

Writing Papers

During your studies in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, you will be asked to write papers as one of the requirements in some of your courses. Writing--along with reading, thinking, and discussing--is one of the main activities of any university curriculum. Improving your writing skills is a long, labour-intensive process. It does not happen in a day and often it requires the advice of your professors. Yet, if you abide by the formal guidelines outlined in this text, you will have a good start and establish a standard by which to evaluate whether your writing skills show improvement through your career. Following some of the formal ground rules of writing will help you to pinpoint the precise areas where you need to improve and seek the necessary advice from faculty members if your own efforts prove insufficient.

Is writing a collective or an individual activity?

Writing is both a collective and an individual activity. In your courses, you will mostly be assigned individual writing assignments unless the instructor assigns a group paper where the paper will be the result of a team work. In this case, please ask the instructor to specify the precise kind of team work she or he expects. Individual paper assignments require that the actual writing of the paper must be done by you only.

Yet even if individual paper assignments are written by you alone, they have a collective aspect. First, after finishing your paper you may, if you wish, ask a friend to proofread your paper. Second, in writing a paper, most of the time you will be in dialogue with other writers who have thought and written on the issue. You will be evaluating and comparing their positions and arguments. Sometimes you will need to convey their different narratives--historical, personal, journalistic--in your paper before evaluating them. In this dialogue, the fundamental rule is that your voice as a writer in the paper has to be differentiated from the voices of the other authors with whom you engage and the voices of the other authors have to be differentiated from each other. Do not forget that, although a dialogue is a collective activity, e.i., it involves more than one side, by definition it also requires that the sides are distinguishable. Your reader must not be confused at any part of the paper as to whether the voice--position, statement, argument, narrative--belongs to you or to someone else, those who are your partners in dialogue.

There are some formal guidelines in writing that make it easier to put in effect the fundamental rule mentioned above. These rules can be generally called the rules of referencing.

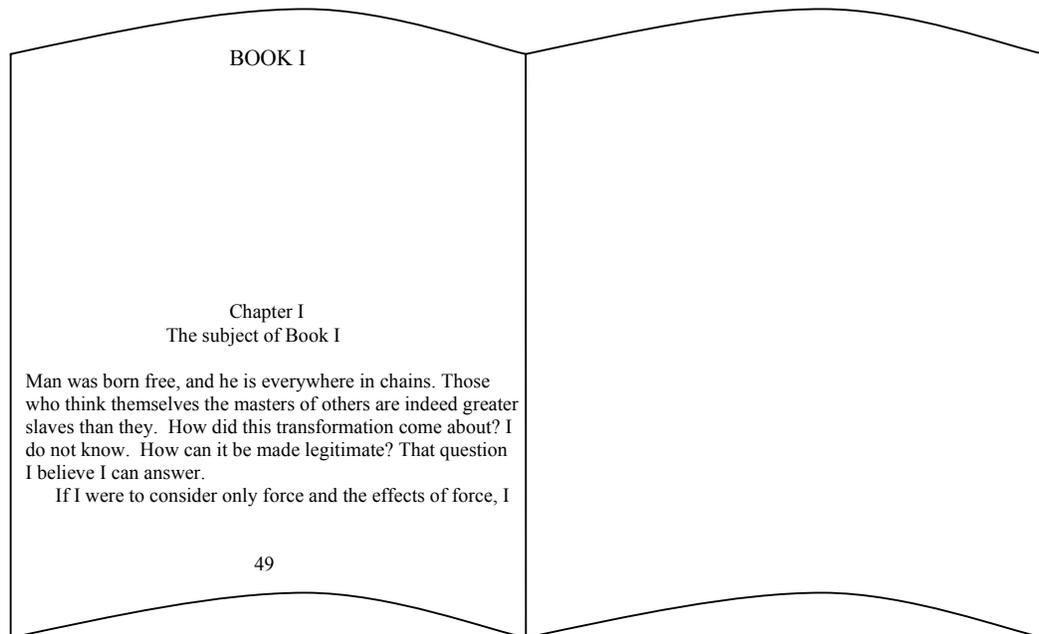
The rules of referencing:

Referencing can be in more than one way. First, it can be in the form of *direct quotations* from the texts of the authors you are in dialogue with.

