

PSC 100
Introduction to Government & World Affairs
University of Tampa
Fall 2016

Final Assignment Guidelines

For the Final Assignment, students may elect to submit a take a Cumulative Final Examination or submit a Research Paper. The Final Assignment will be worth **20%** of the final course grade. This document outlines the requirements and timeline for each option. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for an option (Research Paper or Cumulative Final Examination) on Monday, October 17 (all students should be in attendance, as the In-Class Debate is scheduled for this date; however, any student who fails to sign up for an option may email the instructor with their preference, with the caveat that students who fail to sign up for an option by Friday, October 21 at 11:59pm will be assigned the Cumulative Final Examination option. Students with any questions about the Final Assignment are encouraged to contact the instructor via email (mbroache@ut.edu), attend office hours, and/or discuss the assignment at the mandatory midterm meeting.

Cumulative Final Examination Option

This option provides students with an opportunity to consolidate their knowledge and political institutions and ideologies and, through a series of essay questions, to identify, articulate, and defend their values concerning major issues of public policy and world affairs. The cumulative final examination will be held on the designated date, time, and location (the regular class meeting room) indicated in the University's Spring 2016 Exam Schedule, as follows:

- 100-A (MWF 8:30am-9:40am): Wednesday, December 14, 8:30am-10:30am (PH 227)
- 100-C (MWF 10:00am-11:10am): Monday, December 12, 11:00am-1:00pm (PH 209)
- 100-G (MWF 1:00pm-2:10pm): Monday, December 12, 1:30pm-3:30pm (PH 220)
- 100-I (MWF 2:30pm-3:40pm): Wednesday, December 14, 3:45pm-5:45pm (PH 220)

The exam will cover ALL material presented in the course and will comprise three sections, as follows: concept identification, short response, and essays. The concept identification and short response sections will be identical in format to the corresponding sections on the in-class quizzes (although there will be 15 concepts to identify and 5 short response questions), while the essay section will require students to integrate material from throughout the course to answer two essay questions. In general, the questions on the concept identification and short response sections will be broader in scope than quiz questions (e.g. focusing on the main concepts addressed in the course; for an indication of these concepts, students are advised to consult the "Topics and Readings" section of the syllabus), but students must still provide accurate and precise definitions of relevant concepts as on the quizzes.

For the essays, students may select from **ONE** of the following three questions, as follows:

- 1) “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those that have been tried from time to time.” UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s paraphrase (of a previous statement by an unidentified parliamentarian) implies that democracy, while necessarily imperfect, is superior to alternate forms of government. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Discuss with reference to the effectiveness of democracy compared to authoritarianism in providing security for citizens and promoting economic growth.
- 2) “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong’s statement implies that coercion—the use or threat of negative sanctions (sticks), and in particular, violence—is the ultimate source of political power, rather than positive inducements (carrots), persuasion (ideas), or legitimacy. To what extent do you agree with this characterization of the sources of political power? Discuss with reference to the definition of power developed in this class and examples relating to political institutions (e.g. the state, democracy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, etc.) and contentious politics (e.g. war, revolution, terrorism, and non-violence).
- 3) Rational choice theories focused on material self-interest provide a better explanation of political behavior than theories emphasizing the role of ideas and/or identity. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Discuss with reference to AT LEAST two types of political behavior (e.g. voting turnout and/or choices, participation in revolution or terrorism, etc.)?

Essays should provide a clear thesis statement that responds to the selected prompt, explain the logic underlying the thesis statement, provide examples from the course (or other relevant cases) to support the thesis, and address potential counter-arguments (e.g. if responding to question #2, essays should address the relevance of alternative sources of political power).

There is no required format or length for the essay, although essays should be clearly structured, with an identifiable thesis, examples that relate directly to the thesis and counterarguments, and conclusion. (To this end, students may find it useful to model their essays on the “five paragraph” format, but this is not required).

Students are encouraged to select their topic and prepare in advance, but will not be permitted to consult notes or other material during the examination.

The exam will be graded out of 100 points. Students will be evaluated on the accuracy and completeness of their responses, as follows:

- Concept Identification: 15x3 points=45 points
- Short Responses: 5x5 points=25 points
- Essay: 1x20 points=20 points

Research Paper Option

Purpose: The purpose of the research paper option is to provide students with an opportunity to:

- 1) explore a specific political issue in significantly greater detail than is possible in the class meetings
- 2) practice applying the scientific method to the study of politics
- 3) develop their research, analytical, and writing skills in preparation for future courses.

