

## POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



# COURSEWORK GUIDE

2019 Edition

Welcome to Politics and International Relations. Please take the time to read through this Guide and keep it handy as a source of guidance during your studies. Note that individual courses may vary at points from these general guidelines – follow your lecturer's guidance.

## **ESSAY SUBMISSION QUICKGUIDE**

Coursework essays and assignments are to be submitted according to the requirements of your course. Normally the essay will be uploaded to Canvas and submitted in hard copy. Your course lecturer will tell you if the essay should be submitted only to Canvas or in hard copy. In all cases the essay should undergo plagiarism checking through Turnitin.

Hard copies should be submitted to the Arts Assignment Centre, including a cover sheet generated from Canvas. For instructions on submission to the Arts Assignment Centre, see here: <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/student-space/arts-assignment-centre.html>.

Contact your tutor or lecturer if you will have difficulty meeting the deadline. An extension may be possible if you have a reason for lateness. Essays submitted late without a pre-agreed extension will be subject to penalty on the following sliding scale:

Essays submitted up to **two** days late will lose 5 marks

Essays submitted **three to five days** late will lose 10 marks

Essays submitted **six to ten days** late will lose 25 marks

Essays submitted **more than ten days** past the due submission date will not be accepted but contact your lecturer if you wish to be considered for an exception.

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to Politics and International Relations in the School of Social Sciences. As a student of Politics and International Relations you may have questions about how we operate and what is expected of you. This *Coursework Guide* will help. The University is a diverse institution, and different disciplinary areas have different requirements about matters such as coursework preparation, presentation and submission. This guide outlines the requirements of the Politics and IR discipline. This guide contains information and advice about writing and researching essays, including referencing, which will be of use to both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The webpage of Politics and IR is at <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/subjects-and-courses/politics-and-international-relations.html>, with details of courses, staff, and events.

## COURSEWORK

Coursework is **required of all students** and counts towards final grades at all levels. Although the general rules laid out in this guide apply to all undergraduate courses taught in Politics and IR, the specific coursework requirements of courses vary. For detailed information about assignment due dates, lecture topics, essay questions, reading material and assessment for a particular course, you need to refer to the individual Course Syllabus for each course you are taking. The syllabus will be available on Canvas and may also be distributed in hard copy during the first or second lecture of the semester. Coursework will almost always include formal essays but may take a variety of forms.

## READING

Reading is the most important component of any course and the key to doing well in coursework and examinations. Reading is the most powerful means available of exploring new worlds and forming or refining your own ideas, of learning what good writing is about, and of honing your own skills as an author. Once acquired, the habit of reading is never lost and it will enhance the quality of the rest of your life, regardless of what kind of work you find yourself doing in the future.

Reading is a habit all Politics students must acquire. You are expected to read widely and carefully, not only for your formal coursework, but in relation to the topic as a whole. Independent reading will equip you to succeed. Lecture notes are not a suitable source of material for essays, and are not intended to provide you with the depth and detail required for a good grade in tests and exams.

## ORGANISING YOUR TIME

Good time management is essential to success at University. You need to manage your time effectively and plan in advance to complete your assessments to the best of your abilities. University course loads are set as if a student who is enrolled full-time is spending a forty-hour week on his or her studies. One way of ensuring you use your time well is to make a timetable at the beginning of the semester that sets aside time each week to complete your readings and assessments for each course you are taking. This allows you to consider how to fit study around the other commitments in your life, and means you can avoid panic when you have deadlines that are close together.

## GETTING HELP

### TUTORS

Tutors are there to assist you in your learning. Sometimes the tutor is the lecturer; more commonly, especially at Stage I and II level, the tutor is a Graduate Teaching Assistant (a postgraduate student). If you have problems that are interfering with your academic work, let your tutor know as soon as possible. Tutorial and lecturing staff are usually available in their offices at set times called office hours. During office hours, you can drop in without an appointment to discuss any problems or questions you have about the course or coursework. If these times do not suit you, arrange an appointment by email or telephone.

### PROBLEMS OR COMPLAINTS ABOUT COURSEWORK

If you have any problems or complaints concerning your work in a particular course, you should talk to whoever tutors you in that course in the first instance. They will be happy to discuss the reasons for giving a particular grade, for instance. If there is good reason, they may re-read the essay and reconsider the grade. If you still feel that you have grounds for complaint, let your tutor know and they will take your work to the course convener (usually the lecturer). Do be aware that if the lecturer remarks your paper, they are able to give you a lower, as well as higher, mark if they feel the work warrants it. If your problem is unresolved after discussion with the lecturer in charge, or if your tutor is the lecturer in charge, and you feel that you have been dealt with unfairly, you should see the Undergraduate Advisor or the Convenor of Politics and International Relations:

<http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/schools-in-the-faculty-of-arts/school-of-social-sciences/politics-and-international-relations/key-contacts.html>

### STAFF-STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

There is a staff-student consultative committee consisting of a representative elected from each undergraduate Politics course, two staff representatives and two graduate representatives. The Committee considers any policy matters of concern to students and staff in the running of the Politics and International Relations Disciplinary Area and its teaching programmes. The Committee can make recommendations to the Disciplinary Area and elects one of its student members to be a representative on the Faculty Committee of the Faculty of Arts. The Auckland University Students Association (AUSA) runs training sessions and workshops for class representatives throughout the year and publishes a monthly newsletter which is available through the Disciplinary Area.

### EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Arts Faculty has a Maori and Pasifika Student Liaison Officer (Tuākana Mentor) who can be contacted here: [Tuakana.arts@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:Tuakana.arts@auckland.ac.nz) For information about specific Equal Opportunities services and programmes offered by the University, you may wish to consult the following websites:

- [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/arts/study-with-us/maori-and-pacific-at-the-faculty/tuakana-arts.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/arts/study-with-us/maori-and-pacific-at-the-faculty/tuakana-arts.html)
- [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/students-with-disabilities.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/students-with-disabilities.html)

## STUDENTS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

If you are unsure of your proficiency in written English, you may benefit from assistance. Much of the work you do in an Arts degree consists of reading complex prose and writing essays and other assignments. Memorisation and copying from other students or authors are not permitted; the words you express on paper must be your own. If you are to succeed in Arts, you must be confident both of your ability to comprehend written and spoken English, and of your ability to express your thoughts clearly in written English.

Applied Language Studies and Linguistics offers credit and non-credit English language proficiency courses designed to assist students from non-English speaking backgrounds to achieve success at the University. For information see [www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/subjects-and-courses/english-writing.html](http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/subjects-and-courses/english-writing.html)

The University runs a Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) programme. All first-year students are required to complete a 30-minute DELNA Screening. The programme is designed to help incoming students identify the strengths and weaknesses of their academic English and to direct them to the appropriate language support. For information please refer to the DELNA website at [www.delna.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.delna.auckland.ac.nz).

The English Language Enrichment Centre at the Kate Edgar Information Commons offers English language support in an electronic learning environment where students can meet with their own personal language advisor, utilise electronic language materials, undertake group sessions and attend workshops. For information drop in to the Centre at Level 1, room 101 of the Kate Edgar Information Commons or refer to the ELE website at: <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/about-us/electronic-learning-services>

## ASSISTANCE DEVELOPING ACADEMIC SKILLS

Many students would benefit from improving their academic skills. Usually, acquiring essay writing skills and powers of analysis and insight in any particular discipline can be a matter of practice. Stage 1 tutorials will involve some skills-based activities and instruction regarding skills such as using literature, choosing an essay question, essay planning, structuring your essay, academic honesty, referencing, etc. as they relate to the course. If you would like further assistance it is wise to contact your tutor or make use of the Student Learning Centre. The SLC runs courses on essay writing, reading and researching, and study and exam skills that may be of great help to your work. The SLC also offers one-on-one tutoring to help you perform at your best. The SLC is located on Level 3 of the Kate Edgar Information Commons, or visit the website at <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/about-us/student-learning-services>

## OTHER SOURCES OF HELP AND STUDENT SERVICES

The Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA) endeavours to represent students and advocate their interests at the University of Auckland and in the wider community. AUSA is run by students for students, enabling you to get on with why you're really at University. AUSA membership is free (and available from the Quad at the beginning of semester or from the AUSA House, 4 Alfred St) and gives you access to a range of facilities, goods and services including common room and lounge space, cafeterias and student bars, *Craccum* (the student magazine), scholarships and grants and a bookshop. Other services are personal assistance with academic problems and grievances and academic and educational representation. AUSA is governed by its Constitution

through an elected President, Executive Officers & Executive Portfolio holders (who are all students). There are 19 positions in all and elections take place annually in August. Any enrolled student who is a member of AUSA is eligible to run for a position on the Executive Committee.

