GENERAL FORMAT

The following general format is often appropriate: "tell them what you're going to tell them; then tell them; then tell them what you told them."

The sections below should all be written according to the guidelines below from Van Evera (attached to this document), in terms of both style and content.

I. TITLE PAGE

Include your name, the date, and the title of your project.

II. ABSTRACT

• The first page after your title page should include an abstract that summarizes the following:
  o question,
  o analysis, and
  o results of your paper.
• It should be no more than 250 words and should NOT use first person.
• See the example in Gay’s article “Spirals of Trust” or check out more examples from JSTOR articles.

III. INTRODUCTION

Begin your paper with a short summary introduction. This summary introduction should answer up to five (5) questions:

1. What question or questions do you address?
2. Why do these questions arise? From what literature or real-world events? Offer background that clarifies your questions and puts them in context.
3. What answer or answers do you offer? Summarize your bottom line in a few sentences.
4. How will you reach your answers? Say a few words about your sources and methods.
5. What comes next? Provide a roadmap to the rest of the paper: "Section I explains how I began my life of crime; Section II details my early arrests; Section III describes my trip to death row; Section IV offers general theoretical conclusions and policy implications." Something of that sort.

#1 ("What is your question?") , #2 ("Why does this question arise?") , and #3 ("What is your answer?") are essential: make sure you cover them. #4-#5 are optional.

Summary introductions of this sort help readers grasp your argument. They also help you diagnose problems with your paper. A summary introduction can be hard to write. A possible reason: gaps or
contradictions in your arguments or evidence, which summary exposes. Solution: rethink and reorganize your paper.

IV. ARGUMENTATION

The logic of exposition in your research paper should roughly parallel your presentation. But, while you could take shortcuts and hit only the highlights in your presentation, you will have to unpack the segments of your logic, piece by piece, in your paper.

As you build your argument, four injunctions on argumentation should be kept in mind.

1. Use empirical evidence—facts, numbers, history—to support your argument. Purely deductive argument is sometimes appropriate, but argument backed by evidence is always more persuasive.
2. Clearly frame the general point(s) that your evidence supports. Don't ask facts to speak for themselves.
3. "Argue against yourself." After laying out your argument, acknowledge questions or objections that a skeptical reader might raise, and briefly address them. This shows readers that you have been thoughtful and thorough—that you are aware of possible counter-arguments or alternate interpretations, and have given these due consideration.
4. Often, of course, the skeptic would have a good point, and you should grant it. Don't claim too much for your theories or evidence!
5. Use citation to document all sources and statements of fact.

Below is a list of things that must be included in your paper. The order and exposition of the argument will obviously vary from person to person, but you should at some point be sure to have all of the following information included. Journal articles in political science (which is the model your write-up should follow) often follow this outline:

1) Literature Review
   a) What do we know?
   b) What do we need to know?
   c) Your theory
      i) What is it?
      ii) What is the basis of it? (On what grounds did you develop it?)
      iii) Be sure the specify the MECHANISMS of why or how you think something happens

2) Data
   a) What is your sample?
   b) Is your sample representative of the population you are studying? Why or why not?
   c) Data source
   d) Any questions about the quality of your data?

3) Model Specification
   a) What are the variables
   b) Why are they included (this is important to include for all of your control variables). You should draw on previous literature to justify your choice of control variables.
   c) How are they measured
   d) What is your hypothesis for each one?

4) Results
   a) Preliminary Results (simple relationships and a first cut at multivariate analysis)
i) NOTE: In providing your results to your reader, it is not enough to just say “See Table 1” or something like that. You have to interpret the tables for your reader—tell them what it means.

b) Sensitivity analysis and other searches for anomalies: Are there any unusual results? Any things that are hard to explain?

c) Re-estimation, further analysis

5) Discussion of results from a substantive perspective

V. CONCLUSION FORMAT

You should probably recapitulate your argument in your conclusion. However, a good summary introduction often makes a full summary conclusion redundant. If so, recapitulate quickly, and then use most of your conclusion to explore the implications of your argument. What policy prescriptions follow from your analysis? What general arguments does it call into question, and which does it reinforce? What further research projects does it suggest?

VI. TABLES AND FIGURES

Append any tables and figures that are not embedded in the text to the end of the paper. Make sure that each table and figure is self-explanatory—your reader should be able to understand the table and/or figure without looking at the text. Try showing each of your tables/figures to someone else to see if they can understand them without reading your paper. Follow the style guidelines in formatting tables and figures.

It is very important that you explicitly refer to each table and/or figure in the text of your paper.

VII. WORKS CITED

Properly formatted according to citation guidelines below.
Style

Don’t shirk this. You will be graded on style.

Length: The paper should be about 20 pages long (not including title page, abstract, and bibliography), including graphs, figures, and bibliography. There is no hard and fast page limit, however.

Write succinctly. Edit.

Hone. Eschew verbiage. Make the text flow. If there’s a particularly long, involved methodological problem that you attend to, consider moving it to an appendix and only make reference to it in the body of the paper.

There are also some mechanical issues that you must attend to in writing this paper. (Indeed, you should always attend to these issues when writing for the social sciences.)

