American Government and Politics

Research Paper
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This course requires a 5-page research paper. You are responsible for choosing your own research question based on your own interests. The final aim for this research project is for you to increase your ability to reason logically, to argue coherently, and to write correctly.

Paper Requirements

Each paper needs to be *at least* five (5) pages in length, not including the reference list. You may use Internet sources, but you must use at least eight (8) non-Internet sources. Wikipedia is a nice place to get an idea, especially if you have no clue what you are writing about. However, it is an encyclopedia—a tertiary source. As such, it cannot be the final word on anything you need to cite. You need to find a more reputable source than a general reference source. Make sure all sources are properly cited and included in the reference list, even the Internet sources. Finally, make sure the paper question(s) is (are) answered.

Steps

Introduction (November 30): [10]

The introduction provides both the hook to interest the reader in your work and the lead in to the research question. The introduction should be between one and two pages in length.

Research Question (September 14): [20]

The purpose of the research question is to frame your exploration in a thematic manner. The research question must be empirical in nature. It also must be of interest to you. For the original due date of this section, you also need to include a brief statement explaining what you hope to get out of this. This brief statement should be the seed for your introduction.

Literature Review (October 12): [70]

The literature review seeks to do two things: a) It seeks to place this research question in terms of current research. b) It seeks to find the answer to the question according to current theory. I would expect this section to exceed five pages.

Hypothesis (October 31): [20]

The hypothesis is the answer to the research question according to the current theory. It must be testable.

Operationalization (November 19): [50]

A good operationalization of the hypothesis shows a direct and unmistakable connection between the variables and concepts of the hypothesis and how those variables and concepts are to be measured. When a person reads the operationalization, there should be no question as to how

things are to be measured. I should be able to look at the operationalization and replicate your findings exactly. I would expect this section to exceed two pages.

Reference List (October 12):

This should go without mentioning. Properly format it. Use APSA style. If this is missing, the literature review and the paper is a zero. Proper citation form is also a fundamental requirement. I would *estimate* that each paragraph should have at least one citation. Make sure you cite correctly.

Final Paper (November 30): [30]

This allows you to tidy up the previous sections and make sure everything fits together in a nice, flowing manner.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the usage of someone else's work without proper citation. This is not limited to quotations. Paraphrasing someone else and not citing them is also plagiarism, as is quoting without quotation marks. Any time you use data, you need to cite the source of that data. Any time you make reference to a fact which is not common knowledge, you must cite your source. When in doubt, cite the source. If you use the same source for a series in one paragraph, you only need to cite it at the end (unless you have several quotes, in which case you need to cite each quotation). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. If you plagiarize, you fail.