<b>FINDING HELP WITHIN THE DISCIPLINARY AREA – <i>THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</i></b>
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If you have any queries, need directions, or want help in contacting staff, please feel free to visit the School of Social Sciences Administration Office on Level 4, Room 401b in the Human Sciences Building. The office is open on Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 4:30pm to provide a central administrative resource for staff and students. The Politics and International Relations Administration Office is home to the administrative staff of the discipline.

Contact information:

**Politics and International Relations Administration**  
**School of Social Sciences Office**  
**Level 4, Room 401b Human Sciences Building**  
*Phone:* (09) 373 7599 x 84870 or 82468  
*Fax:* (09) 373 7449  
*Email:* [politics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:politics@auckland.ac.nz)

**Don't let a solvable problem wreck your academic year. There are plenty of people and agencies within the University that are willing and able to help you. Remember that any problem will be more easily solved if it is identified and acted upon immediately.**

## COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The most important thing to remember about the semester's work is that you ought to use your assignments as opportunities to read and think about the questions that are set, to write as well as you can about them, and to get feedback from your tutors. Endeavour to write the best essay (or test) you can in the time you have, and then move on to the next piece of work. Completing coursework on time should be your first priority. In this section, you will find information on the requirements for your coursework. Please pay careful attention to this section to ensure your work follows all requirements (especially with respect to referencing) so that you can avoid being penalised for failure to do so correctly. There is more advice on the writing process further on in this guide.

### REQUIRED PRESENTATION OF ESSAYS

Please follow these rules (some will not apply if submission is online only):

- Use font sized 11 or 12 in a plain font. Use one and a half or double line spacing. Number each page.
- Allow a generous margin on the right side (about 5cm) for marker's comments (if hard copy).
- Type the question in full at the top of the first page. Do not abbreviate the question, substitute your own preferred title or merely cite the essay number.
- Justify your text so it aligns neatly with the left or both sides of the page. The same is not required of footnotes and bibliographies.
- Provide footnotes and a bibliography as prescribed in this Guide.
- If submitting in hard copy, make sure you have completed an Assignment Tracking Sheet downloaded from Canvas. This sheet should be stapled to the front of your work.
- Remember to submit your work to Turnitin (through Canvas.)
- You can print your essay either single- or double-sided. Secure pages with a staple.
- Keep a digital and perhaps a hard copy of the essay as records in case the original is lost.

### WORD LIMITS AND WORD COUNTS

Most essays you prepare for Politics and International Relations courses will have a set or suggested word limit. The length of essays varies between stages and between courses.

**Be sure to pay attention to the instructions of your tutor/convenor and the *Course Outline*.**

- You should aim to produce an essay of the suggested length.
- Where a word limit is imposed, you are given a *10 per cent leeway* either side of the word limit (e.g. for an essay with a set word limit of 1,500 words you may submit between 1,350 words and 1,650 words).
- You should be aware that a tutor/lecturer has the discretion to impose a penalty for essays that exceed this 10 per cent leeway.
- The bibliography does not count within the word count

- Check with the individual convenor/tutor whether footnotes are included within this word limit as practice varies from one course to another. Usually they are not included.
- Please provide an **accurate** word count on the Tracking Sheet

## TURNITIN SUBMISSION

Turnitin.com is an electronic plagiarism detection service that is used by dozens of universities world-wide. When a student's assignment is turned in to the system it is matched against millions of Internet pages, databases and a constantly increasing database of all previously and concurrently submitted assignments. Teaching staff receive a report from Turnitin that can be used as a resource to assist staff in making a judgement as to whether a student's work is plagiarised.

### UNDERSTANDING PLAGIARISM

Before you submit your assignment to Turnitin you will want to ensure that you have not plagiarised any text in your assignment. The best way to do this is to know what plagiarism is, know how to cite and reference correctly and how to paraphrase. There are many avenues for you to approach to learn correct referencing techniques: -

1. Your first port of call is your tutor – plagiarism and academic honesty will also be covered in a tutorial before first assignments are due.
2. The Student Learning Centre (SLC) located in the Kate Edgar Information Commons and at [www.library.auckland.ac.nz/about-us/student-learning-services](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/about-us/student-learning-services) has hard-copy and online resources outlining correct referencing and offers various workshops on referencing.
3. Consult the University's guidelines at [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-copyright.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-copyright.html)
4. <http://www.plagiarism.org/> provides a definition of plagiarism and numerous self-help tips on correctly citing and quoting work, paraphrasing and referencing.

### USING TURNITIN

Turnitin can be accessed for each course directly through the course Canvas page. If you cannot find the Turnitin link on the Canvas page, please contact your tutor or lecturer.

## HOW AND WHERE TO HAND IN ESSAYS

Unless you have been told by your course lecturer to submit only online, or have made an alternative arrangement with your tutor or lecturer, all essays must be submitted to the

**ARTS ASSIGNMENT  
CENTRE  
and submitted to Turnitin  
*before 4pm on the due date.***

Your essay must include an Assignment Tracking Sheet downloaded from Canvas, properly completed and stapled to the front of your essay.

Essays will be collected from the box at **4pm** on the due date and delivered to the marker. Any essays received after that time will be **marked as late and may be penalised**.

**Please do not leave essays under doors or place them in the hands of others for delivery.** Essays

will either be handed back during tutorials (or by arrangement from the tutor during his or her office hours) or will be made available at the end of semester for collection.

## REFERENCING YOUR WORK

Politics and International Relations courses largely require the use of either Chicago or APA referencing. Some courses permit any recognized referencing style. In all cases, please be consistent i.e. use Chicago, or APA, or whatever throughout the piece of coursework and don't chop and change between them.

A very good resource that will tell you how to reference can be found here:  
<http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=tools>

## GRADES, PENALTIES, AND EXTENSIONS

### GRADES AND MARKS IN POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Each assignment during the semester and each separate examination question at the end of the semester is graded on a system of letters and percentage numbers. The following scale applies to all stages of all courses and to final overall grades as well as to individual pieces of work. For your final overall result, you will receive a letter grade only.

Pass Grades			Fail Grades
<b>A+ 90-100</b>	<b>B+ 75-79</b>	<b>C+ 60-64</b>	<b>D+ 45-49</b>
<b>A 85-89</b>	<b>B 70-74</b>	<b>C 55-59</b>	<b>D 40-44</b>
<b>A- 80-84</b>	<b>B- 65-69</b>	<b>C- 50-54</b>	<b>D- 0-39</b>

Coursework grades are posted on Canvas for every undergraduate course. You should check Canvas to make sure that your official coursework grade is what you think it is, particularly if you have not yet picked up assignments or tests, or confirmed your final mark with your tutor.

### WHAT TO DO ABOUT BAD GRADES

You should discuss the essay or test with your **tutor** if:

- Your mark is C- or below;
- Your mark is seriously below your own expectations and you cannot see where you have gone wrong;
- You do not understand the marker's comments, or you consider them unjustified.

Please note that the final examination result is not open to discussion and that students are *forbidden by the University of Auckland regulations to approach examiners while marking is in progress*. You may, however, apply through the Examinations Office for a recount. A recount is exactly that; examination scripts are not re-marked under any circumstances. You may request your examination script back, but no comments are made on the scripts.

