations

Monday (12/1)

In Class: Thesis Presentations

Week 15: Presentations

Monday (12/8)

In Class: Thesis Presentations

Wednesday (12/10)

Due: Final Draft

THESIS GUIDELINES

What is a thesis?

Your thesis is the most sophisticated, in-depth body of work you will complete for the political science major. To be considered an effective piece of scholarship, the thesis should make reference to relevant existing works in the literature, discussing them as necessary; it should offer some unique angle of analysis or commentary on your subject; and it should draw some clear conclusions based on what you have done. *It may include your own opinions and ideology, but as a scholarly work the conclusions must be supported by more than simply personal opinion.* The thesis represents the capstone to your political science major, and it should contain the best work – in terms of in-depth research and effective writing – you have to offer.

How long is a thesis?

The thesis should be about 25-30 pages in length, not including title page, abstract, table of contents, and bibliography. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, but it is meant as a guide; 20 to 25 pages is marginally acceptable and will be graded as such. Some papers are longer, but quality counts for more than quantity. As a polished scholarly work, the final product should be absolutely free of spelling and other grammatical errors. It must appropriately reference all types of sources with some standard citation format (APA or Chicago), and it must have a complete bibliography. No facts or ideas should be used without proper reference to their source(s) of origin.

What steps are involved in the process of writing a thesis?

A thesis begins with an idea. I will work with you in the first two weeks of the semester to help you find a topic. Once you have a topic, you will begin researching the topic. This part of the process will vary from student to student based on your topic. In general, though, organization and time management are critical. Research will help you clarify and develop your argument. When you are ready to begin writing, you will develop an outline, which will help organize your paper and will make the writing process more manageable. Finally, the revision and peer-review process will help refine your paper.

What should I know before getting started on my thesis?

- Pick a topic that interests you because you'll be spending a lot of time with it in the next four months.
- Keep yourself organized. There is nothing more frustrating than having to track down a source that you used three months ago but forgot to write down.
- Consider using a bibliography program such as RefWorks or EndNote to help organize your research. We will spend some time in the library learning how to use RefWorks.
- Plan ahead. Don't underestimate the time it will take to research your topic (you may need to order books and articles through interlibrary loan, which will add additional time to the process), write, revise, and edit. If you put things off until the last minute, the quality of your work will reflect this. Regular and steady progress is the key to producing a great thesis.
- Back it up! You should always have a backup copy of your thesis. Save it to your hard drive, email, z-drive, and wherever else you can put it.

What assignments will I need to complete as part of this class?

<p style="text-align: center;">Thesis Topic Proposal Due: Monday, September 15 in class (1 page)</p>

Start thinking about what you might choose as your topic. You're going to be living with this paper all semester so it's important that you choose something you're truly interested in writing about. Flip through the course readings to see what piques your curiosity. Look back at notes and readings from other courses. Think about the various classes you've taken in political science.

Jot down answers to the following questions:

- Which issues fascinated you?
- What did you want to learn more about?
- Which paper topics were most rewarding to work on?
- Why did these topics intrigue you?
- Which aspects were most interesting?

Keeping in mind that a good topic is one that interests you, concerns something that you want to understand more about, and can be studied in the time available to you, propose a topic for your research paper. The proposal should be approximately one paragraph and should explain the general area you intend to address, why you have chosen that area, and what background knowledge you have that pertains to this topic.

<p style="text-align: center;">Research Question and Preliminary Bibliography Due: Wednesday, September 24 (1-2 pages)</p>

Your research question is the specific question your paper will address and answer. In addition to identifying this question, you should also address the following questions in this assignment:

- Why is your research question important?
- What are the implications of potential answers? (In other words, "so what"?)
- Has this question been asked/answered by political scientists already? If so, how is your project different? If not, why not?

Answering these three questions (which are essential to formulating a good research question) requires you to have completed a preliminary review of the relevant literature in your topic area. Thus, you must also submit a bibliography of the sources you consulted while deciding on your research question. Include at least 5 sources in your bibliography that are directly relevant to your research question.

While this obviously will not be a comprehensive bibliography, it is essential that you demonstrate that you have assessed the existing literature on your topic and ascertained whether your research question has been addressed. Your sources must be from academic journals and/or books. Get friendly with the reference librarians now.

