

POLS 1005—INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Tutors' marking guide to the response paper

Semester 1 2017

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This guide is an effort to standardize our marking for this assessment. It is longer than the guides to the midterm (which you already have) and the final (to be dispersed on 6 June). This is due to the importance and complexity of this assignment.

This is the first and only writing assignment for POLS1005. It might also be one of the first writing assignments that students have completed at university. Thus, we are setting the stage for how students view writing and feedback in SPIR classes. As a result this assessment (and our feedback) is likely to have an outsized effect on how students perceive this class and how they rate us on SELT's forms.

I do not write this guide because I enjoy it (I do have a family and a few hobbies), rather I write it so that we are all on the same page about the assessment and what my expectations are for tutors' marking and comments. Please read this guide closely, and let me know if you have any questions or catch any errors or inconsistencies.

Due date: Response paper should be submitted to the Turnitin link on Wattle by **17 May by 12pm**. Some students will arrange for late submissions with medical approval. Course conveners (e.g. me) are the only people who can grant extensions. If you have students reach out to you regarding submitting their papers late, forward their requests on to me.

Word limit: 1,000 words, not counting footnotes or bibliography but counting in-text citations (e.g. Frank 2016: 57) and quotations. University policy states that a 10% range of the target word count is to be used. Therefore, for this assignment 900-1,100 words is acceptable. We do not strictly enforce this word count, but if you see a paper that is abnormally longer or shorter than normal, it is worth taking this into account and docking points under the editing part of the rubric. For more details of CASS guidelines on assessment word limits see <http://cass.anu.edu.au/current-students/coursework-policy-and-guidelines/word-limits>.

Value: 15% of students' final mark. All student marks should be out of a possible 100 points. As with previous and future assessment for this course the guidelines for grade distribution is 5% HD, 20% D, and the rest P or C. Anything lower than a 50% should be given only if the paper has fatal flaws. Conversely, all scores over 80% should really be for only the most exceptional papers. I will be reading over all papers with a score of either above 80 and below 50, along with a random assortment of papers receiving scores between these two extremes.

Estimated return date: 31 May by 12pm. This is when I will be returning papers to students (e.g. allowing them access to their paper with feedback on Turnitin). As outlined in the tutor handbook, **all of your marking must be completed by the end of 26 May**. This gives you seven business days (and the afternoon of the 17th and the weekend) to do your marking. Please try and spread out your marking (say if you have 70 papers to read, mark 10 per business day) because I have found that tutors' comments to students become shorter and more superficial and grades can be clustered (either high or low) when tutors try and cram their marking in a short period of time.

I. Essay description

The main means to evaluate several course learning outcomes (specifically #3 & #4) is through this writing assignment. The main goal of this paper is to have students synthesize their knowledge of the theoretical topics covered in this course, their Syrian simulation experience, and the links they see between theories of international relations, current events, and their individual views of these links.

Students were asked to respond to the following question, and address all sub-questions:

To what extent was your actor able to achieve its objectives in the Syria simulation?

It does not really matter the extent to which students were able to reach their actor's objectives in the simulation. Rather, what matters for this assessment is how they describe (1) the extent to which they researched and defined their actor's interests, (2) their ability to describe what those objectives were and how they prioritised them (if done), and (3) how the outcome came about.

1. *How did your actor's position align with other actors' positions in your pre-conference group?*

I expect that there will be a good amount of similarities in experience between students having the same role in different tutorials. The best papers will demonstrate that they can link alliance (or alliance of interests) approaches covered in class to their simulation processes.

2. *How successful was your tutorial in devising resolutions and undertakings in the conference? Did your actor achieve their objectives? Why or why not? In retrospect, would you have done something differently?*

The last two questions in this sequence are at the heart of this section. They ask the students to show that (1) they understood the causal reasons behind the outcome and (2) that they learned something they might take to future negotiations or approaches to understanding international relations.

3. *What connections can you make between the simulation and the theories and topics of International Relations covered in the lecture and readings?*

This part of the essay can really take over half of the allotted space if students were ambitious and on the ball with the reading. The answers to this question are how I will gauge how useful this simulation is to students' learning outcomes and what we tweak for next year's class.

4. *As a learning tool, to what extent did the simulation highlight actors' interests, institutions' behaviour and ability to constrain actors, and interactions in International Relations? Why or why not?*

This last bit is just my way of getting information about what worked and what did not to gauge its effectiveness and what needs to be tweaked.