Topic:

Students should identify a **positivist** research question addressing ANY topic related to politics. A list of possible research questions, organized by positivist political science sub-field (American Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Relations) is presented at the end of this document. However, students are free to select another research question in consultation with the instructor. Students may also modify the research questions below to focus on another case, country, or time frame. For example, rather than addressing the question of “Why did Argentina transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the 1980s,” students might identify another country that transitioned from authoritarianism to democracy during any time period and attempt to explain this outcome. **Students who wish to select another research question or to modify one of the questions below should contact the instructor via email (mbroache@ut.edu) to obtain approval in advance of submitting their memorandum.**

Format:

After identifying a research question, students should formulate three competing hypotheses or specific explanations answering the research question. These theories/specific explanations can be logically deduced or induced from academic research on related questions or topics. Each theory/specific explanation should clearly specify the **dependent variable** (which should be the outcome implied by the research question) and **independent variable**, and at least one **intervening variable** linking the independent variable to the dependent variable; students should provide a clear **explanation** of the posited cause and effect relationship between the independent and dependent variable. To the extent possible, theories/specific explanations should meet the criteria for “good theories” discussed in class: explanatory power, parsimonious, satisfying, clear framing (most importantly, with all variables clearly defined) falsifiability, explanation of important phenomena (most importantly, including an explanation for why the outcome under analysis is relevant or important), and prescriptive richness. Note that it will not be possible to meet all these criteria for most research questions, but students should aim to develop the best possible theories/specific explanations following these criteria.

Then, using an **observational** approach (experimentation is not feasible for this assignment), students should collect and examine empirical evidence from available sources (e.g. published academic studies, historical accounts, primary documents, media sources, statistical data etc.) for evidence of the observable implication(s) of each theory/specific explanation. In most cases, students are advised to use a **qualitative** methodology—this will typically involve synthesizing relevant peer-reviewed academic research and linking this research to the theories/specific explanations proposed in the paper. NB: “Original” research, e.g. conducting interviews or consulting archives, is NOT required for this assignment. Based on their analysis of the empirical evidence, students should then identify which theory/specific explanation (or combination thereof) best answers the research question.

Timeline/Deliverables:

- **Wednesday, October 12:** Instructor distributes and discusses final assignment guidelines in class.
- **Monday, October 17** Students sign up for final assignment (research paper OR cumulative examination).
- **Friday, November 4: Memorandum** due via Turnitin by 11:59pm. The memorandum should be at least 500 words and no more than the maximum length for the final paper, i.e. 2,500 words. The instructor will return memorandums to students, with comments, no later than ten days after submission.
 - At minimum, the memorandum must include the following:
 - Title page indicating the student's name, section time, tentative title for the paper, and word count (which the instructor will verify as necessary);
 - Statement of the research question (one sentence in question format);
 - Overview of the motivation for studying the research question, explaining *why* it is important to study the question; this may be framed with reference to the real-world importance of the question and/or existing research published in peer-reviewed academic journals, i.e. addressing a question that remains unresolved;
 - Overview of three theories/specific explanations addressing the research question, including (for each theory/specific explanation):
 - Dependent variable
 - Independent variable(s)
 - Intervening variable(s)
 - Narrative explanation of the posited cause and effect relationship between the independent variable(s) and dependent variable
 - Bibliography with at least **five sources** (in proper format) the student will use for background and/or empirical evidence.
 - Students are strongly encouraged to submit more advanced drafts; the more advanced the draft, the more constructive feedback that the instructor and your peers can provide on your assignment.
 - The Memorandum will not be graded; however, penalties for failing to adhere to the guidelines below regarding late submissions, word count, sources, citations, formatting, etc., on the Memorandum will be applied to the final paper.

- **Sunday, December 11: Final Paper Due:** The final paper will be due via Turnitin by 11:59pm. The final paper should be no less than 1,500 words and no more than 2,500 words, **NOT INCLUDING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY/WORKS REFERENCED LIST**. Students have some measure of flexibility in the structure of the final paper, but all papers must include the following elements:
 - Title page including the student’s name, section time, paper title, and word count (which the instructor will verify as necessary);
 - Introduction specifying the research question; the student’s motivation for studying the research question (either in terms of its real-world importance or with reference to existing peer-reviewed research, in which case the Introduction must include appropriate citations); the paper’s main finding(s); and a “roadmap” of the paper describing its basic structure.
 - Detailed overview of three theories/specific explanations addressing the research question, including (for each theory/specific explanation):
 - Dependent variable
 - Independent variable(s)
 - Intervening variable(s)
 - Narrative explanation of the posited cause and effect relationship between the independent variable(s) and dependent variable
 - Empirical analysis of each theory/specific explanation focusing on the observable implications of each theory. The empirical analysis should draw conclusions about the relevance of each theory/specific explanation and clearly identify which theory/specific explanation (or combination of theories/specific explanations) provides the best answer to the research question—this constitutes the paper’s main finding(s). The empirical analysis must include evidence from relevant **external sources** (see below for guidelines on sources);
 - Conclusion summarizing the paper’s main findings and suggesting any implications of these findings for understanding related phenomena in political science and/or future research;
 - Works referenced list, including full citations for all sources reference in the text of the paper, following the formatting protocols specified below.

