

## Guidelines for Essay #1

DUE DATE: November 13, 2017

(Hard copy to be handed in during class on Monday.)

TURNITIN: A link is available on Blackboard for the submission to Turnitin.com.

### Nature of the Essay and Research Topics

The objective for the first essay is to write a short research paper to examine a topic studied during the first half of the term.

Unlike tutorial discussions, in which students may have expressed *normative* positions (or opinions) on issues, the essay requires students to address a question *analytically*, using the academic literature to support their answer. In addition to the existing literature, students can support their analysis with empirical data and pieces of evidence taken from reliable sources. Students are required to rely upon a **minimum of 4 academic references**—papers published in academic journals or academic books—other than textbooks.

Students are invited to work on one of the following questions/topics for the first essay:

1. Examine the impact of regime type (democracy/autocracy) on the level of corruption of governments.
2. Choose a theory of party systems and discuss whether it helps to explain the current party system in Canada.
3. Select an issue for which the Canadian federal and provincial governments share a responsibility, and explain how the division of powers has affected legislation on that issue.
4. Do vote intention polls published during electoral campaigns influence the choice of voters?
5. Propose an explanation of the support for “right-wing populist” parties, by focusing on a democracy of your choice.
6. Compare the regulation of campaign finance in Canada and the United States, and explain how such regulations affect the influence of interest groups on political parties.
7. Propose an explanation of the results during the Canadian federal election of October 19, 2015.
8. How to explain the decline in voter turnout in Canada around the 1990s?

It is recommended to choose one of these questions. Students wishing to work on a different topic need to obtain the approval of the teaching assistant (TA) responsible for their group. An

acceptable topic should be feasible and related to the material under study during the first half of the course.

## **Details on the Format of the Essay**

Students are asked to write a short research paper of approximately 2,000 words (about 7 or 8 pages). Papers should conform to the University's submission standards: 12-point font size, double-spacing and standard margins.

The first part of the paper should introduce a central argument that will be used to organize the analysis (about 500 words). This section can also include a basic description of the case or topic under study. The second part of the paper should provide the analysis that supports the central argument, and **conclude with a brief discussion of the limits of that argument** (about 1500 words).

To be clear, other than the guidelines indicated above, students can structure their research paper in a way that is most natural to them in order to convey the information efficiently, e.g. with an introduction and a conclusion. For instance, a concluding section could be used to discuss the limits of the main argument, if a student judges that this fits more naturally with their writing style.

## **Collaborative Work**

Although the essay can be done individually, students are allowed to work in teams of two. Teamwork can generate interesting discussions on the research topic and make students more engaged in the learning process, enriching their overall experience in the course.

It may be simpler to form teams within the same tutorial group, but collaborative work is also possible with a student from a different group. In that case, the team will submit the paper to the attention of one of the two TAs involved.

## **Citation Style**

Please use the author-date citation style for this essay. The Chicago Manual of Style is one of the most widely used guides for citations in Political Science, and a copy of it has been posted in the folder "Guidelines for Essays" on Blackboard.

Make sure to include the page numbers when referring to specific sections of a text or when using direct citations. For instance, a reference with a page number would look like this (Smith 2006, 24).

## Evaluation Criteria

This section presents a list of criteria that TAs will consider when evaluating essays.

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### First Part of the Paper

- Is the student able to introduce the topic and the central argument clearly and efficiently?
- Is the student able to define the important concepts clearly?
- Is the student able to communicate the organization of the analysis efficiently to readers?

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### Second Part of the Paper

- Is the evidence (literature or data) collected adequate and relevant to assess the main argument?
- Are all factual claims made by the student actually supported by some piece of evidence?
- Is the student able to recognize the limits of the argument?

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### Paper as a Whole

- Does the text remain organized and focused from the beginning to the end?
  - Can the student avoid personal opinions when discussing the argument?
  - Is the quality of the presentation good enough for a reader to clearly understand the argument and the main findings?
  - Are the research efforts sufficient? (Recall: Students are asked to use a minimum of four pieces of literature—academic journals or academic books—other than textbooks, properly cited.)
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## Library Resources

Library resources can be very useful to complete your research, and the UofT library offers workshops to help students develop their research skills. Make sure to consult the link “Library Resources” available on Blackboard. It is highly recommended to use databases such as *Worldwide Political Science Abstracts* or *Google Scholar* to find academic papers.

There are other resources available on the campus for writing support:

1. [College writing centres](#).
2. The “[Writing at the University of Toronto](#)” website.
3. The [Writing Plus workshop series](#).
4. Non-native English speakers can benefit from the [English Language Learning program \(ELL\)](#).

## Plagiarism and Turnitin

To ensure a fair evaluation for all students, the University has strict guidelines regarding plagiarism. Students are required to submit an electronic version of their paper via the Turnitin service, using the credentials indicated in the header of this file. The official statement from the University reads as follows:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

Please make sure to consult the University’s documentation on plagiarism to avoid any unpleasant experiences. In particular, this guide can be a useful reference:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

## Late Penalty

The **late penalty** is 2% of the assignment value per day, including weekends. After the due date, the essay can be submitted in the deposit box located at the head office of the Department of Political Science (SS 3018).

## Illness or Injury

If a situation of illness or injury prevents you from handing in the essay at the due date, official UofT documentation is required in order to adjust the late penalty. To ensure that all students receive a fair and equal treatment, the instructor and teaching staff are not authorized to grant extensions for other reasons. The policy in force at the Faculty of Arts and Science requires one of the following forms of documentation to justify an extension request:

- The UofT Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form;
- The Student Health or Disability Related Certificate;
- The Letter of Academic Accommodations from Accessibility Services;
- In cases not covered above, a letter from the College Registrar confirming an emergency or illness.

These types of documentation are designed to protect the privacy of students, which prevents the need to discuss any specific details of a medical condition with the teaching staff. If you face a situation of illness, attach a legible copy of the documentation along with the submitted work.