II. Grading rubric

Essay grades will be calculated using the following rubric.

Cohesive formulation (40%): The response paper poses a well-formulated response to the all parts of the question.

Critical engagement (40%): The response paper critically engages with the student's experience of the simulation.

Structure (10%): The essay has clear topic sentences, it is well structured, and paragraphs are clearly organised.

Editing (10%): The essay has clearly been proof-read and drafted and contains no/few grammatical errors.

III. Essay submission and marking

All writing assignments at the ANU are submitted via Turnitin. A Turnitin assignment for the response paper is at the top of the POLS1005 main Wattle page. All response papers are submitted using Turnitin on the course's Wattle site. Students are required to electronically sign a declaration of authorship as part of the submission of their assignment. Some students accidentally submit this cover page along with their paper. Ignore these cover pages.

Turnitin is a text-matching service that analyses student submissions for originality. Footnotes and bibliographies are excluded from the plagiarism results. Students can view their originality report after submission. It is also important to note that students can delete submissions and resubmit up until the due date and time. Originality reports are generated for resubmissions with a 24-hour delay. This is why we should not start marking papers until **after the due date and time**.

For details of how to **submit** a paper to Turnitin on Wattle see the following ANU guide: <https://services.anu.edu.au/files/system/Turnitin%20Student%20Guide%20%20How%20to%20interpret%20a%20Turnitin%20Originality%20Report.pdf>.

There is a **practice Turnitin site** that the ANU has created to enable students to practice submitting papers to Turnitin. This site can be accessed at: <https://services.anu.edu.au/training/turnitin-practice-site-for-students>.

For details of how to **interpret** a Turnitin Originality report see the following link: <https://services.anu.edu.au/files/system/Turnitin%20Student%20Guide%20%20How%20to%20interpret%20a%20Turnitin%20Originality%20Report.pdf>.

Marking will occur in Turnitin and will include both in-line comments and feedback in the Comments area of the Turnitin page. For details of how to download markers' comments from Turnitin see the following ANU guide:

<https://services.anu.edu.au/files/system/Turnitin%20Student%20Guide%20How%20to%20Download%20Comments%20from%20Turnitin%20Assignment.pdf>.

IV. Late papers

Late papers are marked down per university policy. **Penalties (5 points per business day for up to 10 business days) are out of 100 points possible, not the mark the essay received.** Papers submitted late without previous approval from the instructor will receive a mark but no feedback. If the extra time after the due date is arranged with us beforehand, then feedback should be given. All direct quotes from sources must have page numbers.

V. Marking expectations

All papers receiving a mark of under 50 or over 80 will be reviewed by me. Papers will also be graded and moderated by the course convener to ensure that grading is consistent across markers.

If students want to petition their mark, there is an explicit university policy to do so (<http://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/assessment-appeals>). The first stage is informal consideration of the paper. If students submit to me in writing that they would like to have an informal consideration of their paper, I will send the paper to another tutor for re-marking. The new mark can be higher or lower than the original mark. If students are not happy with the new mark, they can proceed to stage 2, which is a formal appeal to CASS. They can also proceed directly to stage 2 if desired. If you have any specific questions about the appeal process, let me know.

VI. How to grade and give feedback on the response paper

Given that this is the only assessment that students will receive feedback on this semester in this class, it is **essential that we provide good written feedback** on students' essays using the template outlined in this grading guide.

1. Gauge the originality of the work—The first stage of marking is to look at the Turnitin originality report. This is an essential stage to complete first as any essays with substantial plagiarism concerns should be forwarded to me as soon as possible.

Tutors and students often wonder what is an acceptable amount of source material from other sources. There is no set percentage that I look for, as some papers are given skewed results because Turnitin does not recognize quotations or bibliographies as such.

Example of a quote not excluded from Turnitin's matching results

Wohlfarth puts this best:

10
"Realist theories are not invalidated by the post-1989 transformation of world politics. Indeed, they explain much of the story. Realism is rich and varied, and cannot be limited to just structural Realism, which deals poorly with change."¹²

Rather I would look out for large blocks of text taken from other sources without attribution.