## PENALTIES FOR LATE COURSEWORK

Late submission of coursework is possible, without explanation, so long as you are ready to accept a penalty by losing marks. It is better to submit late than not submit at all. However, it is better to submit on time and not be penalized a letter grade or more. See also the 'Extensions' section below.

**Submit your work by the deadline by the correct time (usually 4pm) to avoid penalties.**

### ***Turnitin submission and late penalties***

- All undergraduate students must submit their work to Turnitin.

#### ***Hard copy but have not submitted to Turnitin?***

- If you hand in a hard copy without submitting the work to Turnitin the work will not be counted as submitted and the penalty system will apply from then on.
- If you have trouble submitting to Turnitin you should contact your tutor as soon as possible to notify them of the problem. Ensure you still submit your hard copy on time and submit to Turnitin as soon as you can.

#### ***Submitted to Turnitin but no hard copy?***

If you submit to Turnitin but do not submit the hard copy (if one is required) you will be penalised as if you have not submitted your work.

### ***Penalisation policy for work submitted late***

The following penalties normally apply. Note, however, that specific courses may have their own penalisation policies for late work. Check with your lecturer or tutor if in doubt.

- Any work not submitted as instructed by the deadline will be considered late
- Penalties – a loss of marks – will be applied in a sliding scale as follows:
  1. Essays submitted up to **two** days late will lose 5 marks
  2. Essays submitted **three to five days** late will lose 10 marks
  3. Essays submitted **six to ten days** late will lose 25 marks
  4. Essays submitted **more than ten days** past the due submission date will not normally be accepted and the student will be given a 0% mark for the essay. But contact your course lecturer if you wish to be given special consideration and see the note below.

The essay box is not cleared over the weekend, so if your essay is due on a Friday and you hand it in on Saturday or Sunday, it will be considered three days late (i.e. you will lose 10 marks)

**NB:** In exceptional cases, the course lecturer may allow a piece of work submitted after ten days to receive a mark of up to 50 to pass, should the work deserve it.

If you are unsure about any aspect of this policy in relation to your work talk to your tutor, or the course lecturer if there is no tutor for your course.

## EXTENSIONS

If you have a problem with completing your work on time because of personal or health issues then you should seek an extension in **advance** of the deadline from your **tutor** (or where there are no tutors, the course lecturer/convenor).

**An extension where possible will be granted:**

1. Where there is 'good cause', backed up by **documentary evidence** if required by the tutor (or convenor).
2. If the tutor (or convenor) authorises an extension, it is entirely at their discretion, and it is also completely at their discretion to decide how long an extension to grant.

**Good cause** covers genuine cases which are not related to your academic work, such as sudden illness (supported by medical certificate), death in the family, official leave of absence or similar circumstances.

**Bad cause** includes reasons such as the following:

➤ 'I had lots of other essays to submit/other commitments at the same time.'

One of the key study skills you must learn is time management. You must expect that deadlines will coincide and plan your research and writing time well in advance.

➤ 'I couldn't get the books from the library.'

The solution here is not to leave work to the last minute. Convenors make every effort to ensure that texts are available in sufficient numbers, but inevitably there is a pressure on material as the deadline looms. If there is a genuine problem with availability of source materials contact the tutor (or convenor) well in advance of the deadline.

➤ 'I couldn't get on the computers/internet/use the printers/use the copier.'

You must expect that problems like this will arise, particularly towards the end of the semester. Allow good time to do both the necessary research and to prepare the finished assessment document.

➤ 'I accidentally deleted my file/lost my essay before handing it in.'

It is your responsibility to look after your own work. It is good practice to keep back-up copies of important documents, email your essay to yourself and save the email and always make a copy of finished print-outs.

➤ 'I sent you an email/left a message on your answer phone asking for an extension.'

If you apply for an extension, you must ensure that you talk to the tutor responsible for granting that extension and have their signature on the extension form. It is your responsibility to ensure that the request for extension has been properly received.

➤ 'I couldn't make it in that day.'

It is your responsibility to arrange to submit your work early if you will not be able to hand in your work on the due date.

**NB:** Extensions should normally be applied for before the deadline. In exceptional cases, extensions may be granted after the deadline at the discretion of the **course convenor** (who may consult your tutor). Talk to your tutor (or course convenor) if you are unsure whether your circumstances warrant an extension.

## COURSEWORK ADVICE

### WRITING ESSAYS: SUBSTANCE

The study of politics at the tertiary level requires an analytical, rather than a descriptive, approach to essays and exam writing. Most of your coursework consists of writing essays, whether these are set assignments or essay answers in tests and examinations.

The best way to think about an essay is as an act of intelligent and informed communication. Your task, as author, is to explain the set topic to the reader and often, to offer considered judgements about that topic. Your essay should offer a well-thought out and carefully constructed answer to the posed question that is informed by relevant scholarly literature. You might be explaining the content of a particular thinker's political theory, the attributes of a particular form of democratic organisation, or the foreign policy of a particular state. Or, more commonly, you might be assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a particular thinker's theory, arguing for the superiority of one form of democratic organisation over another, or convincing the reader that a particular state's foreign policy is flawed. Most work requires you to critically engage with a topic, rather than just describe some aspects of a concept.

An argument might be a series of generalisations or propositions, supported by evidence or reasoning and connected in a logical manner that leads to a justified conclusion. Think carefully about how you can use the structure of your essay to build a clear, logical argument in response to the essay question. Or your argument might take the form of an analogy, when for instance, it is suggested that the position of women in New Zealand is like that of Maori. Of course, you then need to say why and in what ways the position of women in New Zealand is like that of Maori. It is not enough to assert a likeness without justification, to merely present relevant information about a subject or repeat other people's arguments. Nor is it enough to answer a question with broad generalisations, such as 'women in New Zealand are oppressed', without providing supporting evidence or reasoning.

It is necessary to be critical. Being critical doesn't necessarily mean judging someone or something harshly. It means that you must make an intelligent evaluation of the material and come to a considered judgement. Being critical can have different meanings in different kinds of courses: in courses dealing with the politics of particular countries or groups of people, for instance, you might be expected to be critical in the sense of determining whether the evidence available justifies the conclusions that are drawn from it; in courses dealing with political theory, on the other hand, you might be expected to question the most basic assumptions involved in the material.

If, for example, you are asked why Plato thought that philosopher kings should rule, you will need briefly to explain to the reader what Plato thought about philosophy, about philosophers, and about the kind of rule which was most beneficial to states and why he thought philosophers, and not other people, were best equipped to provide that rule. If you are asked whether Plato was correct in believing that philosopher kings should rule, you will need to explain all of the above, and also critically evaluate Plato's argument. You might think that Plato was wrong about what constituted the best form of rule for a state, and offer reasons for this. Or you might think that he was right, but that philosophers are not the people best equipped to provide such rule, and point out why his reasoning was faulty. What you should not do is simply offer 'personal' or 'intuitive' opinions without any argument. It is not, for example, a persuasive criticism of Plato to say that 'Plato was wrong because he was an ancient Greek' or 'Plato was wrong because he wasn't a democrat'. These are statements of opinion which may well be true, but which, in the absence of further explanation, are unconvincing. What is it about being an ancient Greek that makes Plato wrong? What's wrong with

not being a democrat? You must, if you are to convince the reader, present arguments, rather than bare assertions.

You must avoid bias as much as possible in your essay. Bias refers to prejudices, preconceptions or predispositions that distort your capacity to examine and assess political material in an impartial manner. It may result in any of the following practices: making use only of writers who pander to your prejudices; ignoring or suppressing contradictory data or alternative views; or presenting dogmatic views or opinions that are not supported by evidence or argument. The best way to avoid bias is to read widely and to critically evaluate your own political stance or intellectual approach.

Remember: there are no 100% 'correct' essays in Politics and International Relations; rather there are good essays that directly address their chosen topic in a reasoned, logical argument that is supported by evidence.

