

## POL 500 Final Paper Guidelines and Rubric

### Overview

You will choose a contemporary political issue and propose a solution informed by your conception of the public good. You will have the opportunity to take a position on both your understanding of the public good and what you believe is the most effective solution to the problem you have chosen. Support for your positions will be drawn from scholarly, academic sources. You will be required to find sources examining the problem from diverse methodological perspectives using both qualitative and quantitative methods. You will evaluate the overall effectiveness of these methods in analyzing the issue. You will also be required to evaluate the findings presented in the sources you choose and whether the authors' methodologies conform to ethical guidelines governing social science research. In order to promote a well-rounded analysis of the issue, you will be required to analyze sources that present a perspective contrary to the solution you propose and evaluate these arguments in an even-handed manner. This project is divided into three milestones, which will be submitted at various points throughout the course to scaffold learning and ensure quality final submissions. These milestones will be submitted in **Module Two, Module Four, and Module Six**. The final submission will take place in **Module Nine**.

This assessment will evaluate your mastery with respect to the following course outcomes:

- Evaluate competing theoretical perspectives of the public good as a central concept in the study and practice of political science
- Evaluate research designs for their compliance with ethical standards governing the use of human subjects as referenced in the Common Rule
- Compare and contrast methodological perspectives to distinguish competing visions, goals, and purposes of political science
- Interpret quantitative and qualitative research data from published academic primary and secondary sources to make informed judgments
- Propose solutions to contemporary political issues through the lens of the public good using an objective, non-partisan approach

### Prompt

**Your analysis should answer the following question:** In addressing a contemporary political issue, what solution would best serve the public good?

Specifically, the following **critical elements** must be addressed:

#### I. **Personal Theory of the Public Good**

- a) How do you define the **concept** of the public good? In other words, propose a personal definition of the public good based on an examination of multiple theoretical concepts of the public good.
- b) How does your definition fit within **broader discourses** concerning the public good? Justify your claims concerning how your personal concept of the public good fits within the broader theoretical discourse by citing specific theories from this broader discourse.
- c) What **benefits and costs/trade-offs** are associated with your definition of the public good? Justify claims concerning which populations will benefit and how they will benefit under the personal theory of the public good. What costs/trade-offs/sacrifices will accrue under such a theory of the public good?

II. **The Problem**

- a) What **contemporary political issue** have you chosen to analyze? Why is this issue important to you?
- b) How is the problem **relevant to the real-world practice** of politics? Justify your claims
- c) To whom do you believe the problem is **most relevant**? Justify your claims
- d) How does the issue you have chosen **fit within the concept of the public good** that you have outlined above? In other words, why is the personal theory of the public good sufficient to propose solutions for the chosen political issue?

III. **Research**

- a) How do the **quantitative and qualitative sources** you have chosen analyze the issue? Use peer-reviewed, academic sources, ensuring that both qualitative and quantitative sources are represented. Describe how these sources analyze the chosen political issue.
- b) What **methodological perspectives** are represented by the sources you have chosen? Evaluate how your choice of methodological perspective affects the source's approach to analyzing the chosen political issue.
- c) How has the research informed your **approach** to conceptualizing the issue? In other words, how has an examination of diverse sources affected the conceptualization of the chosen political issue?
- d) What **ethical implications** are raised by the articles you have analyzed? Assess whether or not the sources you have evaluated adhered to political science ethical guidelines. What impact do the ethical standards have on the sources?

IV. **Solutions**

- a) Informed by the research you have conducted, how do you think the problem can be most effectively **addressed**? Justify your reasoning.
- b) How have **perspectives contrary to your own position** informed your solution to the problem?
- c) Why is your solution **best for the real-world practice of politics**? Justify your claims.

V. **Conclusion**

- a) What **ethical implications** are raised by the solution you provide to the problem? In other words, evaluate the ethical implications of the proposed solution to ensure conformity with political science ethical guidelines.
- b) How does the solution you have provided best serve the **public good** as you have defined it? Justify claims.