Example of a paragraph that is compelling evidence of plagiarism

There are special questions raised about Islamic traditions. Due to the experience of contemporary political battles in the Middle East, Islamic civilisation is often portrayed as being fundamentally intolerant and hostile to individual freedoms. However, the presence of diversity within traditions applies to Islam as well. For example, Turkish emperors were often more tolerant than their European contemporaries; and the Mughal emperors in India (except for Aurangzeb) were extremely tolerant and some even theorized about the need to tolerate diversity. The pronouncements of Akbar, Mughal emperor in the 16th century in India, on tolerance, can count among the classics of political pronouncements. In comparison to this, the Inquisition was in full swing in Europe as Akbar was making it state policy to tolerate and protect all religious groups. Another comparison to be made is that Maimonides, a Jewish scholar in the 12th century, had to run away from an intolerant Europe to flee its persecution of Jews, to the tolerant Cairo and under the patronage Sultan Saladin. This would have received more attention from the West had their political historians taken as much of an interest in the East as they did in their own intellectual background.

If you come across any such papers, forward them to me immediately. I will then look at the paper to determine whether to let the tutor proceed with marking the essay (but marking down such poor academic conduct in the appropriate part of the rubric or whether to proceed with an investigation of academic malpractice or

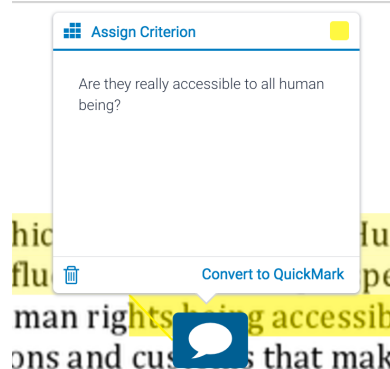
misconduct. As with all things POLS1005, if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, let me know!

2. Leaving in-text feedback—The first step in giving feedback is to leave comments next to the passages themselves. These comments are more directly related to the students' writing (or grammatical mistakes). This sort of feedback allows students to have instant context and feedback on their specific words

Example of extensive in-text feedback

The Western influence which the foundation of Human rights was built upon can be a dominating factor that influences the global perspective of the worldly intentions of human rights. Despite human rights being accessible and inherent to all human beings, the ethical values, traditions and customs that make up various realities of our world are in ways imposed upon by the western European 'social norms'. However, the Human rights construct ultimately aims for global unity, despite the "world order" (Heuer & Schirmer, 1998)¹ involves, in the majority Westernised powers, because they are those in the position to intervene, however in good faith and in most situations without political agenda. Military action on behalf of the Western influence however has also proven to at times be aggressive as well as excessive and questionably undermined by political agenda and power gain. However, it has been proven that, Unfortunately without Western intervention that has occurred in our history in the name of human rights, cultures such as ethnic societies, (CLANCY WRIGHT, 2014)² enforce inhumane conditions and living standards upon the vulnerable, that whether argued to be for imperialistic gain or not, Human Rights enable action to be taken.

Example of in-text feedback text box

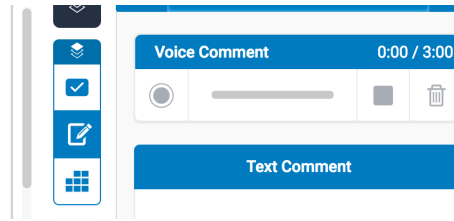


3. Providing overall feedback—The penultimate feedback stage is the most important stage (besides the overall mark). This is the most detailed feedback we will give to students over the course of the semester (outside of tutorial).

You are likely to find that students will repeat the same writing mistakes or turns of phrase quite often across the essays you read. Therefore, some tutors use grading templates to help save them a bit of time. These templates usually follow the grading rubric, but in this essay, you might also think about breaking down your responses by the questions posed in the essay assignment.

Some students might find it difficult to respond to these questions linking their simulation experience, their understanding of international relations, and the theoretical concepts that we cover in this class. The best students will evidence a clear ability to link general IR theoretical approaches to their specific experience and show that they understand the strengths and weaknesses of both.

**Overall feedback is given in the text comment field
(pencil and paper icon on right side)**



Example feedback—Here is a randomly selected sample feedback entry for a paper that received an HD from 2016. The writing assignment was different (it was more of a research paper and did not include a simulation), but it highlights the type of feedback we are looking for. The feedback is a bit hyperbolic, but it provided positive feedback for what the marker thought was done well. And after reading many 50-60-level essays, good essays really do stand out.

Dear XX,

Excellent Introduction. In future essays go further with your thesis statement - this introduction was missing the why? Why are there no viable challengers? You eluded to where the discussion is going but not the actual argument.

Great use of headings, well done!!