Note: Your research question must be approved by me – if your first version of a research question is not approved, it is your responsibility to submit additional versions until you have an approved research question.

When you think you have arrived at a research question, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the question deal with a topic or issue that interests me enough to spark my own thoughts and opinions?
- Is the question researchable in the course of one semester?
- What sources will have the type of information that I need to answer the research question (journals, books, Internet resources, government documents, people)?
- Can I access these sources?

Annotated Bibliography
Due: Wednesday, October 1
(3-5 pages)

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. One purpose of the annotation is to inform me of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources you use. The most important purpose of this assignment is to help you identify the theoretical and empirical work that is most relevant to your research.

In this assignment, you will include a minimum of fifteen relevant sources. You should provide an annotation for five of the sources that are most relevant to your research.

In preparing to write an annotated bibliography, locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic. Briefly examine and review the documents, then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic. Cite each book, article, or document using the appropriate style (APA or Chicago).

Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or (d) explain how this work relates to your research topic.

Literature Review
Due: Wednesday, October 8
(5-10 pages)

The purpose of a literature review is to provide a theoretical backdrop to your own research. Your ideas for research, research questions, and hypotheses are based on what you have learned from the work of other scholars. The literature review provides you with an opportunity to place your own work in the context of others. This paper also provides you with the opportunity to present your hypothesis for what you expect to find through your research. Your hypothesis should be based on what you know through the work of other scholars.

In this paper, you will explore the work of other scholars that relates to the questions you address in your thesis. Undoubtedly, other social scientists and political theorists have written on your topic and, presumably, their analyses have not all been identical. Briefly discuss the opposing arguments presented by these authors. What different factors do they examine? What evidence do they consider? On what points do they agree or disagree? Can you group several authors together in terms of their approach or analysis?

The literature review requires that by the time you write your prospectus you must have read a variety of secondary sources (books and journal articles). You cannot find and read them all the weekend before your prospectus is due, first of all, because they may not be in the library. Plan ahead so you can recall or interlibrary loan the books and articles you need. In addition, you not only need to read the secondary materials on your topic, but also give yourself some time to step back and analyze what you have read so that you can formulate your own hypothesis.

<p style="text-align: center;">Methodology Due: Wednesday, October 15 (2-4 pages)</p>
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This section might best be called a description of your research approach. Your research paper is to be an original contribution. This does not mean that you have to come up with a topic no one else has written on. (In fact, this is probably unwise as your sources would be limited, and it may prevent you from completing the essay in one semester). Instead, the originality of your essay may enter in several different ways, including: how you set up your research question; what factors you consider; what evidence you examine; and your analysis of the available evidence.

In this paper, you present the method you will use to answer the question you pose in your research. You should identify the type(s) of evidence you will need to prove or disprove your argument. Presumably you will be using various types of evidence not only to address different components of or subsidiary questions to your research question, but also to confirm the data you have gathered or the theory you're advancing.

You should identify exactly what steps you will take to collect and analyze information in the attempt to answer your research question. Some methodologies you might consider using include analysis of survey data, content analysis of textual data (i.e newspaper articles, group websites, press releases, congressional hearing transcripts, etc.), and/or interviews. If you rely on one of these methodologies, you should use this section to explain exactly what information is collected and how you plan to analyze the information.

<p style="text-align: center;">Prospectus Due: Wednesday, October 29 (to me and to peer review group) (8-14 pages)</p>

Your peer review group will also read and review your prospectus. Be sure to arrange to give the members of your group a copy of your prospectus by 1:00 on Wednesday. Peer reviews are due in class on Monday, November 3.

Done well, the prospectus will provide the framework for your research paper. You have already written drafts of several of the sections to include in your prospectus. Each of the sections explained below are crucial elements of your thesis and should be addressed in your prospectus.

The research question and thesis statement set out the specific topic you're addressing while the alternative explanations section preempts criticisms that your question ignores other important elements. The literature review situates your research question within the existing literature, the description of your approach explains how your contribution is unique and important, and the outline of major subheadings foreshadows the primary divisions (chapters) of the paper and explains the rationale behind its organization.

