

POLS 350: Persuasive research paper

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



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The Writing *Process*

Getting started

- Explore the assignment
- Make rough notes
- Pick a tentative topic



Drafting/revising

- Get feedback on your draft/revise: work on higher order concerns: structure, argument, organization

Editing

- Work on style and lower order concerns
- Proofread, consult checklist for assignment



Genre: Persuasive/argumentative
Analytic, synthetic

Length: 7 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font

Value: 30%

Due: March 30th

References: Your choice (APA, MLA, Chicago, Vancouver, etc.)

Sources: minimum of 6 academic sources



The paper will be evaluated based on:

1. the strength of the ***thesis statement***,
2. the overall ***organization*** and ***style***,
3. the ***quality of evidence*** and ***appropriateness of research***, and
4. the ***persuasiveness of argument***.



Students are required to write one **argumentative** paper on a **case study** and/or **theme** related to course topics. Your paper should

- a) carefully **define** a gender or feminist analysis,
- b) provide **background research** on your topic that **draws on scholarly literature**, and
- c) **explain** how your analysis **changes or transforms our understanding** of your case or topic.
- d) i.e., create a compelling **narrative** about your topic **and its significance**



“The purpose of this paper is to **persuade** a reader of your point of view. Therefore, you are expected to **take a stand** on an issue and **use evidence to back it up**. **Do not simply review and analyze literature on a particular topic**. Your thesis statement should be a debatable proposition – one which another person may reasonably agree or disagree.”



“You might argue that

- a gender or feminist analysis challenges conventional approaches to understanding security, militarism or conflict; or
- explain what is revealed when we take gender seriously in political science; or
- illustrate how gender is an important category of analysis for policy-making at the local, national or/and international level.”



Case studies:

- the International Criminal Court or the United Nations;
- conflict or peace-building (Burundi, Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, Chiapas, Mexico);
- a social movement (Women in Black; Women on Waves; CodePink, Femen)
- feminist responses to the TRC

Themes:

- women's anti-war/peace activism;
- wartime sexual violence;
- constructions of gender in conflict/post-conflict zones
- post/anti-colonialism



Three aspects to this:

1. **Understand** and be able to **summarize** a topic (based on course themes, theories, and/or case studies);
2. **Situate** your topic within a broader academic conversation;
3. **Take a position** on your topic

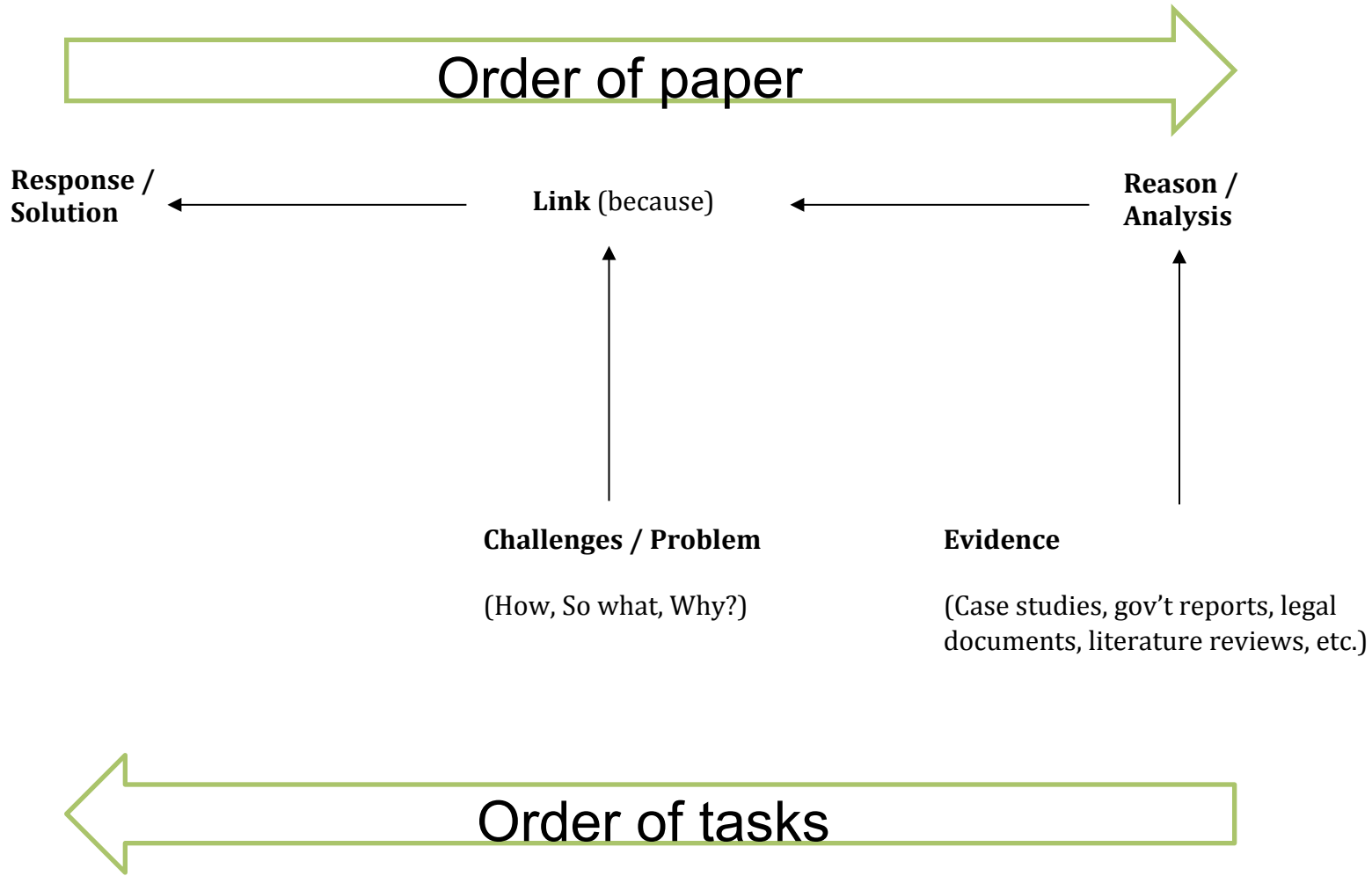
Approaches:

