



Writing Centre

Writing in the Disciplines: Political Science

Writing in Political Science **draws on historical and current events in order to analyze political theory** and how it interacts with the rest of the world. As historical politics influence today’s politics, it is essential to be aware of both the history of the topic you choose as well as the current events surrounding it. Global events analyzed in a political science paper are called *case studies*, which provide support for your claims.

It is also important to be aware of political history in terms of the **language** we use: the politically correct words to describe something may change over time (for example, we now use person-first language to describe a person with a disability, rather than the historical terms, “handicapped” or “disabled”).

Tips for Political Science Assignments:

<i>Research Paper:</i> an analysis of the literature in order to find an answer to a research question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend your thesis using support from academic literature. • Political theory needs to be supported by a case study. • Address counterarguments to strengthen your argument. • Define your terms in the introduction.
<i>Response Paper:</i> a critical analysis of a text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts may come in a variety of types, e.g., news article, book. • If responding to more than one text, consider writing your response in a compare/contrast format. • Support your opinion with political theory and history.
<i>Oral Presentation:</i> a verbal explanation of a topic, often followed by a question and answer period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a conversation between theory and case study. • Use repetitive key words to remind your audience of your main points. • Use visual aids, speak slowly, and present yourself formally • Make the information clear and concise. Use your visual presentation to support what you’re saying.

Citation Style: It may vary, but the most common are APSA, Chicago, APA, or MLA.

Things to avoid in your writing:

- 1st person language
- Vagueness or ambiguity in your arguments
- Politically incorrect language
- Wordiness

Do this instead:

- Use neutral third person language
- Define your terms clearly and have a strong thesis statement
- Use politically correct terms
- Use clear and concise language

Adapted from/further reading:

- <https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/poli-sci.original.pdf>
- <https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/response-paper.original%281%29.pdf>
- <https://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio/resources-students/genres>