• Double-space everything, except footnotes and tables.
• Use footnotes, not endnotes.
• Use the author-date form of citation (see below)
• Properly number the pages (page 1 is the first text page).
• Include figures and tables at the end of your paper, consecutively numbered. (Include all the figures first, then the tables.) Make explicit reference to each table and figure in the body of the text.
• Proper font.
  o Either 11pt or 12pt.
  o Times New Roman
• Use a constant 1” margin on each page.
• Tables and figures should be self-explanatory (i.e. I should be able to read them without reading the text).
• Staple the paper in the upper left-hand corner. Don’t use a report cover.

VI. VETTING

Ask a friend or two to give your paper a look before you turn it in; and return the favor for them when they have a paper underway. Two heads are better than one, and giving and receiving comments are important skills.

VIII. HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO WRITE PAPERS

Re-read articles you or others admire, and imitate their better aspects.
REFLECTION ESSAY DIRECTIONS

The end of the semester is a time to reflect upon what you have learned, ponder how you have grown as a student and as an analyst of politics, and figure out what to prioritize as the next steps for you. Write a 1-2 page essay reflecting on your own performance and learning in the course. Answer the following questions:

- What are 1 or 2 major, big-picture insights I learned about politics in this course?
- Did I learn anything else from the course (about analysis, about writing, about myself, anything!)?
- What did I do well?
- What could I have improved?
- How can I use my strengths to improve in areas where I need improvement?

In answering the questions above, you can think about things like the following: How much effort did I put forth in the class? Was it sufficient? Why or why not? If yes, what was it that allowed you to commit an adequate amount of time & energy to this class? If not, what might you do in similar situations in the future to facilitate more effort? What was my participation like in class? What was the nature of your contributions? Were you asking questions when you were unclear about content? Were you synthesizing what others said? Were you introducing new ideas? How was your listening? Did you balance your amount of participation with that of others? Did you incorporate what others said when you then chose to speak? Did you solicit opinions from others? Etc. etc. etc.
**STEPHEN VAN EVERA**  
**HOW TO WRITE A PAPER**  

Good writing is essential to clear thinking and effective communication. So bear the following points in mind:

1. Your paper should make a single point or a handful of related points, and should follow a simple organization. Avoid cluttering it with extra points. If you developed an argument that later became ancillary as you rethought your paper, drop the argument from the paper. This is painful ("I sweated hours on that idea!") but extraneous arguments drain power from your main argument.

2. Break your paper into sections and subsections. More sections is better than fewer. Sections help readers see the structure of your argument. Label sections with vivid section headings that convey the main message of the section. I recommend the following structure for sections/subsections:
   a. Your argument;
   b. Your supporting evidence;
   c. Counter-arguments, qualifications, and limiting conditions of your argument.

3. Start each section with several sentences summarizing the argument presented in the section. You may cut these summaries from your final draft if they seem redundant with your summary introduction; but you should include them in your first drafts, to see how they look. Writing such summaries is also a good way to force yourself to decide what you are and are not doing in each section, and to force yourself to confront contradictions or shortcomings in your argument. Often these section summaries are best written after you write the section, but don't forget to add them at some point.

4. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that distills the point of the paragraph. Subsequent sentences should offer supporting material that explains or elaborates the point of the topic sentence. Qualifications or refutation to counter-arguments should then follow. In short, paragraphs should exhibit the same structure as whole sections.

   *A reader should be able to grasp the thrust of your argument by reading only the first sentence of every paragraph.*

5. Write short, declarative sentences. Avoid the passive voice. (Passive voice: "the kulaks were murdered"--but who did it? Active voice: "Stalin murdered the kulaks.")

6. Always write from an outline. Outlines are major aids to coherence and readability.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & CITATIONS

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Be careful in citing. Here are the guidelines.

When in doubt, err on the side of attribution. The two basic rules are these:
• If you use someone else’s language exactly, you must display it, or put it in quotes, and provide guidance about where precisely the reader can find it.
• If you make a claim that is not common knowledge, you must provide a citation to it.

On citations, rely on the guidelines below. These citation rules are from the APA style manual, which you can check out online or in the library if you need more information:

**In-Text citations:** The ideas and words of others that you discuss in the body of your paper must be formally acknowledged. The reader can obtain the full source citation from the list of references at the end of the paper.

- **Basic Format:** ALWAYS cite the author and year, and include page numbers for direct quotes.
  - When the authors of a source are not part of the formal structure of the sentence, both the authors and year of publication appear in parentheses. Consider the following example:

    Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Gartner, Larson, & Allen, 1991; Koenig, 1990; Levin & Vanderpool, 1991; Maton & Pargament, 1987; Paloma & Pendleton, 1991; Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991). [Note that when several sources are cited parenthetically, they are ordered alphabetically by first authors' surnames and separated by semicolons.]

  - When the names of the authors of a source are part of the formal structure of the sentence, the year of publication appears in parentheses following the identification of the authors. Consider the following example:

    Wirth and Mitchell (1994) found that although there was a reduction in insulin dosage over a period of two weeks in the treatment condition compared to the control condition, the difference was not statistically significant. [Note: and is used when multiple authors are identified as part of the formal structure of the sentence. Compare this to the example in the following section.]