- **Summarize/describe** topic: what are the most important aspects for your argument?
- **Analyze**: what are the component parts?
- **Synthesize: persuade** audience of your position



Argument:

- Demonstrates knowledge of
 - Gender/feminist concepts (summary)
 - Chosen theme/case study (summary)
 - Applies course theories/concepts (analysis)
 - Reads case study through concepts (analysis)
 - Introduces and supports compelling position (synthesis)
-
- Don't attempt to cover every aspect of a topic: focus on the most *pertinent*, *compelling*, and *interesting* aspects.





Include:

- Observation (What?)
- Argument (So what?)
- Implication(s) (Now what?)

Needs to be:

- Specific/focused
- Manageable
- Interesting
- Explicit

“I argue X, because of A, B, and C.”



Introduction

- Purpose/topic/research question
- Methodology/theoretical approach
- Object(s) of study
- Thesis
- Outline

Background/literature review

- Overview of general topic/issue
- Overview/outline of research/theories

Body/sub-claims

Conclusion

- Summary
- Significance/implications/"so what?"



Brevity with clarity:

- Use active, declarative sentences
 - Avoid overly-long and complex sentences
 - Avoid passive constructions
- Avoid modifiers (adjectives, adverbs)
- Avoid emotional appeals or attempts to blatantly spin the issue/responses
- Be direct and explicit
 - “I argue that....”
 - “This shows....”
 - “Here we see....”



Ways to introduce evidence:

- Direct quotation
- Paraphrase
- Summary

Quotation: more wordy; places focus directly on text; allows you to comment on *rhetoric* and *form*; need to provide explicit *analysis*; integrate into your own sentences (avoid “dropped quotations”)

Paraphrase and summary: more concise; focuses attention on specific aspects of evidence; creates a persuasive narrative; keeps focus on *content* rather than *rhetoric*

Always (ALWAYS!) indicate when you draw on another’s ideas



Always comment directly on your evidence

- Assert
- Cite
- Explicate: always **explicitly** link your evidence to your claims



Always have a **topic sentence** that explicitly indicates what the paragraph is about, and how it fits within the larger document

Always have a **transition sentence** that connects each chunk of argument to the next:

- use transitional words/phrases
- link back to main claim or sub-claim

Transitions for purpose

For this purpose	In order to	To that end
In order that	So that	To this end

Transitions for argument or proof

Accordingly	Despite	In addition	Nevertheless	Therefore
Admittedly	Even so	In any case	Nonetheless	Thus
Although	Even though	In conclusion	Obviously	To be sure
At this level	Evidently	Indeed	Of course	Truly
Because	For	In fact	On the one	Whatever the
Besides	For the same	In light of this	hand... On	case may be
But	reason	evidence	the other hand	What's more
Certainly	Furthermore	In summary	Regardless	
Clearly, then	Granted	Meanwhile	Since	
Consequently	However	Moreover	That is	