## Milestones

### Milestone One: Contemporary Political Issue

In **Module Two**, you will pick your political issue. What contemporary political issue have you chosen to analyze? Why is this issue important to you? How is the problem relevant to the real-world practice of politics? Justify your claims.

The paper must be 2–3 pages in length (excluding title and reference pages) and formatted according to APA style. You must include at least three scholarly sources, which may include your course text. Cite your sources within the text of your paper and on the reference page.

**This milestone will be graded using the Short Paper Rubric.**

### Milestone Two: Literature Review

In **Module Four**, you will summarize the current literature relevant to the issue you chose in Module Two. A literature review is an analytical essay containing an introduction (including a thesis and a research question), body (where you use research to support your issue and tie the resources back to your research question), and a conclusion. The purpose of a literature review is to summarize and synthesize the ideas of others in regard to your chosen issue. This will construct a solid foundation for your final paper, due in Module Nine.

**This milestone will be graded using the Literature Review Rubric.**

### Milestone Three: Rough Draft

In **Module Six**, you will complete a rough draft. Your analysis should answer the following question:

In addressing a contemporary political issue, what solution would best serve the public good? Refer to the critical elements listed above for a full listing of required elements.

The paper must be 6 to 8 pages in length (excluding title and reference pages) and formatted according to APA style. You must include at least seven scholarly sources, which may include your course text. Cite your sources within the text of your paper and on the reference page.

**This milestone will be graded using the Final Paper Rubric (below).** This will help you improve your paper for the final submission.

### Final Submission: Final Paper

In **Module Nine**, you will submit your final paper. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the critical elements of the final product. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **This submission is graded using the Final Paper Rubric (below).**

## Final Paper Rubric

**Requirements of Submission:** Students should submit a well-developed analysis of a contemporary political issue. The paper should be 12–15 pages in length and include 8–10 references (peer-reviewed, scholarly research).

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (90%)	Needs Improvement (70%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
<b>Personal Theory of the Public Good: Concept</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples to substantiate claims	Proposes a personal definition of the public good based on an examination of multiple theoretical concepts of the public good	Proposes a personal definition of the public good, but does not do so based on an examination of multiple theoretical concepts of the public good	Does not propose a personal definition of the public good	10
<b>Personal Theory of the Public Good: Broad Discourse</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples to substantiate claims	Makes and justifies claims concerning how the personal concept of the public good fits within the broader theoretical discourse by citing specific theories from this broader discourse	Makes claims concerning how the personal concept of the public good fits within the broader theoretical discourse, but does not cite specific theories from this broader discourse	Does not make claims concerning how the personal concept of the public good fits within the broader theoretical discourse	10
<b>Personal Theory of the Public Good: Benefits and Costs/Trade-Offs</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and substantiates claims with scholarly research	Makes and justifies claims concerning which populations will benefit and how they will benefit under the personal theory of the public good and what costs/trade-offs/sacrifices will accrue under such a theory of the public good	Makes claims concerning which populations will benefit and how they will benefit under the personal theory of the public good, but does not discuss what costs/trade-offs/sacrifices will accrue under such a theory of the public good	Does not make a claim concerning the benefits and costs/trade-offs associated with the public good	10
<b>The Problem: Contemporary Political Issue</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria, and proposal is well supported using scholarly resources to substantiate claims	Proposes a contemporary political issue to analyze and describes why it is an issue of personal interest/importance	Proposes a contemporary political issue to analyze, but does not describe why this is an issue of personal interest/importance	Does not propose a contemporary political issue to analyze	5
<b>The Problem: Relevance to Real-World Practice</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria, and proposal is well supported using concrete examples to substantiate claims	Makes and justifies claims concerning why the chosen political issue is relevant to the real-world practice of politics	Makes claims concerning why the chosen political issue is relevant to the real-world practice of politics, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not make a claim concerning why the chosen political issue is relevant to the real-world practice of politics	5

