

30:117 Political Decision Making
Paper Guidelines
Updated February 2007

I. General Requirements

- A. Your basic requirement is to write three papers of approximately 5-7 pages focused on a particular topic. Topics are listed in the syllabus.
- B. Please note that these papers are to consist of *original thought and research*. They are not simply compilations of existing thought on the topics. You should use existing literature for your sources, but you will need to go beyond the formal literature and draw conclusions based on your own reading of the materials and discussions in class. The papers are to be about 7 pages long, not including any tables or references. References should show the materials you used, and should be cited in the body of your paper. Don't include references that aren't actually cited in the paper, just to pad your references. References include ANY source of information from which you draw quotes or ideas, whether a formal academic publication, or the popular press (newspapers, magazines) or interviews with people involved in the decisions you are writing about.
- C. Make sure that any tables or illustrations are referenced in the body of your paper – so that if you have a “Figure 1” or a “Table 2” you discuss it at some point within your text, and tie it into the paper itself. Please number the pages of your paper and provide a separate title page that includes your name, ID Number, Course Number, and Date.
- D. Please staple your paper and don't bother putting it into a plastic cover.

II. A few other points

- A. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is when you use somebody else's work and call it your own. When you use verbatim excerpts from books, papers, internet sites, any source at all, you **MUST** provide a citation, and you must use quotation marks around the verbatim section. Even when you borrow an “idea” without quoting verbatim, you **MUST** cite the source of the idea. Failure to properly cite sources is academic dishonesty and can result in a range of penalties, including an “F” on the paper or an “F” in the course.
- B. Citations. The citation in your text should generally be the Author's name and the date of the work, placed in parentheses, e. g. (Redlawsk, 1999). This must tie back to a listing in your References section of a work by that author on that date. Interviews should be referenced in the same way, so that there is a listing of the interview in your References section. Examine some papers in the *American Political Science Review* for appropriate format.
- C. Grammar and spelling **COUNT!** Please write in appropriate academic style – avoid contractions, use proper grammar, and make sure your spelling is correct. Improper grammar/spelling makes it very difficult for the reader (me) to follow your arguments.