Direct quotations:

Direct quotations have to be introduced by you, the writer of the paper, and then evaluated. They must not be present in the paper without an introduction as to why the reader will be reading that quotation, and without an evaluation of why that quotation is significant for your argument. Let's look at an example:

EXAMPLE I. The Original Text



Above is a section of Jean Jacques Rousseau' book *The Social Contract* published by Penguin Books in 1968 in New York. Below is a section of a student paper which gives direct quotes from this book:

EXAMPLE II. Section of a student paper using original text in example I.

According to Rousseau, domination among men does not originate from nature. As he states in the opening remarks to his *Social Contract*, “man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains” (Rousseau, 1968: 49). If man did not have these “chains” at birth, then when and how was he shackled by them and how was the loss of his freedom “made legitimate”? Rousseau limits his main question in *The Social Contract* to how such a loss of freedom was “made legitimate.” He clarifies the main question of his book as follows:

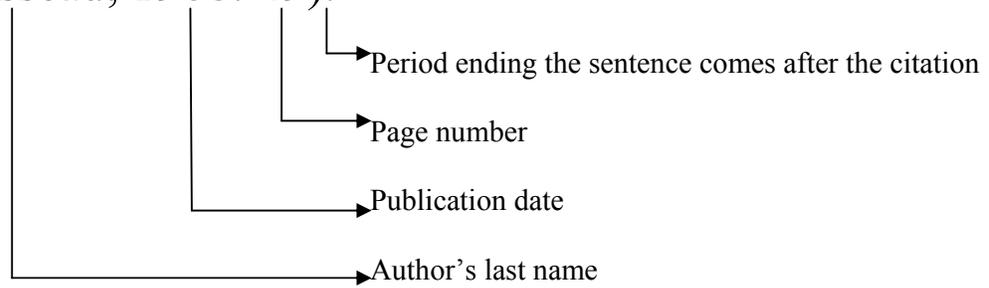
How did this transformation [the transformation from a state of freedom to a state of slavery] come about? I do not know. How can it be made legitimate? That question I believe I can answer (Rousseau, 1968: 49).

Here, although Rousseau lays out succinctly the main question to which he will seek an answer in *The Social Contract*, I find his disclaimer that he does not know how this transformation came about quite inaccurate, because he addresses this question in his other classic work *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality Among Men*.

Note the following in Example II:

1) Citation Format

(Rousseau, 1968: 49).



2) Direct quotations of three lines or more are single-spaced, tabbed in, and the quotation marks are removed.

—>How did this transformation [the transformation from a state of freedom to a state of slavery] come about? I do not know. How can it be made legitimate? That question I believe I can answer (Rousseau, 1968: 49). }

Do not give a direct quote of more than 5 lines unless it is really necessary. There are many citation formats. Example II uses an in-text citation format. In other words, instead of using an endnote or a footnote, the information on the publication—author's last name, publication date, page number--is given right after the quotation.

There are also many bibliography formats. For the purpose of paper assignments in this department, in-text citation format and the below bibliography format will suffice. The book which is referred to in the above example could appear in your bibliography as follows:

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1968. *The Social Contract*. New York: Penguin Books.

Below are the appearances of other kinds of publications in your bibliography:

Edited Volume:

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press.

Article in an edited volume:

Taylor, Charles. 1994. "The Politics of Recognition." Pp. in 25-73 in *Multiculturalism*, ed. A. Gutmann.Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Publication by same author in the same year:

Benhabib, Seyla. 1996a. "The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference." Pp. 3-18 in *Democracy and Difference Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. S. Benhabib. Princeton:Princeton University Press.

Benhabib, Seyla, ed. 1996b. *Democracy and Difference Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Journal article:

Prakash, G. (1990). "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 32, iss. 2: 383-408.

Article on Internet:

Doe, John. 2005. "Political Science Today." <http://www.kaynak.com.tr>. Accessed on May 20th 2005 at 14:00.

Note that in making entries in the bibliography, you start with the last name of the author followed by a comma and the first name. Note also that all book and journal titles are italicized, and all article titles are in quotation marks.