### CHOOSING A TOPIC

Most courses offer several topics for any assignment. Quite early on, you should choose one of these and begin working on it. This means that you will be able to prepare the essay without a frantic last-minute rush. Consider your choice of topic carefully and do enough general reading to gain an awareness of which subject areas you are likely to find interesting. You should also take the availability of resources into account. Physical books may be difficult to get hold of at short notice and even e-books may have a licence that restricts access to a limited number of readers at a time. And don't under-estimate how much time will be required in actually reading the books and articles you have.

### ANALYSING THE QUESTION

Having chosen a topic, you should work out what the question is asking you, and what you will need to know in order to answer it. What does the topic ask you to do? Is a direct question asked? Is there a quotation used? What relationship does this have to the topic? In other words, it is a good idea to begin by carefully examining the operative words and key concepts in the topic.

Many topics will ask you to *compare*, *contrast*, *analyse*, *discuss*, *critically appraise* or *evaluate* various things. Make sure you understand what these words mean. If you are asked to compare one form of government to another, you clearly need to look at both forms and discuss their similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses, in relation to one another and in relation to any principles which they share, or practices in which they engage.

Imagine choosing the following topic: 'Critically appraise the arguments put forward by the opponents of MMP'. This question is asking you to evaluate the criticisms made of a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system by those who opposed its introduction. You should, therefore, read as widely as possible about MMP, in comparison to other proportional and non-proportional electoral systems and make up your own mind what its strengths and weaknesses are in relation to those other systems. You should also read the criticisms of MMP, both from those who advocate a first-past-the-post system and from those who advocate a different form of proportional representation, and then decide which criticisms are justified. You should read as many scholarly sources as possible - including international sources - and expose yourself to as many points of view as possible. You should ask yourself if all these criticisms are valid in the context of New Zealand, so you will also need to know something about the broader political culture within which an electoral system operates, and how this context might affect different electoral practices. When you know what you think about the subject - that is, when you have come to a considered judgement - you should write

an essay which explains to the reader which of the criticisms most commonly made by opponents of MMP are accurate and which are mistaken. You should not merely list the attributes of the first-past-the post system or of MMP, or simply recite all the things which you think are good about MMP. Nor should you simply repeat all the things that everyone has said about MMP and about first-past-the post, without offering an evaluation of those claims.

## RESEARCHING THE QUESTION

To secure a good grade in any Politics and International Relations essay, students must research purposefully and widely. Effective researching depends on knowing what to look for. Always keep in mind the precise question to be answered and read to answer that question.

The reading requirements are of course related to the nature of the course and of the topic. Some topics may demand a more detailed analysis of a small number of texts. Nevertheless, it is not usually sufficient to read only one or two sources on a particular topic. Without wide reading, you will be unable to evaluate the quality or usefulness of what you have read. Bear in mind that most books do not need to be read from cover to cover, and that journal articles can be excellent sources. Be selective about what to read. If an abstract is provided, use that as a guide to choose relevant material. Skim through material and focus on those parts that are directly relevant to the topic. Consult the content page and the index of a book to see if and where it deals with the topic that you researching.

Most lecturers issue comprehensive reading lists to help students choose material, and also direct students, in the first instance, to what they feel are the most valuable sources on the topic in question. (These will be available on the course Canvas page.) If you are directed towards particular sources, read these first. Further references may be compiled by using the bibliographies in textbooks, looking up the subject index on the Library Catalogue, at [www.library.auckland.ac.nz/guides/arts/politics-and-international-relations](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/guides/arts/politics-and-international-relations), by browsing through online journals and databases and by consulting the library staff.

Anahera Morehu is the Politics and International Relations Subject Librarian and is happy to provide help with using the Library, designing search strategies, using electronic and print resources, getting the most out of electronic databases, and finding relevant information online. Simona is available by email at [a.morehu@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.morehu@auckland.ac.nz). You are advised to prepare your own research plan prior to contacting Anahera.

If you have questions about suitable source material, please contact your tutor for advice.

## TAKING NOTES

The important thing to remember about collecting information from various sources is to be systematic and organised. You need to be very careful to document where your information comes from, in order to abide by the Politics' referencing requirements and avoid plagiarism. Before you begin researching, make sure to use the referencing guides mentioned above (Chicago or APA) to find out what information you need to note from each source in order to reference it correctly in your essay. To fill a notebook with vast amounts of randomly collected data or with detailed notes on each writer's chapter or article is useless because it then becomes very difficult to organise this into coherent sections before writing the essay. The end result is likely to be confusion: you have read widely and each author says something different about the topic. Everyone has his or her own system of compiling information. The following method is one suggestion for approaching your research, but you should find a style that suits you:

- read a couple of texts relevant to the topic without taking detailed notes;
- think about the major themes of the topic that this reading highlights;
- head separate pages with the title of each theme or section (new sections can be added later);
- head another page or document 'Bibliography' or start an Endnote library with the details of each book and article consulted; (the Library offers courses on how to use Endnote – we recommend you learn how to use this valuable electronic referencing tool);
- as each book or article is read, enter your thoughts, in your own words, about it on the page reserved for the appropriate section, making a note of where the information came from;
- when the research is completed, all the information will be arranged by section (If necessary, this can be further divided into sub-sections)

The major advantage of this system is that it provides organised, manageable notes at the time of writing.

## WRITING THE OUTLINE

Before writing your essay, you should sit down and think. What is the question asking you to do? Has your reading suggested an answer? Develop a workable outline of the major arguments and points you wish to make and ensure that the outline will answer the question you have been asked.

The following is an outline that indicates the major items in the essay:

- **Introduction:** This section should introduce the topic to be discussed by preparing the reader for what is to follow. Keep it concise and informative. You may introduce the topic in a variety of ways, but it is important to use this section to indicate the limits of the study and how the topic is dealt with in the essay. Are there important dates within which your study is set? Are there ambiguous or controversial terms that you need to define at the outset? Is there a particular focus that your study takes? You may need to set the topic in a meaningful background by, for example, describing the setting of the study or putting the question into its historical perspective. You should summarise briefly the overall theme or argument of the essay, indicating the main points to be made and perhaps the order in which they are to be presented. Do not use the introduction to reiterate the question or to inform the reader that you intend to answer it.
- **Body:** This will be an attempt at a comprehensive and coherent treatment of the topic as stated in the introduction, and will consist of a series of major paragraphs that will develop in a logical sequence. Pay particular attention to:
  - answering the question;
  - supporting major generalisations with appropriate evidence (factual information, statistics, examples, textual information, logical reasoning);
  - using terms with precision;
  - examining the implications of statements made;
  - placing each main point of your essay in a single paragraph;
  - ordering your points (and therefore paragraphs) logically to build your argument
- **Conclusion:** This should briefly summarise the argument or theme and indicate possible conclusions. Remember that the conclusion should be neither a regurgitation of the body of the essay, nor a departure from the main themes of the essay into a new area of discussion. You should not introduce any new points or arguments in the conclusion. It should be short, unambiguous and convincing.

## WRITING THE FIRST DRAFT

Try to complete the first draft in one or two unbroken sittings. An essay written this way is more likely to be compact, clear and coherent than if it is written in a number of disconnected bursts. At this stage, the main task is getting the ideas down on paper, rather than achieving the best possible wording. Expression can be corrected when writing the final drafts. You will probably be on a strict timetable - you are likely to be writing an assignment every two weeks - but after the first draft is completed, try to set it aside for a little while, so that you can reassess your arguments before you write the final draft.

## WRITING THE FINAL DRAFT

Begin by re-reading the first draft. You may decide to re-cast the essay in the light of new perspectives and ideas developed from this critical appraisal. Then write out the final version of the essay, paying particular attention to the following:

- presenting a consistent, logical argument which answers the questions asked; that is, ensure that each paragraph is related to the central argument, and related to the paragraphs before and after it;
- ensuring that the expression is clear and unambiguous and that 'padding' and irrelevance has been avoided;
- adhering to the formal conditions for the presentation of essays

As well as this Coursework Guide, you may wish to consult the following sources:

### For politics and international relations essays:

Scott, Gregory M. and Stephen M. Garrison. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, Prentice-Hall, 2000.

