

San José State University
Department of Political Science
POLS 100W: Writing Workshop, Spring 2020

Instructor:	Sara M. Benson
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Office Hours:	Monday/Wednesday 10:15-11:45
Class Days/Time:	Monday/Wednesday 1:30 – 2:45
Classroom:	DMH 160

Course Description

Writing skills for majors in political science. Basic materials; research; memos and research reports, press releases, analyses of political/electoral behavior, political speeches.

This workshop is designed for political science majors. It guides students in developing a writing practice focused on organization, analysis, sentence fluency, voice, and word choice. Course assignments allow students to craft useable pieces of writing, including a scholarship application and a short research report. This work will prepare students for professional writing in political science-related careers and require that students become familiar with the basic aspects of academic research and writing. Each assignment will be resubmitted after deep revision. Course readings will introduce students to the stages of revision and to various theories of composition. As background materials to guide the writing process, the readings can help jumpstart writing sessions and guide students through moments of potential frustration. With weekly writing tasks recorded in a journal, student success in this course will be based on consistency and improvement in composition over the course of the term.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the Written Communication II (Z) General Education requirement. Student success in this course is dependent on an active engagement with the research and writing process. The primary goal of the course is for students to develop their own critical writing process. By the end of the course, students will be able to craft a scholarship application and a short research report, to revise their own work and deepen the presentation of their ideas, and to properly cite primary and secondary materials.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

GELO1: Students shall be able to refine the competencies established in Written Communication 1A and 1B.

GELO2: Students shall be able to express ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.

GELO3: Students shall be able to organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO1: produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, clarity of expression

SLO2: explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse

SLO3: organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences

SLO4: organize and develop essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards

SLO5: locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing.

Department/Program Learning Outcomes:

The Department of Political Science has the following goals in mind for this course:

Breadth Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

Application and Disciplinary Methods Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

Communication Skills Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

Citizenship Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Required Texts/Readings

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well (30th Anniversary Edition)* ISBN 0060891548

Other Required Materials

A journal or notebook of your choice (available at discount stores for \$1)

Course Requirements, Assignments, Grading Policy

This course requires that students write a minimum of 8,000 words per semester.

Assignment One: Scholarship Application/Personal Statement 25% of course grade

Assignment Two: Research Proposal 25% of course grade

Assignment Three: Research Paper 25% of course grade

Assignment Four: Class & Journal Exercises, Feedback Session, Quizzes 25% of course grade

Assignment One: Scholarship Application/Personal Statement (GELO 3 and SLO 3)

This project begins with the “what is political science” essay and resume workshop, but will also require students to research scholarships and grants for which they may be eligible, and to craft an application using a personal statement. Most of these applications will require that the student outline their relationship to the field. The length of the assignment will vary because of the

requirements of various applications. Students should use this assignment to draft a useable piece of writing with which they might secure scholarships and grants. Potentially helpful websites include:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/polisci/scholarships/> and <http://www.sjsu.edu/faso/Scholarships/>

Assignment Two: Research Proposal (GELO 2 and GELO 3 and SLO 5)

This assignment is comprised of three parts: a research proposal, a literature review, and a bibliography. Each aspect of the assignment will build on the previously submitted assignments and should reflect deep revision. The research proposal should outline the student's interest in the subject, its significance for the study of politics, and situate the work in relation to relevant scholarly literature. The research reflection is to be completed after an initial search (in the form of a library shelf walk, an online database search, or an archival visit) and should be three double-spaced pages in length (including the bibliography). This assignment will eventually be incorporated into the introduction of the research paper.

Assignment Three: Research Paper (GELO 1 and SLO 4)

This assignment should be approximately 20 pages and take the form of a traditional research paper. Students will submit multiple drafts for feedback over the course of the semester. The final assignment will be graded on an adherence to the conventions of writing, the strength of the analytical voice, and the fluency of sentences and transitions. Be sure to revise, proofread, and copyedit.

Assignment Four: Writing Practice Journal/Class Exercises/Feedback Sessions (SLOs 1 and 2)

This part of your grade is based on your active participation in class exercises, assignments, feedback sessions, and entries in your writing journal. There will be 26 of these assignments over the course of the semester and they are worth 25 points. This means that you are permitted to not submit *ONE* of these assignments with no penalty to your grade. After that, for each assignment that is not submitted, students lose one point for each assignment missed. In order to earn a passing grade for this part of the course, students must arrive on time and actively participate in class exercises. No late assignments will be accepted.