I really liked your definition section on hegemony and how it linked to the next section on sources of US hegemony. My only suggestion is that the definition was perhaps a little limited - you defined theoretically what hegemony means - however, this could have been bolstered by a sentence or two on how this translates in the real world. What does 'a preponderance of material resources' or 'ideological and consensual' element actually mean. I think this definition missed the other element of hegemony - legitimacy or compliance by other states. - I think there is an element of leadership (either by coercion, submission or compliance) in hegemony.

Referencing - please use Ibid when citing a source multiple times in a row - and use Op Cit when using a source for a second time in a different place in the footnotes.

Excellent use of primary sources! and you displayed an excellent engagement with the literature on this topic. The use of the Chinese Peaceful Development Paper was excellent!!!

EXCELLENT ESSAY! To improve moving forward continue to develop a thesis statement. I liked your 'cooperative' hegemon idea which could have formed your thesis statement.. i.e There are no viable challenges to US Hegemony because US' two major rivals are seeking two different aims: China is seeking cooperative hegemony and Russia is looking to reconstitute its empire and bolster its sphere of influence. Therefore, even if analysis of soft and hard power points to Russia, and China challenging US Hegemony, their foreign policies are seeking different end goals. (something like that).

Also, in the definition section a discussion of hegemonic stability theory would have bolstered this essay.

TD

Here is a randomly selected feedback on a paper that received a 50.

Dear XX,

While your essay is passionately argued, I'm afraid it does not meet the required standards of a pass.

There are major issues with your language. Many sentences throughout the essay are extremely awkward, some to the extent that they were impossible to understand. Clear language is a crucial component of essay writing, and I would suggest booking a session with the Academic Skills and Learning Centre.

The structure of the essay also made it difficult to follow. Consider sub-headings next time. They help not only the reader, but also the writer.

Also, the research really needed to be wider for an essay of this length, and needed to reference the relevant IR literature. You rely far too heavily on one internet source.

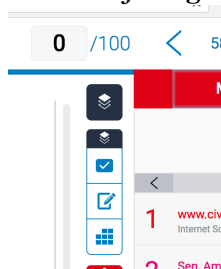
There were also some sweeping generalisations made about Islamic societies and Sharia that should not appear in a university level academic research essay.

Again, your language is the biggest issue, so once you improve with that component, your grades will no doubt improve substantially.

*Best wishes,
LH*

4. Give the paper a final mark—The last stage is to give the paper a (whole) grade. This is done by entering a number (e.g. 65 not 65.3) in the box at the upper right of the screen. Once you have entered this mark, it will sync with the course's Gradebook. Remember that we are aiming for an average mark of about 67-68 with 5% HD and 20%D. If a tutors' marks are significantly different than the other tutors' marks for this assessment, I will have to weight this tutor's marks either up or down to counteract the skewed results. Thankfully, I have not had to do so very often, but I have had to in the past, with the largest weight being 5% down.

Box to enter final grade



Personally, I would recommend giving a grade for each of the four rubric elements (out of 100) and enter them into the contents box. Then I would calculate the final grade right below it (using a calculator). If you use a template for your feedback it is possible to just copy and paste this template into your comments as well. A big reason for breaking down the mark this way is to help show students that we did follow the rubric and weighted final grades accordingly. I have found that this significantly reduces student complaints and emails.

*Cobesive formulation (40%): 75
Critical engagement (40%): 55
Structure (10%): 60
Editing (10%): 55
Overall mark: 64*

Lastly, I would request that you leave your initials in the bottom of your comments. This allows me to quickly see who graded what paper, and it makes the comments more personal and less like a huge lecture class that it is.

VII. Formatting

This is an essay, and so it should be in essay format, not a series of unconnected bullet points.

Papers should have **2cm margins** on all sides. All text should be **double-spaced** (not footnotes or the bibliography). This allows sufficient room to make comments on students' work. Using other margins or font sizes looks like students are trying to pad their paper—or (less likely) are trying to fit a longwinded paper under the maximum word limit.

Further, I asked students to use a **Times New Roman twelve-point font**. Other fonts might be the default in word processing software, but nonstandard fonts are distracting to read and can make it harder to focus on an argument. In addition, I asked students to delete the extra space in between paragraphs that is now standard in Microsoft Word. A cover page is not necessary but is acceptable. Taking up half of the first page for the title and name looks like a blatant effort to take up space.

Lastly, using the **Chicago Manual of Style author-year citation style** is strongly preferred. Details can be found at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. **Outside sources are not strictly necessary** for this paper, but can be used if they help strengthen your argument.