Schmidt, Diane E. *Writing in Political Science: a Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2000.

Biddle, Arthur W., Kenneth M. Holland, and Toby Fulwiler. *Writer's Guide: Political Science*. Lexington, Mass., D.C. Heath, 1987.

All these books are in the General Library at 808.06632: check the shelf for others.

### For social sciences essays:

Galvan, Jose L. *Writing Literature Reviews: a Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2nd ed. Glendale, Pyczak Publishing, 2004. *General Library 300.7 G18*

Cuba, Lee, *A Short Guide to Writing about Social Science*. 4th ed. New York, Longman, 2002. *General Library 808.0663 C96 2002*

Northey, Margot, Lorne Tepperman, and James Russell. *Making Sense: Social Sciences: a Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 2nd ed. Don Mills, Ont., Oxford University Press, 2002. *General Library 808.0663 N87*

Redman, Peter. *Good Essay Writing: a Social Sciences Guide*. 2nd ed. London, Sage, 2001. *General Library 808.0663 R31*

Pyczak, Fred, and Randall R. Bruce. *Writing Empirical Research Reports*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles, CA, Pyczak Publishing, 2000. *General Library 808.066 P99*

## WRITING ESSAYS: STYLE

### APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL STYLE FOR ACADEMIC ESSAYS

#### Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviations, acronyms and symbols should be avoided in essays. Readily understood acronyms (US, NZ, ANZAC) are acceptable in tests and exams, but should not be used in essays unless the full titles of the organisations or institutions are cumbersome. If you do use acronyms in essays, always write the title out in full the first time you use it, with the acronym in brackets, as in: *Australia-New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC)*. Terms such as *for example* and *that is* should be written in full, and *per cent* is better than %. Avoid using *etcetera*: it is usually dropped in to cover for lazy thinking. Never use the ampersand (&) in place of the word *and*. Avoid using the forward slash (/) where either *or* or *and* should be; never use *and/or*.

#### Numerals and dates

In general, numbers from one to nine should be spelt out, but those above should not. When writing dates it is normal to use figures, especially for years. If you are specifying day, month and year, use the form: *14 April 2004*, rather than writing it out in full. If you are only citing a month, you can use either *14 April* or *the fourteenth of April*. Don't use *14th April*. If you are discussing a particular decade, use figures: *the 1990s*. Where a number (or date) begins a sentence it should be spelt out in full.

#### Underlining, italics and bold typeface

Underlining and italic script are used to indicate the same things. Use underlining instead of italics if you are handwriting essays, or if you do not have a printer capable of rendering them properly. Never use both in the same piece of work; to do so is redundant. Italics should only be used to indicate the titles of whole publications and non-English (for example, Latin or French) words. Maori words do not require italics unless you are using them in a linguistic discussion.

Avoid the use of italics, underlining, or bold typeface for the purpose of conveying emphasis. The importance of particular words or phrases ought to be made obvious by the way in which you construct your argument.

#### Quotations

- All quotations should correspond exactly with the originals in wording, spelling, and punctuation. If you depart from the original in any way, you must properly indicate this (as below).
- Use single inverted commas for quotations shorter than three lines:

Life in the state of nature was, according to Hobbes, 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'.

- Indent quotations that are longer than three lines, and single space them. Do not enclose indented quotations in inverted commas, and do not use a different size or style of typeface:

Hobbes believed that the natural condition of humankind was a state of war:

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell onely but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

- Use double inverted commas for quotations within quotations:

As Robertson has pointed out, 'the Finance Act allowed "disloyal" public servants to be dismissed.'

- Enclose interpolations (inserted comments, explanations or additions) within square brackets:

'Lee's health had recovered by May [1935] and he again took to the road'.

- Indicate omissions within a sentence by three dots:

'The President...shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanours'.

- Omissions including the end of a sentence should be indicated by four dots, that is, including the absent full stop:

'In 1874 he proposed a scheme for settling Vancouver Island.... Later he published a denial of the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company over the island.'

- To show omission at the end of a sentence use four dots with a space before the first:

'Two years later he published a denial of the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company ....'

- Show omission at the beginning of a quotation only when it is necessary to emphasize the incompleteness of a passage.
- Do not add your own punctuation to any quoted material, or modernise spelling or usage. If an oddity occurs in the text which the reader is likely to perceive as an error in transcription use *sic* (meaning: it was expressed just so), enclosed in square brackets, immediately after the oddity to reassure the reader that the text has been faithfully reproduced. Use *sic* sparingly, and only when you are genuinely convinced that the reader may be confused by the original material.

'...all the noble ladies and all the boanie [sic] lasses who ... have as good a title to all the benefits of the mention'd fundamental national rights as the men can pretend to'.

- Hint: **Where to put the full stop:** If the full stop is part of the quoted sentence, include it *within* the quotation marks (e.g. 'This is a quoted passage.'). If there is no full stop in the sentence you are quoting, then the full stop should appear *outside* the quotation marks (e.g. 'This is a quoted passage'.) (Note: This also applies where other marks of final termination are used "? , !" etc.).

### Paragraphs, headings and lists

An Arts essay should consist of a number of paragraphs. A paragraph is a cluster of inter-related ideas. It is not normally a single sentence. To indicate a new paragraph, either miss a line or indent the first line of the new paragraph. Do not do both – you should choose one style and be consistent throughout your essay. Some students have taken to starting each sentence on a new line. This serves only to distract the reader and to severely disrupt the continuity of the argument.

For the most part, you are required to present essays rather than technical reports. Some lecturers (but not all) discourage the use of lists or subheadings in undergraduate essays, especially within a short (1500 word) essay. Some subject areas lend themselves more readily to such a format than others. If you wish to use subheadings, bullet points or numbered points, only do so if they are appropriate and use them with moderation. Check with your tutor or lecturer if you are unsure.

**Appendices** may be used, but ought to be used sparingly, only when appropriate.

## GRAMMAR

Grammar is the art of understanding the relationship between words in a language. It incorporates punctuation, syntax, spelling and, in some cases, vocabulary. One way to think about grammar is as a set of rules that govern the way in which prose is written and read. If the writer transgresses the rules, literate readers will be left bewildered, because they will be obeying a set of instructions that do not make sense to them. If you believe that correct grammar is dispensable, you are wrong. Exercising creativity within any medium is only possible after you have mastered that medium. Only after an author has demonstrated a reliable grasp of grammar will she be freed, in the reader's mind, to creatively break those rules in the interests of artistic style. Good grammar is essential to success in any Arts subject. Grammatical errors impede successful communication and give a negative impression of the ability, intelligence and education of the author. These errors will always result in you getting a worse mark than you would if you didn't commit them. If they appear in sufficient quantity the essay will fail because it will be incomprehensible to the reader. The essence of good writing is clarity. Clarity can only be achieved by obeying the rules that govern the English language and by being careful in your deployment of words. Below are some of the 'problem areas' of English grammar and usage. If you are having trouble with using grammar correctly, it may be a good idea to seek help from the Student Learning Centre.

## SYNTAX

Syntax is the arrangement of words into sentences. A sentence is a grammatically complete unit which begins with a capital letter and ends with a full-stop, question mark or exclamation mark. A complete sentence normally requires three components: subject, object and verb. The subject is who or what acts, the verb is the action and the object is that which is acted upon: *Locke wrote a treatise on government. He argued that government was based on contract.*

In some sentences, the subject-verb-object order cannot be changed without disturbing the meaning, as in the following: *A treatise on government wrote Locke.* In other sentences, the meaning will remain intact: *Government was based on contract, he argued.*

Complex sentences (which may also include subordinate clauses) require the same three components: *Locke, in his treatise on government, used the 'state of nature' motif formerly employed by Hobbes in order to argue that government derived its authority from an original contract, rather than from divine right.*

The following is not a grammatically correct sentence: *Locke in his treatise on government argued.* This is an incomplete sentence. There is no object, only a subject (*Locke*) and a verb (*argued*).