Paraphrasing:

Sometimes as the writer you may not be able to find a short enough direct quote which conveys the idea you would like to underline in the text you analyze, or you are writing the introduction or the conclusion of your paper and you need to summarize the position of another author (direct quotes are rarely given in introduction and conclusions of papers), or you are writing the body of the paper and you need to give a snapshot of an argument in an author's text briefly, or just as a writing style you may prefer paraphrasing. The dictionary definition of a paraphrase is as follows: "a restatement of a text, passage, or work giving the meaning in another form" (Merriam and Webster Dictionary). In other words, you convey the idea in the text in your own words. You still credit the author in question for the idea, and put your in-text citation--author, publication date and page number. Here is an example:

EXAMPLE III. The Original Text

Page 58 of Immergut, Ellen M. 1992. "The rules of the Game: The logic of Health policy-making in France, Switzerland, and Sweden," Pp. 57-89 in *Structuring Politics Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This essay compares the politics of national health insurance in France, Switzerland, and Sweden. Politicians in all three nations proposed national health insurance as well as controls on doctors' fees. From similar starting points, however, the health systems of France, Switzerland, and Sweden developed in divergent directions as a result of the specific legislative proposals enacted into law in each country. In Switzerland, national health insurance was rejected. Consequently, the role of government in the health care market is limited to providing subsidies to private insurance. In France, by contrast, the government succeeded in introducing national health insurance, a compulsory program that pays for medical treatment by private doctors, as well as limited controls on doctors' fees. The Swedish government has gone the furthest, first establishing national health insurance and then converting this program to a de facto national health service that provides medical treatment directly to citizens through publicly employed doctors and working in public hospitals. The policy results of this series of political conflicts are three health systems that represent the two extremes and the center of government intervention in health: The Swedish can be considered the most socialized health system in Europe, the Swiss the most privatized, and the French a conflict-ridden compromise between the two. Consequently the economic autonomy of doctors has been most restricted in Sweden and least in Switzerland.

The balance of this essay argues that these divergent policy outcomes cannot be explained by differences in the ideas of policy-makers, differences in political partisanship, or differences in the preferences and organization of various interest groups. Instead, it argues that these outcomes are better explained by analyzing the political institutions in each country.

Here is a section of a student paper which paraphrases from the above article:

EXAMPLE IV. Section of a student paper paraphrasing the original text in Example III

According to Ellen M. Immergut, different health care systems of France, Switzerland and Sweden are a result of the differences in the political institutions of each country. Immergut presents political institutions as an explanation of different health care systems in challenge of those other explanations which focus on policy-makers, interest groups or political partisanship (Immergut, 1992: 58).

Using someone else's work without proper referencing qualifies as plagiarism. Merriam and Webster dictionary defines 'to plagiarize' as follows: "To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (a created production) without crediting the source" (Merriam and Webster). In other words, plagiarism is not only a matter of academic ethics, but it is also a theft subject to legal consequences. Below are some examples of plagiarism:

EXAMPLE V. Plagiarism A from original text in example III

It is commonly believed that direct democracies always create policies for the good of the people. **However, in Switzerland, national health insurance was rejected. Consequently, the role of government in the health care market is limited to providing subsidies to private insurance.**

The section in bold in example V is taken verbatim from the original text in example III without giving any references.

EXAMPLE VI. Plagiarism B from original text in example III.

It is commonly believed that direct democracies always create policies for the good of the people. **However, in Switzerland, national health insurance was rejected. Consequently, the role of government in the health care market is limited to providing subsidies to private insurance** (Immergut, 1992: 58)

The section in bold in example V is taken verbatim from the original text in example III and reference is given but there are no quotation marks. Note that direct quotation from a text that is not in quotation marks is still plagiarism even if reference is given.

EXAMPLE VII. Plagiarism C from original text in example III.

It is commonly believed that direct democracies always create policies for the good of the people. **However, in Switzerland, national health insurance was *not accepted*. Consequently, the role of government in the health care market is limited to *giving* subsidies to private insurance** (Immergut, 1992: 58).

The italicized parts of the section in bold are changed but the rest is verbatim from the original text in example III and reference is given. Note that changing a few words here and there in an original text does not make it your own.

These formal rules will help to organize your writing better. They will also have a positive impact on the clarity of your arguments. Please remember once more that the minimal requirement of a good paper is that "[y]our reader must not be confused at any part of the paper as to whether the voice--position, statement, argument, narrative--belongs to you or to someone else."

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