Guidelines:

○ Sources

Papers must incorporate and properly cite material from at least **five REPUTABLE external sources**. (Memorandums must include a list of at least five sources and references for any cited material). **REPUTABLE EXTERNAL SOURCES** may include articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, books, statistical data, government/non-governmental organization/inter-governmental organization reports, transcripts of government hearings, and primary sources such as speeches, statements by relevant political leaders, etc.

NB: The **“gold standard”** of evidence is peer-reviewed academic articles or books similar to those discussed in class during the “Reading Political Science” exercise and suggested for the Reading Review assignment. As students will be evaluated, in part, on the quality of the evidence used to test their theories, they are **STRONGLY** encouraged to use peer-reviewed academic articles as their principal sources.

Many (though not all) materials may be sourced online (e.g. from the University of Tampa Library website), but students **should NOT employ online encyclopedias (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs, or other unvetted online content as sources**. Students who have questions about the appropriateness of sources, or where to find relevant sources, should consult with the instructor.

Papers that fail to incorporate at least five REPUTABLE external sources WILL BE DOWNGRADED BY 5 POINTS for each source less than five. Reputability will be judged solely by the instructor. **Penalties for failing to incorporate at least five reputable sources in the Memorandum will be applied to the final paper grade.**

○ Citations

Students must be careful to attribute all ideas that are not their own (including both direct quotations and summaries or paraphrases of others’ ideas). Students may select any widely used citation format (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago), but should use a consistent format throughout any paper. Students with questions about appropriate citation should consult the instructor. **Final papers that do not employ a consistent citation format will be downgraded 10 points.**

○ Plagiarism:

Failure to cite others’ ideas—whether direct quotations or summaries of others’ arguments—is **plagiarism**, which constitutes a serious violation of academic integrity. A good rule of thumb to avoid plagiarizing is as follows: **WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE!**

The instructor takes academic integrity very seriously, and all suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the appropriate disciplinary authorities. Students found guilty will, at minimum, receive a failing grade on the assignment (and possibly the course). Students who have questions about citing sources or plagiarism should feel free to consult the instructor.

- **Word Counts:**

Students must adhere to the designated word counts (500-2,500 words for the Memorandum, including the works referenced list, and 1,500-2,500 words for the Final Paper, excluding the works referenced list). **Submissions that do not adhere to the designated word count will be downgraded by 1 point for each WORD under or over the minimum or maximum word count.**

- **Formatting:**

All submissions should be written in standard font (Arial, Calibri, Garamond, or Times New Roman), 12-point with 1” margins all around, and double-spaced. Papers should include a title page (which will not count against the word limit) indicating the student’s name, paper title, section time, and the paper word count (which the instructor will verify as necessary). **Submissions that do not correspond to these requirements will be downgraded by 5 points for each violation;** for example, a paper written in non-standard font with no title page will be downgraded by 10 points.

- **Deadlines and Extensions:**

Submissions turned in after the deadlines specified above will be downgraded 10 points for each 24-hour period (including weekends) beginning at the time of the deadline specified above.

The instructor will not accept any final papers after 12:00pm on Wednesday, December 14. Students who have signed up for the paper assignment and who fail to submit a paper by this deadline will receive 0/100 on this assignment.

Extensions will be granted only in cases meeting the criteria for “unscheduled excused absences” as outlined on the syllabus and specified by University of Tampa policy. In cases meeting the criteria for “scheduled excused absences” (e.g. the student is participating in a University-required event), the student should make alternate arrangements to submit the assignment by the deadline; in such cases, the instructor may, at his discretion, accept electronic submissions, but advance approval for electronic submissions is required in such cases.

Evaluation Criteria:

As outlined on the syllabus, this assignment will be graded on a scale of 0-100. The Memorandum and the Final Paper will receive separate grades, with the Memorandum counting for 10% of the overall assignment grade and the Final Paper counting for 90% of the overall assignment grade. (This is a modification from the syllabus, which indicated that the entire assignment grade would be based on the Final Paper alone).