What did Locke argue? *Using the 'state of nature', the government derived its authority from an original contract.* This is what is known as a 'dangling' or 'unrelated' participle: the verb *using* has become detached from its subject *Locke*, and wrongly attached to the noun *government*. But it is Locke, not government, who uses the state of nature. This is a common error made when participles of verbs are used to introduce a phrase. Sometimes, instead of being attached to the wrong noun, the participle is left truly dangling, without any subject at all: *Lying in the sun, it could have been summer.* Who, or what, was lying in the sun?

If you have difficulty with complex sentences, don't use them. There is nothing wrong with simple sentences. In fact, reasonably short sentences are often preferable to lengthy ones. Psychologists report that the desirable maximum length for a sentence is twenty-three words – too much longer and both author and reader are in danger of getting lost. Very long sentences by bad writers are often made up of many complete sentences, linked by commas. This is grammatically dubious and difficult to read. When in doubt, follow the rule of using one sentence for one idea.

## CAPITAL LETTERS

The first letter of a sentence is a capital letter. Other than that, only proper nouns (names of people or specific things) are given a capital letter. Where titles and institutions have a specific reference they should be capitalised, as in *the President, George Bush, Congress, Parliament* and *Cabinet*. If you are talking generally about *presidents, prime ministers, governments* or *authors*, use lower-case letters. Do not capitalise the first letter of common nouns unless they are part of a title: *Students at the University of Auckland are expert grammarians. She hopes to return to university next year.* Do not write in capitals and do not use capitals for emphasis: *I told you NOT to do that; It is important to be Honest and to have Integrity.* If you *must* add emphasis, use italics (or underlining). You should also capitalise the first word and all the principal words in English titles of publications.

## PUNCTUATION

A **full stop** always follows a sentence (including footnotes), *except* where:

- The sentence is in the form of a question, in which case it is followed by a **question mark**: *What role has the Treaty of Waitangi played in New Zealand politics?*
- The sentence is in the form of an exclamation, in which case it is followed by an **exclamation mark**: *The Treaty has been broken!*

(Note: Questions, rhetorical or otherwise, ought to be used sparingly in academic essays, and exclamations should be avoided altogether).

The **semicolon** is usually used:

- to link grammatically complete sentences together, where those sentences are closely related in terms of meaning: *MMP was widely criticised; the criticisms did not, however, prevent the public from voting for it.*
- instead of a comma, to separate the items of a list after a colon, when the items are of some length: *Criteria I would expect to emerge would include: the working of the electoral system; the extent to which important decisions are taken by elected bodies; the representation of women; tino rangatiratanga (Maori self-determination); the use of referendums; general belief in the working of democracy; and the provision of good information on political matters.*

The **colon** is used in the following cases:

- to introduce a (long indented) quotation:  
*McCrystal has demonstrated the degree to which Astell's discussion of marriage was inflected by her high flying Tory principles:*

*Whereas Wollstonecraft extended revolutionary discourse to women and claimed rights for them, Astell used women's lack of rights to prove that Lockean discourse was wrong.*

- to present information which amplifies or explains that which has gone before:  
*Only one head of state objected to the declaration: John Major.*

- to present a series of points:  
*These smaller states are more properly described as 'peripheral': Japan, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, and Israel.*

The **comma** is usually used:

- To separate words, or items, in a series:

*Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, Hume and Mill were all British political philosophers.*

*She typed the last word of her bibliography, saved the file, turned off the computer and went to bed with a book, a bottle of whisky and a battered teddy bear.*

Hint: Use commas before “and” and “or” in a series of three or more: ‘England, Scotland, and Wales’.

- To separate or mark subordinate clauses in sentences. If you use a comma to interrupt a sentence, you must follow the interruption with another comma before completing the sentence: *Contract theory, influential during the seventeenth century, was discredited by Hume in the eighteenth.*

*Imperfect though it was, the essay was complete.*

Hint: do not use the comma to separate two complete sentences; use a semicolon.

The **hyphen**:

- A hyphen is used to compound adjectives: ‘*nineteenth-century imperialism*’. A hyphen is not used where the first element of the compound is an adverb: ‘*rapidly increasing tensions*’.
- Wherever their position in a sentence, words should be hyphenated if they would be ambiguous or awkward otherwise.

The **apostrophe** is mostly used in only two cases:

- To indicate *possession* and other relationships, so *the progress of society* is *society’s progress*. If a singular subject ends in *s*, the apostrophe and *s* may be added as usual, or the apostrophe may be added without the addition of another *s*. So *the theory of Thomas Hobbes* can be *Hobbes’s theory* or *Hobbes’ theory*. If a plural subject ends in anything other than *s*, the rule is the same as for a singular subject, so *the room of the women* is *the women’s room*. If a plural subject ends in *s*, the apostrophe is added without the addition of another *s*, so *the progress of societies* is *societies’ progress*.
- To indicate *missing letters*, especially when using contractions, so *do not* becomes *don’t*, *was not* becomes *wasn’t* and *it is* becomes *it’s*. Placing the apostrophe between the two words which have been joined as in *do’nt* and *was’nt* is wrong. Contractions are best used sparingly in essays.

The fact that it ends in *s* is not a necessary or sufficient reason for a word to have an apostrophe. Do not add an apostrophe to a word just because the word ends in *s*. *See’s* and *apricot’s* are wrong. Pronominal possessives (words like *theirs*, *ours*, *its*, *hers* etc.) do not carry a possessive apostrophe. Therefore one writes *the painting’s quality* but *its quality*; *the students’ argument was convincing* but *theirs was a convincing argument*.

Apostrophes can be used to indicate plurals of individual letters, words and numbers: *it takes two l’s in the past tense*; *she uses too many and’s and but’s*; *he writes his 7’s in the continental way*; *the*

1980's. They are also sometimes used to indicate plurals in abbreviations: *MP's*. These usages are falling out of fashion and given the widespread confusion over the use of apostrophe, you would be wiser to avoid its more arcane manifestations unless they are as natural to you as breathing.

## PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun to designate a person or a thing which has already been mentioned or can be gleaned from the context.

A common mistake is to use interrogative pronouns (*who, what, which*) and demonstrative pronouns (*this, that, it*) without making it clear which noun they are standing in for, or, in some cases, without referring to a noun at all. The following sentences, for example, are confusing:

- *Of which, in regard to opinion, if there were differences in, or displays of criticism for an individual, or group's unarmful conduct this was not sufficient to order ceasing or punishment of that.* Of which what? Order ceasing or punishment of what?
- *The growth of urbanisation and industrialisation provided new problems in crime and development issues, which current government systems were ill-equipped to deal with, and which were also inefficient and inconsistent in action.* Was it the current government systems, the new problems in crime or the development issues which were inefficient and inconsistent in action?

Avoid this kind of imprecision in writing. Make sure that pronouns are always unambiguously referring to nouns. Hint: avoid over-using pronouns; repeat nouns to prevent ambiguity. Compare, for instance: *Locke was writing after Hobbes and knew his ideas were original* with *Locke was writing after Hobbes and knew Hobbes's ideas were original*.

One other pronoun problem can sometimes be using plural pronouns to designate singular nouns or vice versa. If the pronoun is standing in for a singular noun, the pronoun should normally be singular. However, it is now generally accepted that resort may be made to plural personal pronouns in an effort to avoid sexist language. For tips on non-sexist language, see below.

## GENDER

### How should you use gender-specific language?

It's important to use accurate language concerning gender, so that your reader clearly understands your meaning. Here are some helpful rules:

- Only use 'men' and 'women' when you specifically mean only those groups. Otherwise use terms like *people, persons, men and women*.

With pronouns:

- If you mean specifically only men: use *he/his/him*
- If you mean specifically only women: use *she/her/her*
- If you mean men and women, or you don't want to specify which gender you're referring to, you have a few options:
  - It's now accepted practice to use *they, them* and *their*, to cover all genders – you can use them in the singular, to replace he and she, etc. This is usually the least clumsy option.
  - Use *he/she, his/her, him/her*; or *he or she, his or her, him or her*.
  - Use masculine pronouns (*he, his, him*) in one paragraph, and feminine (*she, her, her*) in the next. Alternate them paragraph by paragraph. Your reader will understand that

you don't mean to specify a particular gender.

