

Theories of Comparative and International Studies (SIS 672)
Instructions and Tips for the Short Analytical Papers
Professor Carl LeVan

INSTRUCTIONS:

Pick one of the study questions for the course unit and write a short essay approximately 6-7 pages in length, not including end notes or works cited. Use one-inch margins, 12-point type, and double-spacing. Please put your name and the question you are answering on a separate title page. (This will make it easier for me to read the paper without knowing who wrote it.)

An analytical paper should formulate a concise argument up front. While outside research is permitted, the essay will primarily be evaluated on your command of the assigned material. Strive to demonstrate breadth by drawing on different readings, not just a few assigned for one class meeting. Since you cannot be comprehensive in a paper this brief, work towards clarity and creativity. The paper becomes analytical in part on the basis of what you choose to exclude or include.

Note that the paper is due the night after class meets. This will give you roughly one day to revise and polish anything you'd like to change. However, because you will be expected to demonstrate some expertise on the topics during class, do not wait until the last minute to write this paper. You are encouraged – but not strictly expected – to bring a handout or an outline to class. If you do so be sure to put your name on it and to attach a copy to your paper.

All papers must follow a standard formatting style such as Chicago, APSA, or MLA. You may use informal social science in-text (Author year, page) citations, but be sure to include a works cited page. Papers will not be accepted by email without prior permission. Early papers are always welcome. Late papers will be penalized.

AU's Academic Integrity Code will be strictly enforced. For information see: <http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>.

TIPS AND HINTS:

- As an analytical paper, this essay must do more than merely summarize the material. However it is often helpful to write a literature review as a first draft, just to help you understand how the arguments fit together. If you are not ready to start with prose, then write an annotated bibliography first. Also, it is often easier to trace the arguments through a chronology but abandoning this might be the next step in finding your own voice.

- Rewrite your introduction after you have written your paper. It should state a clear argument and provide the reader with a concise “road map” for what to expect.
- Think carefully about how you introduce concepts and terminology. Aim to explain and persuade, rather than to impress. Ask yourself if there are related concepts you need to mention, and be prepared to struggle with how to summarize them efficiently.
- Strongly consider forming a study group or meeting with other students who are writing on the unit; Blackboard is very helpful for this. You will quickly discover that everyone can contribute something to the discussion, and that each person brings different talents to the table. This is a great (and reassuring!) way to learn theory.
- Because this is “foundational” material that will serve you throughout your time in SIS, think about tackling one of the more difficult questions or taking on an unfamiliar topic. This is especially important for students in Comparative and Regional Studies, who will need to demonstrate such proficiency during their examinations.
- Use citation software such as EndNote – this will save you hours formatting bibliographies, and allow you to construct a database searchable by keyword. In a few keystrokes, you’ll be able to pull up everything you’ve read on “dictatorship” or “social capital.” The library has training courses for the software, and you can even import citations directly from the library’s catalogue.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

I would encourage you to purchase either *A Manual for Writers* by Kate Turabian or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For a short, concise guide to grammar, consult *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk.

The AU Library Citation Guide provides examples of several major citation styles. <http://www.library.american.edu/subject/citation.html>.

The AU Writing Center can help you evaluate and improve your writing. It also offers special assistance for international students. Students trying to improve their writing often make a few recurring mistakes that can be easily corrected with outside help.

<http://www.american.edu/cas/lit/writingcenter.cfm>.

The AU Academic Support Center offers a variety of academic services, including writing instruction designed for international and ESL students. <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asc/index1.html>