I. Research Question and Thesis Statement (1-2 paragraphs)

As you have completed more research, it's possible – even likely – that your research question has been revised. That's fine: what is the current research question of your research paper?

Your thesis statement is the argument your paper will make: the answer to your research question. You won't necessarily wind up holding on to the thesis you articulate here when you're done writing the paper – certainly the process of reading, researching, thinking, and writing may change your opinions or your argument. But articulating a thesis statement early is helpful for structuring your research and in avoiding a paper that simply explores a topic without ever taking a stand or making an argument. Do not equivocate in your thesis statement. This is your working theory based on the research you have completed to date. If your thesis is disproved, this does not weaken your paper but actually demonstrates the strength of your research. Poor research is often the result of ignoring evidence that challenges your thesis rather than acknowledging that further research has demonstrated that your thesis is false or that an alternative theory has greater merit.

After stating your research question, identify the factors (variables), subsidiary questions, and/or alternative explanations that you will be examining in your research. You do not need to mention all alternative explanations, merely the most prominent or promising. The reason for identifying and addressing alternative explanations in your essay is to preempt criticisms that the factor you are examining is secondary to another more important factor.

II. Summary and Analysis of Existing Views (“The Literature Review”) (4-8 pages)

Use my comments from your previous assignment to revise this section. The literature review section of your prospectus should directly connect your research question to the existing research on this topic and should lead to a description of your methodology by raising questions that merit study. You may need to add to or subtract from your first draft of your literature review. You will certainly need to revise and edit the first draft for this section of your prospectus. This section should answer all of the questions raised in the Literature Review assignment.

III. Methodology (1-3 pages)

Use my comments from your previous assignment to revise this section. The methodology section of your prospectus should provide the reader with a clear explanation of what data you will use, why that data is appropriate to use, and how you will analyze the data in answering your research question. You may need to add to or subtract from your first draft of your methodology section. You will certainly need to revise and edit the first draft for this section of your prospectus.

IV. Outline of Major Subheadings (1-5 pages)

List the main issues/topics you will address in your paper and provide a sentence outline of each main section and subsection. It is not adequate to say that you intend to have an introduction, body, and conclusion. I take that for granted. At this stage of your research, you should have a clear sense of how you intend to address your research question and argue for your thesis statement. In this outline, I expect you to identify the substantive sections of your paper. The more detail, the better. What sorts of evidence and argumentation do you foresee using to address your research question? What is the logic behind your selection of sources?

At this stage, the important thing is to present an outline that illustrates the logic of your argument. The outline should help us identify if there are missing links in your argument (jumps in logic or assumed knowledge), or if you are going off on a tangent. In addition, the outline is a great “fill-in-the-blank” worksheet as you collect information. You can put notes or citations from sources where you think you might incorporate the information in the essay. It is expected that this outline will be, and should be, revised over the course of the outlining and drafting process.

Rough Drafts 1 and 2
Rough Draft 1 Due: Wednesday, November 12
Rough Draft 2 Due: Tuesday, November 25 (to me and to peer review group)
(25-30 pages)

All drafts must be word-processed, spell-checked, and proofread.

Read the RESEARCH PAPER FINAL DRAFT guidelines. They include a lengthy discussion of expectations for the final version of this paper. The more attention you pay to those expectations when you're writing your rough drafts, the closer your draft will be to your final paper.

After completing your rough draft, let it "rest" one day or overnight, at least. You will want to see it through fresh eyes before attempting to revise it. When ready to revise, go into a quiet, private place and READ YOUR ROUGH DRAFT ALOUD. This is the very best way to revise writing, since you will both see it and hear it. Read each section aloud, and ask the following questions:

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

1. Is there at least one separate paragraph for each of the major points that I listed on my outline? Does the order in my essay match the order of the outline?
2. Have I made my point clear in this paragraph?
3. Is there a clear topic sentence for each paragraph? Do I stick to my topic sentence throughout the paragraph?
4. Are there details, examples, specifics, and quotations in the paragraph that "keep the promise" the topic sentence makes? Each point must be supported with evidence.
5. Do my examples "paint pictures"? Do I "show," rather than just "tell"? Am I proving what I say?
6. Is my meaning confusing anywhere? If so, is it due to poor lead-ins to quotations, or lack of explanation and discussion of quotations and reference materials? Where do I need more explanation for clarity?
7. Is my meaning unclear due to lack of transitional words or phrases? Does it "flow" logically and smoothly? Where can I add transitions for better coherence and logic?
8. Have I introduced all quotations properly? Have I documented quotations properly?
9. Where can I combine short choppy sentences? Where are sentences too complex or too awkward to be clear?
10. Where is there unnecessary or irrelevant information? (All rough drafts have some. Be ruthless! Weed it out!) If it doesn't relate, it doesn't belong!
11. Is my style formal and mature? Use standard English, not slang words. Avoid contractions. Use cannot, not can't; use it is, not it's.)
12. Are ideas stated in complete sentences? Listen for fragments (incomplete sentences) and run-on sentences.
13. Does each paragraph end with a transition sentence that logically leads into the next paragraph?

MECHANICS

After the thorough revision of content and organization, you may feel you are finally through with revising. Take a deep breath, and go through it one more time. Re-read it silently, this time, for mechanical errors. Have a friend whose writing skills you trust and respect proofread it with you for mechanical errors.

DO:

- Turn in as close to a full draft of your paper (including citations and references) as you can.

- Make sure that the central focus of your paper is your thesis, the ARGUMENT you're making, around which you organize your facts.
- Make sure that you are citing an appropriate range of sources. If possible, your draft should reflect the full range of sources you intend to use. At a minimum, you should identify those areas where you believe you need more information and note what sources you intend to consult.
- Make sure that your draft reflects your best effort at this assignment in each of the following areas: research, argument, analysis, and writing.
- Remember that the more complete the draft you hand in, the more substantive and constructive my comments and those of your peers will be. Neither I nor your peers will proofread or copy edit your rough drafts.

DON'T

- Do not turn in an outline.
- Do not turn in a summary of sources. This is a full draft of your paper and the most important aspect of your paper is your argument.
- Do not turn in a hastily written, disorganized, or incoherent document.
- Do not turn in a document that has not been proofread, edited, and spell-checked.

Final Draft
Due Wednesday, December 10 by 1:00
(25-30 pages)

You must provide **2** copies of your final draft – one will be returned to you and one will be stored in the Political Science department files.

For each of the sections in your research paper, make sure that you have addressed each of the components discussed below.

INTRODUCTION

- *Frame your topic and research question.* What topic will your paper address? Why is the topic worthy of investigation? What questions, related to that issue, will the paper seek to answer? Why are these important questions? What is the answer at which you arrive? (The answer to this last question will be your *thesis* – the argument that will organize and drive your paper.)
- Using your thesis statement to keep your paper focused and structured, *review* a relevant body of literature. (*E.g.*, What has been written about this topic/question? What arguments have these various authors made? What are the common analytical agreements and disagreements that surface in them? Can you identify schools or patterns of thought in them? On what assumptions do they rest and to what conclusions do they come?)

BODY

- *Analyze* that body of literature in light of the research question you are asking. (*E.g.*, What does that literature say about your research question? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to your question contained in the literature?)
- *Make your case.* Given the body of literature you have just reviewed and discussed, what conclusions can you draw? What is – and *why* is it – the most intelligent approach to (or explanation of) the topic question you addressed?)
- *Consider counter-arguments.* What objections might others raise to your argument? How might you respond to those objections?

CONCLUSION

- What is the significance of your conclusion – the answer to the research question that framed your research and analysis? What is at stake in the way that we answer this question? Put another way, your conclusion should answer the “so what?” question.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- In addition to this broad structure, you may find it useful to *make use of headings and subheadings*.
- The headings provide a rough outline of the terrain your paper will cover and move it over that terrain in a coherent and orderly fashion.
- The subsections note the particular points of emphasis (importance) within each section.
- When well done, each section will have an introductory and thesis paragraph, subsections (if needed) to demonstrate and advance that thesis, and a concluding paragraph that pulls the material treated in the section into the general topic and thesis of the paper. These sections can stand alone: a sort of mini essay on a component of your general topic. You will, in this way, develop the general argument of the paper in an internally coherent and clearly and logically structured fashion.
- It *almost* goes without saying that a well-structured paper is grammatically correct, stylistically clear, and internally coherent. The reader should not be jarred by misspellings, sudden and unexplained transitions in thought, paragraphs that go on well past the confines of their introductory sentences, and sentences that are fragments, run-ons, or so convoluted as to convey no clear idea at all. Finish a near-final draft of your paper several days before handing it in. Put it aside for a day or two to let it “rest,” and then return to it and give it a thorough edit and rewrite. This is likely to dramatically improve the clarity and quality of the paper’s presentation.