VIII. Common Errors

Using the passive tense—This is one of the easiest traps to fall into. A first draft is bound to be filled with the passive tense. This is why leaving time for a revision is crucial—something that all too few students take advantage of.

Not planning ahead—It is virtually impossible to write a thorough and complete paper at the last minute (trust me, I have tried). It always helps to make a plan for your semester and break your research and writing into manageable chunks.

Insufficient word count—It is always important to follow instructions. The word count mentioned in the course guide refers to the number of words of *text* and does not include any cover page, footnotes, or bibliography. Fight the natural urge to focus obsessively on the word count. Rather think about first outlining your paper then fleshing out your paper's sections as suggested above. If you have an interesting subject and a good argument the length will take care of itself.

Using conjunctions—A research paper is not an appropriate venue for conjunctions like “isn’t,” “didn’t,” “wasn’t,” etc. Please spell the words out: “is not,” “did not,” “was not,” etc.

IX. Writing tips

The following tips are suggestions that I have found to be useful in writing a paper—whether a five-page book review or a 300-page book manuscript. Hopefully, they will make your writing process a bit smoother. They are far from revolutionary, but I have found it helpful to refer repeatedly to this list.

Read the assignment—It might seem obvious, but the assignment description contains important information about the instructor's expectations.

Give yourself enough time—Procrastination is a human impulse, but in the long run it will stress you out and make your job more difficult.

Start with an outline—Beginning the writing process by constructing an outline is a good way to get the writing process started. It also helps decrease stress by enabling you to easily fill up several pages. It also helps you avoid staring at an empty Word document—unable or unwilling to begin the writing process. Just having a document started and saved on your computer can make it easier to start plugging ideas or facts into the outline as you progresses. Before you know it, you are on your way towards a complete first draft.

Proofread!—The first draft of any work is but the beginning of a well-written paper. It takes time to revise your thoughts and words both for meaning as well as for clarity.

Have others read your paper—Nothing beats a fresh set of eyes to help find errors in spelling or of logic. Be sure to reciprocate!

Read your writing aloud—Often hearing your words aloud you to spot tortuous grammar or highlight more direct and clear ways of making your argument.

Use the present tense whenever possible—Active verbs written in the present tense are much easier to read and comprehend. For example, write "Frank (2017) argues that..." rather than "It is clear from his article that Frank (2017) believed that..."

Learning how to write a good paper will help you in many ways long after your time at ANU has ended. For example, when applying to graduate school having a writing sample can come in handy both in demonstrating writing proficiency and highlighting your skills as a researcher and writer.

The basic outline described above can be used in a broad number of contexts besides political science. Clarity and conciseness will always enable your argument to be more easily grasped and more likely to be convincing regardless of the setting.

X. Useful Resources

These books, articles, and websites were useful in putting together this guide and provide much more detailed analysis and suggestions.

Published works:

Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Orwell, George. 1946. "Politics and the English Language." *Horizon* (76).

Strunk, William, Jr. & E.B. White. 1999. *The Elements of Style*. New York: Longman.

Truss, Lynne. 2004. *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. New York: Gotham.

Turabian, Kate L. 2010. *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*. Fourth Edition. Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and the University of Chicago Press Staff, eds. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

University of Chicago Press Staff. 2010. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Sixteenth Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Online works:

Blattman, Chris. This University of Chicago professor's blog (<http://chrisblattman.com/2010/02/17/how-to-write-an-essay/> [Accessed September 6, 2010]) has a number of useful tips about writing, political science, and academia.

Enterline, Andrew J. 2007. "A Guide to Writing Research Projects in Graduate Political Science Courses." Unpublished manuscript. Denton, TX: University of North Texas. Available from: <http://www.psci.unt.edu/enterline/projectguidev4b.pdf>. (Accessed September 6, 2010). While geared for graduate students, much of this guide can be applied to undergraduate writing.

Farrell, Henry. 2010. "Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student's Short Illustrated Primer." Unpublished manuscript. The George Washington University. Available from: http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_science_essays.pdf (Accessed September 6, 2010). A highly recommended resource.

Leeds, Ashley. "Writing a Research Paper for a Graduate Seminar in Political Science." Unpublished manuscript. Rice University. Available from: www.ruf.rice.edu/~leeds/Leedsrespaperguide.pdf (Accessed September 6, 2010). *Another graduate level resource that can be applied to undergraduate writing.*