Transitions for exemplification, illustration, addition or clarification

Additionally	For instance	More importantly	Specifically	The next part
Again	Further	Moreover	Such as	To add
Also	Furthermore	Most importantly	Take the case of	To clarify
And then	Generally	One characteristic...	That is to say	To demonstrate
As an illustration	speaking	Another characteristic	The final type	To explain
Besides	i.e., (that is)	One example...	The first	To illustrate
Besides that	In addition	another	(second, third)	To put it another
Case in point	In another case	example	category	way
Equally	In general	One kind... another	The last group	To rephrase it
important	In other words	kind	The most	What's more
Finally	In particular	One way... Another	important	
First	In the same way	way	component	
Following this	In this case	On this occasion	The most important	
further	In this situation	Point in fact	example... The	
For example	Like	Pursuing this further	next example	

Transitions for emphasis or repetition

Absolutely	Certainly	In brief	Obviously	To repeat
Always	Definitely	Indeed	Of course	Undeniably
As I have noted	Emphatically	In fact	Perennially	Undoubtedly
As I have said	Eternally	Naturally	Positively	Unquestionably
As has been noted	Extremely	Never	Surely	Without a doubt
Assuredly	Forever	Nobody denies	Surprisingly	Without reservation
By all means	In any case	No doubt	To be sure	

Transitions for comparison and contrast

Although	Despite	Likewise	hand... On the	Vis à vis
After all	Even though	Meanwhile	other hand	Where
As	However	Nevertheless	Otherwise	Whereas
Balanced against	In comparison	Nonetheless	Similarly	While
But	In contrast	Of course	Still	Yet
By comparison	In the same way	Once in a while	Though	
Compared to	In spite of	On the contrary	Unlike	
Conversely	Like	On the one	Up against	

Transitions for concession and exception

Admittedly	Granted	Nevertheless	Once in a while	Though
Although this may be true	However	Nonetheless	Perhaps	To be sure
Certainly	In spite of	Of course	Regardless	True
Despite	It is true that	Of course, it is true that	Sometimes	Yet
	Maybe		Still	

Transitions for cause and effect

Accordingly	Because	For this reason	The first (second, third) cause / effect	important cause / effect
Another cause	Consequently	On account of	Since	Therefore
Another effect	For	Since		
As a result	For that reason	So	The most	

Transitions for narration and process

After	At first	third	Meanwhile	(second, third) step
After a few hours (days, months, years)	At last	Firstly...	Nearly	The next step
After that	At the same time	secondly... thirdly	Never	The last step
Afterwards	Before	Formerly	Next	Then
Almost	Before long	Frequently	Now	Thereafter
Always	By this time	Immediately	Once	Two hours (days, months, years) later
As	Earlier	In the first place	Previously	When/While
As soon as	Eventually	In the meantime	Soon	
	Finally	Later	Subsequently	
	First... second...	Later on	The first	

Transitions for description

Above	Beyond	Inside	On one side... On the other side	The least important
Behind	In	Nearby	Outside	The most important
Below	In back of	Next to	Over	Under
Between	In front of	On		

Transitional chains

Basically... similarly... as well	In the first place... pursuing this further... finally
First(ly)... second(ly)... third(ly)...	In the light of the... it is easy to see that
Generally... furthermore... finally	In this case... in another case
In the first place... also... lastly	To be sure... additionally... lastly
In the first place... just in the same way... finally	

Transitions for conclusion or summarization

Accordingly	Finally	In final analysis	In summary	To summarize
As a result	Hence	In final consideration	Lastly	To sum up
As I have said	In brief	In general	On the whole	Therefore
As I have shown	In conclusion	In sum	Summing up	Thus
Consequently	Indeed		To conclude	

References

- Kirszner, L.G. & Mandell, S.R. (2006). *Writing first: Practice in context* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- The OWL at Purdue (2007). *Transitional devices*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/02/>
- Transition words* (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://larae.net/write/transition.html>
- The Writing Centre at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (2006). *Using transitions*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Transitions.html



- Get feedback from a “trusted reader”
 - Consider using other students in the course or the Centre for Writers
- Ask readers to read for specific purposes: thesis, structure, transitions, development of a particular paragraph or idea.
- Focus on higher-order concerns before lower-order ones



Towards the due date, switch your focus from

higher-order concerns (arrangement, arguments, evidence) to

lower-order concerns: proofreading, grammar, citation format,
grammar/spelling



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