- **Listing Multiple Authors:**
  - When a source that has two authors is cited, both authors are included every time the source is cited.

  - When a source that has three, four, or five authors is cited, all authors are included the first time the source is cited. When that source is cited again, the first author's surname and "et al." are used. Consider the following example:

    Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991).
Payne et al. (1991) showed that ...

- When a source that has six or more authors is cited, the first author's surname and "et al." are used every time the source is cited (including the first time).

**Web Sources**
- Articles that you find on JSTOR are NOT web documents. Cite them as regular journal articles.
- To cite a Web document (meaning a document that is ONLY found on the web), use the author-date format. If no author is identified, use the first few words of the title in place of the author. If no date is provided, use "n.d." in place of the date. Consider the following examples:

  Degelman and Harris (2000) provide guidelines for the use of APA writing style.

  Changes in Americans' views of gender status differences have been documented (Gender and Society, n.d.).

**Other Notes:**
- Every effort should be made to cite only sources that you have actually read. When it is necessary to cite a source that you have not read ("Grayson" in the following example) that is cited in a source that you have read ("Murzynski & Degelman" in the following example), use the following format for the text citation and list only the source you have read in the References list:

  Grayson (as cited in Murzynski & Degelman, 1996) identified four components of body language that were related to judgments of vulnerability.

- To cite a personal communication (including letters, emails, and telephone interviews), include initials, surname, and as exact a date as possible. Because a personal communication is not "recoverable" information, it is not included in the References section. For the text citation, use the following format:

  B. F. Skinner (personal communication, February 12, 1978) claimed ...

**Quotations:** When a direct quotation is used, always include the author, year, and page number as part of the citation.
- A quotation of fewer than 40 words should be enclosed in double quotation marks and should be incorporated into the formal structure of the sentence. Example:

  Patients receiving prayer had "less congestive heart failure, required less diuretic and antibiotic therapy, had fewer episodes of pneumonia, had fewer cardiac arrests, and were less frequently intubated and ventilated" (Byrd, 1988, p. 829).

- A lengthier quotation of 40 or more words should appear (without quotation marks) apart from the surrounding text, in block format, with each line indented five spaces from the left margin. It should be single-spaced.
**References:** All sources included in the References section must be cited in the body of the paper (and all sources cited in the paper must be included in the References section).

- **Pagination:** The References section begins on a new page.
- **Heading:** References (centered on the first line below the manuscript page header)
- **Format:** The references (with hanging indent) begin on the line following the References heading. Entries are organized alphabetically by surnames of first authors. Most reference entries have three components:
  - **Authors:** Authors are listed in the same order as specified in the source, using surnames and initials. Commas separate all authors. When there are seven or more authors, list the first six and then use "et al." for remaining authors. If no author is identified, the title of the document begins the reference.
  - **Year of Publication:** In parentheses following authors, with a period following the closing parenthesis. If no publication date is identified, use "n.d." in parentheses following the authors.
  - **Source Reference:** Includes title, journal, volume, pages (for journal article) or title, city of publication, publisher (for book). Italicize titles of books, titles of periodicals, and periodical volume numbers.

*To see an example of APA-formatted References:* Go to [http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/references.pdf](http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/references.pdf)


**Examples of how to list references**

- **Journal article**

- **Book**

- **Web document**

- **Web document (no date)**

- **Web document (no author, no date)**

- **Article or chapter in an edited book**
RESEARCH PORTFOLIO: FINAL CHECKLIST

POL 199
SPRING 2006

Name: ____________________________

Date Submitted: __________________

PUT THIS SHEET ON THE FRONT OF YOUR PORTFOLIO!

Final Checklist

Style:
- Double-spaced, except footnotes and tables.
- Footnotes used, not endnotes
- Author-date citation form used
- Page numbers properly used
- Proper font.
  - Either 10pt or 12pt.
  - Courier or Times/Times New Roman typeface.
- Constant 1" margin on each page
- Paper stapled in the upper left-hand corner. No report covers.
- Coefficients and other statistics in tables (like regression coefficients and standard errors) have no more than 3 significant digits.
- No SPSS output dumped into the text of the paper.
- All figures and tables appended at the end of your paper, consecutively numbered (Include all the figures first, then the tables.)
- Each figure and table is explicitly referred to in the body of the paper.
- Each figure and table is self-explanatory (I should be able to understand it without reading the text).
- Double-check to make sure that your paper follows all 7 of Stephen Van Evera’s writing tips.

Content:
- Two copies of your final paper. I will grade one of the papers and return it to you, if you wish. I will keep the second copy, as an example to people who take the class in the future. Make sure you have another copy for yourself.
- Your research proposal (submitted in February) with my comments on it
- Your 4 graded problem sets, with my comments on them
- Your personal reflection essay
- A statement signed by someone else that s/he proofread your paper (include her/his name, the date s/he proofread it, the time s/he began, and the time s/he ended).
- Things to turn in that I will keep:
  - An extra (third) copy of your abstract, which I will keep.
  - A copy of your slides from your presentation (I will also keep this)