

POLI 1100 – Argumentative Essay Assignment

An argumentative essay identifies what various authorities have to say on a given subject and allows you to develop an opinion based on the research that you've gathered.

1. Choose an essay topic from the list below:

- a) Should the voting age in Canada be lowered from 18 years of age to 16?
- b) Would you advise a new democratic country to adopt First-Past-The-Post for its electoral system?
- c) Are populist parties a threat to democracy?
- d) Should Canada implement mandatory voting in federal elections?

** If you want to write on a topic different than those listed above, please be in touch with me by mid-June to discuss the topic's suitability and scope.

2. Then, using the Langara library system (only), find at least 6 academic books and/or journal articles relevant to your topic and at an appropriate level of scholarship. It is often good practice to locate more than 6 research sources and then edit for excellence. **It's important to spend time at this stage and select your sources carefully.**

You are encouraged to prioritize research sources published over the past 10 years (e.g. 2012-present). The research sources you select should also reflect the various sides of the topic's argument.

3. Read the sources you identified pulling out key ideas found on both sides of the debate you are examining. Take careful notes during this stage of the research process. You should be clear about which authors are raising which points in which research sources, down to the page number(s). This is important for the citations (footnotes or endnotes) that you will include in your paper. I strongly recommend you cite your sources as you draft your essay – this will save you time in the long run and help you avoid potential problems relating to plagiarism should you not do this carefully.
4. Then, select one of the patterns found in the Charlton and Barker piece, "How to Write an Argumentative Essay" (see Assignment folder in Brightspace) and use it as a template for structuring/organizing your essay.

Before submitting your essay, please double check that it meets the following criteria. Your paper should:

- Include a title page, containing the following information:
 - A title, one that reflects the topic and the position you are taking on it
 - Your name
 - Your student number
 - The instructor's name
 - The course name and number
 - The date that you submitted your assignment
 - Which template or pattern from the Charlton and Barker guidelines you followed for the structuring of your essay (i.e. Pattern #1 or Pattern #2)

**Your essay title and name should only appear on the title page, and not elsewhere in your paper.

- Be written in 12pt font, double-spaced, and to a target length of 4-6 pages (not including the title page and bibliography).
- Contain margins that are 1" on all sides of the page.
- Be structured according to one of the templates/patterns listed in the Charlton and Barker reading, "How to Structure an Argumentative Essay".
- Include a *minimum* of 4 authoritative sources (i.e. journal articles or academic books). Note that all the sources you use for this assignment must be accessible through the Langara Library.
- **Include citations throughout your discussion referencing any and all information drawn into your essay that is not publicly known; footnotes are preferred, but you could also use endnotes.** This is how social scientists show whose ideas, perspectives, and examples we are building on or making connections with in our writing. It also demonstrates to the reader the degree to which the arguments we are presenting are informed by research, and specifically, by whose research. Your citations must be organized and formatted using the Chicago citation style, see: <https://langara.ca/library/research-help/citing-help/pdf/citing-chicago.pdf>
- Include page numbers on the top, right hand side of the page.
- Include a bibliography which lists only the sources you've cited by way of footnotes or endnotes in your paper. These should be listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

Assessment: your essay will be assessed on the following five criteria:

- Presentation
- Organization
- Quality of evidence/appropriateness of research
- Sentence structure and clarity; and
- Format and referencing

Note that no marks are attached to each criterion, rather, an evaluation is achieved by an overall assessment of the assignment.

Submitting your Assignment:

Your assignment is due on **Sunday, July 16** by 11:59pm. Late assignments will not be accepted beyond one week past the due date (unless documented extenuating circumstances warrant). Late assignments will only receive a summary comment and grade at the end of the paper, whereas assignments handed in on time will receive feedback throughout the essay, and a summary comment and grade at the end.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The Department of Political Science takes cases of plagiarism (the representation of someone else's work as your own) and violations of academic integrity (e.g. the misrepresentation of another person's words or ideas, the paraphrasing of ideas or information without identifying the source(s), using a paper writing service or having another person write your assignments, using artificial intelligence programs, misrepresenting sources) very seriously.

Cases of plagiarism and violations of academic integrity are treated as instances of serious academic misconduct and are investigated and penalized accordingly. Penalties for engaging in plagiarism and engaging in acts of academic dishonesty can include a failing grade in an assignment and/or course, or even suspension or expulsion from the College.

In order to avoid engaging in acts of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, whether intentional or accidental, please review the following resources:

- The Department of Political Science has developed a guide, "How to Avoid Plagiarism: An Introductory Guide"; see the Assignment folder. (This guide also contains information about using the Chicago citation style, so you are strongly encouraged to review it as advanced preparation for this assignment).