- When you are quoting or reporting anybody else, including scholars and philosophers of Politics, don't change their language, even if it doesn't follow these rules. Quote it as it was written.

## PREPOSITIONS

A preposition is a part of speech which marks the relationship between a noun or a noun equivalent, and the rest of the sentence. Certain prepositions are appropriate to certain words; you may not pick and choose them at random. So it is *similar to* and *different from*; one may not *differentiate of* or *on*, but only *between* or *among*, and then only when there are at least two things to *differentiate between* or *among*; one may *differentiate* something, but it must be *from* something else; *complexity* is a feature *of* something, not a feature *between* things; one *proposes* or *suggests that*; one *believes that* or *believes in* and *argues for* but one does not *advocate for*; one merely advocates. One *disagrees with* but *disapproves of*; something might have *implications for*, but it cannot have *implications on* or *to* anything; one does *harm to*, not *upon* or *at* others and one cannot *interfere of* anything; only *with* or *in* things.

## VOCABULARY AND SPELLING

A precise and correct vocabulary is essential if you are to achieve clarity in your essays. Words in the English language have fixed, if multiple and contestable, meanings. You may not alter these meanings arbitrarily to suit your own purposes. Words also have fixed usages. You may not alter these usages at random. There are rules in the English language which govern the transformation of words into other kinds of words. You may not transgress these rules by adding bits and pieces to a word for no reason at all, or in order to make it into another word.

Do not use words:

- when you do not understand what they mean or what part of speech they represent;
- when your main motive for using them is to make yourself sound more intelligent and learned;
- when you have changed an existing word to suit your purposes without any idea of whether or not the resulting word is part of the English language;
- when you do not know how to spell them correctly

Using a thesaurus or a dictionary can be useful for checking spelling and meaning. Do not use a thesaurus or a dictionary to artificially extend your vocabulary. Word usage in English is subtle and is learned through practice. If a word is not part of your own vocabulary, a dictionary - or more particularly, a thesaurus - may lead you to believe that it is synonymous with the term you are seeking to replace. Often, it will not be an exact synonym. Sometimes, even if it is, it will sound odd because it is not customarily used in the way you wish to use it. If using a thesaurus leads you into these errors, do not use a thesaurus.

Avoid tautology. Tautology is the repetition of the same statement or the repetition of the same idea or statement in other words. It is often the result of carelessness or of ignorance of the meaning of words. *Continue on*, *adequate enough*, *gather together*, *more superior*, *rise up*, and *past history* are common tautologies. *Continue* means *go on*; *adequate* means *enough*, *gather* means *bring* or *come together*, *superior* implies *more*, *history* can only be *past*, and so on.

Below are some examples of other common confusions in word usage and spelling:

- To *imply* is to assert indirectly; to *infer* is to deduce or to understand. *He implied that my work was unsatisfactory; I inferred from this that he would be asking me to resign.*
- *Affect* is usually a verb; *effect* is usually a noun. When *effect* is used as a verb, it means 'bring about' or 'accomplish'. The verb *affect* means 'influence' or 'have an effect on'. *These appalling marks have affected my morale. They have had a dramatic effect on me. It was my lecturer who effected my nervous breakdown.*
- *There*, *their* and *they're* are all quite different words. *There* is an adverb: *There are a number of different theories of political obligation.* *Their* is a possessive adjective: *Some of their claims may be justified.* *They're* is a contraction of 'they are': *They're too organised in Politics and International Relations.*
- *Alot* is not a word. *A lot*, which is two words, means many or much. *There was a lot of advice on grammar in the handbook.* *Allot* means to distribute or to assign to. *These seats have been allotted to VIPs.*
- *Forfill* is not a word. The word most people are searching for is *fulfil*.
- *Criteria* are plural; *criterion* is singular. *Literacy is a criterion of one gaining an A, but we also have other criteria.* There are many words like this, all derived from Greek, e.g. *phenomenon* and *phenomena*. The same rule applies to them all: an *n* ending indicates singular, an *a*, plural.
- The past participle of *read* is *read*, but the past participle of *lead* is *led*.
- *I* usually comes before *e*, except after *c*. So it is *believe*, but *receive*.
- *Argument* is correct: *arguement* is wrong.
- *Separate* is correct: *seperate* is wrong.

The main problem with misspelling, apart from the fact that it displays one's ignorance, is that it can, if committed frequently enough, make clear communication impossible. *Fear*, *fare* and *fair* are all different words; they therefore mean different things. A *principal* is not a *principle*; to be *weary* is not to be *wary*, *whether* is not *weather*, *their* is not *there* (or *they're*) and *were* is not *where*. Bad spelling can render one's writing ungrammatical, one's meaning mysterious, and in extreme cases, one's message utterly nonsensical.

Do not rely on computer spell-checks. They cannot write the essay for you. All they can do is lull you into a false sense of security. It is recommended that all students invest in a dictionary (preferably the *Oxford English Dictionary*) and proofread your essays carefully. Start to take notice of how words are spelt by reading carefully and absorbing what you read. If you dislike reading as an activity and so rarely indulge in it, try to get into the habit of taking a novel to bed with you instead of watching television. Arts students must be competent, and ought to be fluent writers. Extensive research has come up with only one answer to the question of what makes people good writers; good writers are, without exception, good readers.

There are many good reference books on the English language. The following are all available from the General Library. H.W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (423.098c) is a bit stuffy, and now somewhat out of date, but still a standard source of advice on the subject. Eric Partridge, *Usage and Abusage: A Guide to Good English* (423 P27) is an often witty update of Fowler, and Martin H. Manser, *Bloomsbury Good Word Guide* (428.3 B65) is an even more recent and very accessible guide to 'problem' areas in English usage. There are also two excellent style guides issued by the Government Printing Office and designed specifically for New Zealanders: *Style Book: A Guide for New Zealand Writers and Editors* (655.25 N53) and *The New Zealand Style Book for New Zealand Writers, Editors, Journalists and Students* (655.25 N53).

## GOOD WRITING

Good writing will come with practice. Attractive prose is more than a display of technical prowess. Although good writing is always technically correct, technical correctness will not always lead to good writing. If you write enough, you will not only get better at working out what you want to say and at saying it: you will eventually find ways to say it gracefully. This may take years to achieve, but it is a goal worth striving for. Below is an example given by George Orwell in his essay '*Politics and the English Language*', of a passage of good English, which was written almost four hundred years ago by the translators of the *King James Bible*:

*I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*

Here is Orwell's version of what a bad modern writer might do with the passage:

*Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.*

The second passage is as grammatically correct as the first. And the first is now archaic. But which did you most enjoy reading? Orwell's 'modern author' has committed (at least) the following errors:

- **Pretentious vocabulary.** Latin or Greek-derived words like *contemporary*, *phenomena*, *commensurate* and so on are all right in small doses, but make for deadly prose when they are used too often, especially if they are used even when a simple and more direct alternative is available.
- **Operators.** Simple verbs have been replaced with operators, phrases consisting of a noun or adjective tacked on to a non-specific verb. The result is verbosity and pomposity. Why say *compels the conclusion that* when you can say *proves*? Why say *exhibits no tendency* when you can say *is not*?
- **Indirect speech.** The tone of the passage is indirect, to the point where it avoids any mention of human agency. In the first passage, *a person*, the narrator, *returned and saw*. In the second, *objective consideration of contemporary phenomena is compelling a conclusion*. This is a common method among bad writers of achieving spurious authority in prose. Human agency is not present in every situation you will write about, but when it is, it should be made evident. Take the following sentence. *A declaration of war was necessitated by the deteriorating international situation*. This sentence, by implying that the declaration of war was *caused by* the deteriorating international situation, avoids the fact that a person or people *made a decision to* declare war. Worsening international situations do not declare war: governments do. The indirect nature of the sentence above is compounded by the author's use of the passive voice.