Penalties for late submission and/or failing to adhere to the formatting guidelines specified above will be assessed on the relevant component (e.g. a late Memorandum would affect only the Memorandum component of the assignment grade, not the Final Paper component, and vice versa).

Memorandum: Memorandums that fulfill the minimum requirements outlined above in the do not accrue any penalties for lateness or violation of course policies will automatically receive 100/100 on this component of the assignment grade.

Final Paper: Final Papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 10 points: Clear introduction, including:
 - 2 points: clear identification of the research question, phrased as a question;
 - 4 points: discussion of the motivation for studying the research question, in terms of its real-world importance and/or with reference to prior academic research;
 - 2 points: clear statement of the paper's main findings;
 - 2 points: detailed "roadmap" outlining the organization of the paper.
- 45 points (15 for each theory/specific explanation): Development of theories/specific explanations addressing the research question, including specification and clear definition (as appropriate) of the following:
 - 1 point: Dependent variable(s)
 - 2 points: Independent variable(s)
 - 2 points: Intervening variable(s)
 - 3 points: Narrative explanation of the posited cause and effect relationship between the independent and dependent variable
 - 2 points: Meeting the criteria for "good theories" (see Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*)
 - 5 points: overall logical coherence and quality of the theory/specific explanation
- 30 points: Overall quality of the empirical analysis, including:
 - 10 points: Identification and use of relevant external sources;
 - 10 points: Quality of external sources;
 - 10 points: Interpretation of empirical evidence for the validity of the proposed theories/specific explanations.

- 5 points: Clarity and quality of the conclusion, including:
 - 2 points: Clear summary of the paper's main findings (in terms of the research question and proposed theories/specific explanations);
 - 3 points: Identification of the broader implications of these findings in terms of related political phenomena and/or future research.

- 10 points: Overall quality and clarity of presentation and writing, including:
 - 5 points: overall structure of the paper, i.e. logical sequencing and appropriate transitions between ideas and sections of the paper;
 - 5 points: correct use of standard English grammar, including punctuation, spelling, etc.

- Adherence to guidelines discussed above, with penalties as indicated.

Suggested Research Questions:

American Politics:

- Why did Barack Obama win the 2012 presidential election over Mitt Romney?
- Why did the Tea Party movement emerge and gain followers in 2009-2010?
- Why did George W. Bush win the presidential election in 2004 over John Kerry?
- Why are campaign finance regulations relatively weaker in the United States compared to other democracies?
- Why do some Democratic politicians oppose stricter gun control measures despite their party's support for such measures?
- Why has public opinion in the United States become more polarized in recent decades?
- Why do some Americans support the legalization of marijuana while others do not?
- Why is voter turnout in elections substantially lower in the United States than in other advanced democracies?
- Why has trust in government by American citizens declined in recent decades?

Comparative Politics:

- Why did China adopt market-oriented economic policies in the early 1980s?
- Why are many African states economically underdeveloped compared to European states?
- Why have some resource-poor, low-income countries been relatively more successful in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS than other resource-poor, low-income countries?
- Why were strong social welfare systems established in Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark?
- Why did Argentina transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the 1980s?
- Why did Germany adopt a proportional representation electoral system?
- Why did France adopt a semi-presidential system of government?
- Why was the 2009 "Green Revolution" in Iran unsuccessful?

- Why did the white-dominated government of South Africa end the apartheid system of racial segregation and allow open political competition in the early 1990s?
- Why did the Netherlands legalize same sex marriage in 2001, becoming the first country in the world to do so?

International Politics:

- Why did North Korea develop nuclear weapons?
- Why did the United States invade Iraq in 2003?
- Why do some terrorist organizations (e.g. Al Qaeda) use suicide bombing tactics?
- Why did some European countries agree to give up their national currencies and join the euro currency?
- Why did international actors fail to effectively intervene to stop the Rwandan genocide in 1994?
- Why did Mexico join the North American Free Trade Agreement in the 1990s?
- Why did some advanced industrialized countries (e.g. the United States and Canada) oppose the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement aimed at addressing climate change?
- Why did the Soviet Union withdraw its troops from East Germany in 1989, effectively ending the Cold War?
- Why did the United States and the Soviet Union avoid war over the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962?
- Why did the Allied powers (United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and France) decide to hold trials of Nazi German leaders after World War II instead of simply executing them without trial?