Political Science Honors Day Research Symposium
Poster Guidelines
Due: Wednesday, December 10

The purpose of a poster session:

The Political Science Honors Day Research Symposium, held in the spring semester, will feature research conducted by majors in Senior Thesis classes from the 2008-2009 school year. All thesis students are asked to design and display a poster of their research. The purpose of a poster session is to allow the scholar to share the results of his or her research and to allow viewers to learn from those projects in a semi-formal environment. As a presenter, your poster should communicate the message of your paper through simple and eye-catching means. A viewer should be able to quickly glean the main point(s) and key findings of your research. The poster will not communicate all of your findings, but will provide a starting point for further discussion of your research.

Poster tips:

- Divide the contents of your poster into appropriate sections such as: title and author, abstract, research questions, hypotheses, methodology, data, results, conclusion. For some thesis topics, these categories will not fit very well. In these cases, it may be useful to think of your presentation as a set of overheads to outline your argument, engage visitors to your poster, and stimulate conversations with them about your paper.
- Headings above each poster section can indicate its contents and identify the appropriate order in which viewers should read the poster.
- Use a large, clear font size (absolutely no less than 16 point) since people will be reading your poster from a few feet away. Posters with lettering that is typed will look more professional than posters with lettering that is handwritten.
- Be concise. Concentrate on the visual impact and use your poster as a basis for further discussion with your visitor rather than trying to fit everything on the poster.
- You should be prepared to discuss your project in more detail and you may want to bring one or more copies of your thesis to the presentation for those who might want more information about your project.

Format:

Posters take a variety of formats, and the following formats are acceptable for the Political Science Honors Day Research Symposium:

- A maximum of nine 8 ½" x 11" papers. This is the most basic poster format and if you opt for this format, you may want to consider ways to make your presentation more visually appealing through the use of color, graphs, images, etc. These papers will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board.
- Tri-fold project display board (36" x 48 "). These "science fair" poster boards are available at all major office supply stores. We will provide tables on which to display them.
- Poster board (maximum size: 30" x 40"). You can attach printed sections to a poster board (as opposed to simply writing on the poster board with markers). Poster boards will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board or set on a ledge (like a whiteboard ledge).
- Printed poster (maximum size: 36" x 48"). If you prefer to create your entire poster digitally, media services can print a full sized poster. Printed posters will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board.

GRADING SCALE FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

A or A-: Superior development of original ideas. These papers organize arguments logically, present credible supporting evidence, and communicate the information without stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers present a significant and well-argued position that is both convincing and thought-provoking. I reserve this grade for papers that are truly excellent, and A grades, in particular, are rare.

B+, B, or B-: Good development of thesis. These papers organize arguments in a logical way, find credible supporting evidence, and communicate the information without distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers reflect a clear understanding of both the assignment and the course material, however, they lack the sophistication and polish of A papers.

C+, C, or C-: Average development of thesis. These papers lack strong development of arguments and/or credible supporting evidence, and include distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. This grade often reflects a lack of time or effort in researching, writing, revising, editing, or proofreading.

D+ or D: Poor development of thesis (may not even have a thesis). These papers fail to organize arguments in a logical way (you may not have supporting arguments or any sort of organizational structure), find credible supporting evidence (you may not have the right kind or amount of evidence or you may not be citing that evidence properly), or communicate the information without distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers reflect poor-quality college-level work with little time or effort put into the writing process.

You can earn an F if you do not turn in a paper, plagiarize your paper in any way, do not answer the question, and/or do such a poor job in writing your paper that it is impossible to understand what message you want to communicate with the paper.

COURSE GRADE SCALE

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	65-69
D	60-64
F	<59