<b>The Problem: Most Relevant</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and is well supported using concrete examples to substantiate claims	Makes and justifies claims concerning the most relevant population impacted by the chosen political issue	Makes claims concerning the most relevant population impacted by the chosen political issue, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not make a claim concerning which population is most relevant to the chosen political issue	5
<b>The Problem: Fit Within the Concept of the Public Good</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and is well supported using concrete examples to substantiate claims	Makes and justifies claims concerning why the personal theory of the public good is sufficient to propose solutions for the chosen political issue	Makes claims concerning why the personal theory of the public good is sufficient to propose solutions for the chosen political issue, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not make a claim concerning why the personal theory of the public good is sufficient to propose solutions	5
<b>Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Sources</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and substantially describes in detail how these sources contribute to analyzing the chosen political issue	Uses peer-reviewed, academic sources, ensuring that both quantitative and qualitative sources are represented, and accurately describes how these sources analyze the chosen political issue	Uses peer-reviewed, academic sources, but they do not sufficiently represent both qualitative and quantitative sources, OR does not describe how these sources analyze the chosen political issue	Does not use peer-reviewed academic sources	5
<b>Research: Methodological Perspectives</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and substantiates claims with scholarly research	Accurately identifies diverse methodological perspectives and evaluates how the choice of methodological perspective affects the source’s approach to analyzing the chosen political issue	Identifies diverse methodological perspectives, but does not evaluate how the choice of methodological perspective affects the source’s approach to analyzing the chosen political issue	Does not identify methodological perspectives	5
<b>Research: Approach</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples to substantiate claims	Reflects on how an examination of diverse sources has affected the conceptualization of the chosen political issue	Reflects on how an examination of diverse sources has affected the conceptualization of the chosen political issue, but reflection is not clear and/or lacks sufficient detail	Does not reflect on how an examination of diverse sources has affected the conceptualization of the chosen political issue	5
<b>Research: Ethical Implications</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claims	Assesses whether or not the sources have adhered to political science ethical guidelines and evaluates what impact ethical standards have had on the sources	Assesses whether or not the sources have adhered to political science ethical guidelines, but does not evaluate the impact ethical standards have had on the sources	Does not assess whether or not the sources have adhered to political science ethical guidelines	5

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<b>Solutions: Addressed</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claim	Based on the research conducted, makes and justifies a claim concerning the overall best solution to the chosen political issue	Based on the research conducted, makes a claim concerning the overall best solution to the chosen political issue, but does not justify the claim	Does not make a claim concerning the overall best solution to the chosen political issue	5
<b>Solutions: Perspectives Contrary to Your Position</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claims	Assesses the effect of sources contrary to the student’s viewpoint in the formulation of the solution using relevant factors	Assesses the effect of sources contrary to the student’s viewpoint in the formulation of the solution, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not assess the effect of sources contrary to the student’s viewpoint	5
<b>Solutions: Best for Practice</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claim	Makes and justifies claims concerning why the solution chosen is the most effective one for the real-world practice of politics	Makes claims concerning why the solution chosen is the most effective one for the real-world practice of politics, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not make claims concerning why the solution chosen is the most effective one for the real-world practice of politics	5
<b>Conclusion: Ethical Implications</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claims	Evaluates the ethical implications of the proposed solution to ensure conformity with political science ethical guidelines	Evaluates the ethical implications of the proposed solution to ensure conformity with political science ethical guidelines, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not evaluate the ethical implications of the proposed solution	5
<b>Conclusion: Public Good</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses specific, concrete examples from scholarly research to substantiate claims	Makes and justifies claims concerning how the solution proposed best serves the public good	Makes claims concerning how the solution proposed best serves the public good, but overlooks relevant factors	Does not make claims concerning how the solution proposed best serves the public good	5
<b>Articulation of Response</b>	Meets “Proficient” criteria and has excellent syntax and sentence construction	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	5
<b>Total</b>					<b>100%</b>