Grading Information and Policies

This course must be passed with a C or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

No late papers will be accepted.

No extra credit is available.

Grading Scale

97 to 100	A plus
93 to 96	A
90 to 92	A minus
87 to 89	B plus
83 to 86	B
80 to 82	B minus
77 to 79	C plus

73 to 76	C
70 to 72	C minus
63 to 69	D
60 to 62	D minus
less than 60	F

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

Please review the information about university policies on plagiarism contained above, which may result in a failing grade. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Classroom Protocol

Students should attend all class meetings and participate in class exercises, assignments and discussions. Your cell phone is not needed for this writing class. Please come to class with your course materials, your journal or notebook, and a pen or pencil. Students should not be late. If you absolutely must enter late, be prepared to enter quietly and without disruption. Please be respectful of your colleagues in class discussions and during peer review exercises.

Political Science Departmental Writing Policy and SJSU Writing Center

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count. Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm.

For assistance with writing, please see me or visit the SJSU Writing Center located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

Political Science 100W: Writing Workshop, Spring 2020

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Monday, January 27	<u>Course Introductions</u>
Wednesday, January 29	<u>Good Writing:</u> Film Screening: <i>Bad Writing</i>
Monday, February 3	Film Discussion
Wednesday, February 5	<u>On Writing and Inspiration:</u> John Steinbeck, selections from <i>Journal of a Novel</i> Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence..." (readings distributed in class)
Monday, February 10	<u>Resume and Personal Statement Workshop</u> (please bring a copy of your current resume and a computer)
Wednesday, February 12	<u>Personal Statement Timed Writing</u> Timed Writing on Political Science
Monday, February 17	<u>Research Workshop: Two Methods and Proposal Assignment</u> draft of personal statement due (no late papers accepted) Discussion of Zinsser assignment
Wednesday, February 19	Zinsser assignment (reading and synthesizing the first 91 pages of <i>On Writing Well</i>) due by 5pm
Monday, February 24	<u>Information Literacy and Citational Practices</u>
Wednesday, February 26	<u>Writing Literature Reviews</u>
Monday, March 2	Library shelf walk
Wednesday, March 4	Library shelf walk (assignment due by 5pm)

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Monday, March 9	<u>Roadmap Sentences</u> draft of research proposal due (no late papers accepted) (sign up for feedback sessions)
Wednesday, March 11	<u>Grammar and Composition</u>
Monday, March 16	<u>Feedback Session 1</u> (grammar and punctuation quiz)
Wednesday, March 18	<u>Feedback Session 2</u> (grammar and punctuation quiz)
Monday, March 23	<u>Feedback Session 3</u> (grammar and punctuation quiz)
Wednesday, March 25	<u>Feedback Session 4</u> (grammar and punctuation quiz)
Monday, March 30	Spring Break.
Wednesday, April 1	Spring Break.
Monday, April 6	<u>Title Workshop</u> final draft of research proposal due (no late papers)
Wednesday, April 8	<u>Shaping the Personal Statement</u> (please bring your revised draft to class)
Monday, April 13	<u>Workshop: Removing Clutter/Rebuilding Writing</u> final draft of personal statement due (please bring your computers/tablets to class)
Wednesday, April 15	<u>Clutter & Clarity: Organization & Paragraph Structure</u> 5-page draft of research paper due for class exercise
Monday, April 20	<u>Reverse Outlining/Paragraph Sequence</u> bring clean 7-page draft of research paper to class
Wednesday, April 22	<u>Reverse Outlining/Topic Sentences</u> bring clean 10-page draft of research paper to class
Monday, April 27	<u>Topic Sentence Workshop/Grading Matrix</u> bring 10-page draft to class to submit for feedback

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Wednesday, April 29	<u>Mobilizing Quotes Effectively</u> (please bring your computers/tablets to class)
Monday, May 4	<u>Transition Workshop</u> (please bring your computers/tablets to class)
Wednesday, May 6	<u>Crafting Conclusions and Abstracts</u> (please bring your computers/tablets to class)
Monday, May 11	<u>Course Closing</u>

***Final papers due Monday, May 18 by 2:30 pm**