

POL 210 Final Project Guidelines and Rubric

Overview

The final project for this course is the creation of a **final research paper**. The research paper must be on a topic relevant to class content. In the paper, students need to present research and also draw and support a conclusion about the topic. Research papers must be objective in the presentation of the content. The final product represents an authentic demonstration of competency because students select their own topics appropriate to the course content and objectives, conduct independent research with minimal supervision from their professor, and create finished papers that meet all of the established criteria. The project is divided into **four 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 **Modules Two, Four, Five, and Seven**.

Guidelines

The main elements of the research paper will include:

Topic Selection:

- Research topics must be objective in their presentation of the material. A list of possible topic ideas found below can be used as a resource when choosing a topic. You will need to present and support a conclusion about the topic.
- If the topic is one on which people have differing views (examples: abortion, gun control, the death penalty), students will need to present at least two sides of the issue. If personal beliefs about an issue are so strong that you cannot objectively present at least two sides of the issue, you may want to pursue a different topic that can be approached less passionately. Objective research is the framework.

Outline:

You will submit a research outline that may incorporate the use of cross-section of reference materials including but not limited to newspapers, magazines, journal articles, scholarly books, and even information gathered through the interviews of the individuals involved in the project.

Final Research Paper:

You will submit a final research paper that will include:

- Cover page
- Abstract
- Thesis statement
- Body of paper between 5 and 7 pages in length
- Citation/reference page, 4 to 5 scholarly references

Topic Ideas

The following list includes some possible topics for your final paper, but the actual topic choice is yours. You are certainly free to select a topic that is not on this list. This list is here to get you thinking and offer inspiration. If you wish to pick a topic not on the list, submit your topic for approval with details about what exactly you wish to pursue in the Topic Selection discussion topic in Module Two.

You need to submit a topic idea and some details about where you wish to take your research regardless of whether the desired topic is from the list or not.

- A favorite amendment to the Constitution (First, Second, Fifth, and Fourteenth are especially popular)
- Presidential impeachments/process: Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and/or Bill Clinton
- Presidential scandals: Watergate, Teapot Dome
- Censorship of the press for national security or “morality”
- The limits on free speech and expression placed upon members of the military
- Gay marriage
- History of abortion laws and pertinent court cases
- Handling conflict of interest in the federal judiciary
- Campaign finance rules/reform
- Activist Supreme Courts, whether liberal or conservative
- The evolution of the rights of the accused
- Restoring voting rights to convicted felons
- The death penalty
- Juveniles in the criminal justice system
- Leadership positions in the Congress and how leaders are chosen
- The committee system in the Congress
- The use and/or abuse of the filibuster over time in the Senate
- The Electoral College and how it selects a president
- Unpopularly elected presidents, the circumstances, and their ultimate success or failure
- Presidential elections decided by the House of Representatives
- The presidency of someone you admire or love to hate (cannot be merely biography)
- The growth of the federal government since the 1930s
- Affirmative action/equal opportunity

Milestones

Milestone One: Topic Selection

In **Module Two**, you will submit your **topic selection**. The topic selection should be submitted as a post to the discussion topic. Upon the professor's approval, you should begin your research. **This milestone will be graded separately using the Discussion Rubric. You will be graded based upon your participation. Feedback from the instructor and your peers may be applied to how you develop the topic of your final project.**

Milestone Two: Outline

In **Module Four**, you will submit an **outline** of the final research project. **This milestone will be graded separately using the Outline Rubric. Feedback should be applied to the final product.**

Milestone Three: Rough Draft of Final Product

In **Module Five**, you will submit a **rough draft** of the final research project. The format should follow that of the final product itself. It should include an abstract, the body of the paper, a supported conclusion, and a listing of the sources in an actual reference section. **The submission of the rough draft will be graded using the Milestone Three Guidelines and Rubric document. Feedback will be provided using the Rough Draft Rubric. This is your opportunity to see how you are meeting the criteria in the critical elements. Apply the feedback to your final product.**

Milestone Four: Final Product

In **Module Seven**, you will submit the **final research project**. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the main elements of the final product. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **This milestone will be graded using the Final Project Rubric.**

Deliverable Milestones

Milestone	Deliverables	Module Due	Grading
One	Topic Selection	Two	Graded separately for participation and feedback to peers; Discussion Rubric; feedback should be applied to the development of the topic
Two	Outline	Four	Graded separately; Outline Rubric
Three	Rough Draft of Final Product	Five	Graded separately using Milestone Three Rubric; feedback should be applied to the final submission
Four	Final Product: Final Research Paper	Seven	Graded separately; Final Project Rubric

Final Project Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Written components of the project must follow these formatting guidelines when applicable: double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and discipline-appropriate citations. The final research paper should be 5 to 7 pages in length, not including the cover page, abstract, and reference section.

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Needs Improvement (55%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Organization of Thought	Includes consistent evidence of critical thinking, thorough research, synthesis, and disparate materials; summary and ideas are organized and communicated effectively within the research paper	Includes evidence of critical thinking, research, synthesis, and disparate materials; summary and ideas are mostly organized and communicated within the research paper	Includes some evidence of critical thinking, research, synthesis, and disparate materials; lack of organization results in some communication of ideas, but some ideas are poorly communicated	Does not include any evidence of critical thinking, research, synthesis, and disparate materials, and ideas are not communicated	20
Analyzes Various Perspectives	Comprehensively analyzes many aspects of the formation, functionality, and/or structure of the chosen issue objectively from various perspectives	Analyzes many aspects of the formation, functionality, and/or structure of the chosen issue objectively from various perspectives	Analyzes minimal aspects of the formation, functionality, and/or structure of the chosen issue from various perspectives	Does not analyze any aspects of the formation, functionality, and/or structure of the chosen issue from various perspectives	20
Policy-Making Process	Extensively examines all of the roles of different players in the policy-making and electoral process as is appropriate to the topic selected	Examines the roles of different players in the policy-making and electoral process as is appropriate to the topic selected	Minimally examines the roles of different players in the policy-making and electoral process as is appropriate to the topic selected	Does not examine the roles of different players in the policy-making and electoral process as is appropriate to the topic selected	20
Solving Political Challenges	Skillfully analyzes varied efforts (more than three examples) of the Framers of the Constitution to solve political problems	Analyzes the efforts (three examples) of the Framers of the Constitution to solve political problems	Analyzes some of the efforts (one to two examples) of the Framers of the Constitution to solve political problems	Does not analyze the efforts of the Framers of the Constitution to solve political problems	20
Research	Incorporates at least five scholarly resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research	Incorporates at least four scholarly resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research	Incorporates three scholarly resources that reflect depth and breadth of research	Incorporates fewer than three scholarly resources that reflect depth and breadth of research	10
Writing (Mechanics/Citations)	No errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Minor errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Some errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Major errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	10
Earned Total					100%