

Political Science 553 Guide for Essay Writing

The purpose of this guide is to help you write a clean and coherent essay.

The Question:

The most important thing to do is to actually answer the question. Read the question thoroughly! These questions often ask you to do more than one thing. Break it down into its subparts and make sure you address each point in your essay.

The Readings:

Your job is to show that you have a clear understanding of the readings and can incorporate the various authors' arguments and evidence into a coherent essay. You will not be able to write a good essay without making use of the relevant readings. *When you do use words or ideas from another person, you must cite them.* To fail to do so is to plagiarize. This does not just mean citing direct quotes, but also anything you paraphrase. You do not, however, need to cite information from the lectures used in these essays.

Citations:

You can use footnotes, but the preferred method is "in text" or parenthetical notation. The OSU library has handouts on the various styles for citing resources. The style I will show you is from *The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Ed.* (University of Chicago Press 1993) at the library call no. Z253 C5722 1993. You can also use MLA style (*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 5th Ed.* (Modern Language Association 1999) call no. LB 2369 G53 1999).

The basic format for Chicago style text reference is (Author, date, page). If you want, you can use MLA format and just do (Author, page). You need to cite the author of the actual reading, not the editor or the journal.

Article or book with one author: (Gilpin 1987. 249)

Article or book with two authors: (Mansfield and Busch, 1995, 725)

Article or book with more than two authors: (Coughlin et al. 2000, 193).

For these essays you do not need to provide a Works Cited list unless you use materials that are not on the syllabus. If you use outside materials, see the library guide for citing resources, it is especially helpful for correct citation of internet materials. Remember, if a book is an edited collection of works, you cite the actual author of the reading, not the editors.

Other Requirements:

Include, either on a title page or at the top left-hand side of the first page of text, your name, essay section number, professor name, course number, and the date.

You must also include page numbers, preferably including your name, on each page after the first.

Helpful Sources:

For a more detailed discussion of essay writing as well as questions about grammar, punctuation, or style, please refer to the Ohio State Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing handout page at <http://cstw.ohio-state.edu/handouts.html>.