The passive voice occurs when the object of the sentence receives the action of the subject: *War was declared by the government*. The passive voice is frequently used by politicians and bureaucrats to deliberately draw attention away from the fact that *someone* has done *something to someone*. As students of politics, you should be particularly alert to the political implications of such usage. When an agent is performing an action, use the active voice: *The government declared war*.

George Orwell's six basic rules of good writing are worth noting:

- Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print;
- Never use a long word where a short one will do;
- If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out;
- Never use the passive where you can use the active;
- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of any everyday English equivalent;
- Break any of these rules sooner than say anything ugly.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," *Collected Essays*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London, Secker and Warburg, 1968), v.2: 127-139

## TESTS AND EXAMS

### STUDYING FOR TESTS AND EXAMS

The main thing to remember when you prepare for tests and exams is to not panic. Once again, timetabling is important. Exam dates and times are usually released about halfway through the semester, while coursework due dates are normally specified at the beginning of the semester. Make sure you set aside plenty of time to study. Don't sit up to all hours the night before and cram – this method will ensure that you absorb almost nothing of value and that you seriously impair your ability to think or write coherently during the examination. If you ignore this advice, at least make sure that someone reliable will wake you up in time the next morning. Sleeping through an exam does not, unfortunately, constitute grounds for an aegrotat or compassionate pass.

Because most of your tests and examinations will take the form of essay questions, most of what you've read about writing successful essays applies equally to performing well in exams and tests. As with essays, you are not expected to regurgitate unconnected facts in an exam answer. Rather, you are expected to present a claim and well-argued answer to the question. Imagine that a clever friend asks you a question about Israel's defence policy, or New Zealand politics; give the kind of explanation in the exam, albeit couched slightly more formally, that you would give your friend.

The main difference between essay writing and writing an exam answer is that in an exam you will be relying on your memory and performing under time constraints. The quality of presentation which is required of you in essays is not expected under examination conditions. You do not need to worry about footnotes and bibliographies. If you remember an appropriate quote and know who said it, but are unable to cite a source, don't let this stop you from using it. The examiners are usually more lenient about spelling and punctuation than in the case of essays, but bad grammar should be avoided as this will make your meaning unclear and so detract from the quality of your argument.

When you study for a test or an exam:

- **Study selectively.** You will usually have been given a broad idea of the topics to be covered in the exam. You do not need to know everything, but should concentrate your efforts on those areas with which you are most familiar because you have written essays, or read extensively on them.

- **Do not study too narrowly.** Make sure that you have a broad understanding of the topics that you select. Even if you know you will only have to answer four questions, study more than one extra topic just in case. That way, you will have something in reserve if you are required to make a comparison, or are faced with a question which you don't understand, which comes at you from an unexpected angle; or worse, if your question simply fails to appear.
- **Concentrate on understanding the issues,** not rote learning facts. You are expected to substantiate your assertions, and a few well placed facts will impress your examiner. An exam answer which provides nothing more than a recitation of disconnected facts will be considerably less impressive than an essay which displays an understanding of the question and a reasonable attempt to answer it.
- If you have any problems obtaining resources, see your tutor for assistance. Remember that the last month of the semester is not the best time to be looking for books and articles - the chances are that hundreds of other students will be searching for the same material. If possible, begin to research your examination topics early in the semester.
- Make sure that you eat well and get plenty of sleep the night before an exam. Your mind will perform better if your body is in reasonable health.

#### SITTING TESTS AND EXAMS

- Read the whole paper carefully and select the questions to be answered.
- Work out what the question is asking you and what you think the answer is.
- Work out how long you have to answer each question. (You can usually do this before the exam). For example, if you have four questions to answer and three hours to answer them in, you will be able to devote 45 minutes to each answer. Never spend more than the allotted time on an answer. No matter how brilliant your answer is, it can never be worth more than a set percentage of your total exam mark.
- Make a short essay plan, or jot down the main points of your argument.
- Write the essay. Remember that examiners will look for:
  - Structure;
  - Coherence;
  - Relevance;
  - Clarity of expression and legibility
- Check the essay after you have finished. Have you said what you intended to say? (You might put it right with a postscript.) Eliminate the 'noise' factors such as poor grammar, punctuation and spelling.

#### MISSING TESTS AND EXAMS

The only valid reasons for missing tests during the semester are serious illness or family catastrophe, accompanied by proof. Make a careful note of the dates of tests and organise yourself so that you will be available. If you know you are going to miss an assessment, see your tutor *before* the test to enquire about an exemption. If you miss a test during the semester you must submit a formal application for aegrotat or compassionate consideration. The form (AS-46) is available from: [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results/during-exams/aegrotat-and-compassionate-consideration.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results/during-exams/aegrotat-and-compassionate-consideration.html).

Examination clashes, and problems caused by illness and misfortune are dealt with by the Examinations Office, not Politics and International Relations. Information can be found here: [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/academic-information/exams-and-final-results.html)

For a detailed explanation of the regulations governing aegrotat and compassionate passes, consult the *University Calendar*.

## RESOURCES

The University has a vast number of repositories for seeking a variety of information. It is to your advantage to get to know your way around the different libraries and to seek out other sources of useful material. If you cannot afford to buy your set texts, you will normally be able to find them in the Short Loan Collection (SLC) or General Library. The most useful places for you to get to know are the following:

### CANVAS COURSE PAGES

All courses within Politics and International Relations have their own page on Canvas. Essential information about the course will be posted here.

### UNIVERSITY BOOKSHOP

The University Bookshop (Ubiq) is located on campus, in the Kate Edger Information Commons Building (corner of Alfred St and Symonds St). Set texts for all University courses are available from UBS. At the beginning of each semester UBS publishes a booklet of set and recommended texts. Alternatively, visit the UBS website at <https://ubiq.co.nz/> and search by course code.

### GENERAL LIBRARY

For library opening hours check <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/contacts/hours/>

The General Library houses a large number of books, journals and official publications. In order to use the library efficiently, you will need to get to grips with using the Library Catalogue search function. If you need more assistance, contact your tutor or enrol in a library course. You can enrol in library courses here: <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/booking/>.

#### Books

To find a particular book, search the Library Catalogue by author or title. If you are looking for books on a particular topic, but do not have a specific author or title to search for, search by subject. A keyword search is a way of finding material when you only have partial information - if you don't know the exact title of a book, the complete name of the author, or you don't know the subject heading to use. When you have found the material you require on the Catalogue, check the 'location' information. In many cases the book will be available online. If not, take a note of the call number and go to those shelves in the library. A directory-board of call numbers is on your left as you enter the main doors of the library. Most of the books you will be using for Politics and International Relations are housed in the 300s on Level 1.

#### Journal Articles

To find a journal article, use the Catalogue search but select the 'Articles and more' tab on the drop-down menu to the left of the search bar. If there is a particular journal you wish to search choose 'E-journals' from the drop-down menu under the search bar. You can also choose 'Databases' to search particular subject databases.

### **Past Exam Papers**

To find a past exam paper, select the 'Exams' tab from the drop-down menu under the search bar.

### **The New Zealand and Pacific Collection**

All material on New Zealand or Pacific topics is housed in the NZ & Pacific Collection on the ground floor of the General Library, regardless of call number. Check for the NZ & Pacific location on the Library Catalogue when searching for material. This collection includes official papers such as the Journals and Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, Parliamentary Debates, and Yearbooks. New Zealand census and statistical publications are also found there.

### **Instructional Services**

This service is designed to help you to become skilled in accessing information in both print and electronic form. Contact the General Library for information on dates and times.

Programmes offered are:

- **Tours** to introduce you to the library's layout, borrowing procedures, Voyager, and services and locations.
- **Library tutorials** show you how to get the most out of the library's on-line catalogue. Introductory and advanced hands-on workshops are available.
- **Internet Modules** introduce you to searching techniques for the Internet.

### **Photocopying facilities**

There are photocopying facilities in the General Library, and on several levels of the Kate Edgar Information Commons. Information about how to use the photocopying services is available here: <http://www.ec.auckland.ac.nz/docs/caps.htm>.

<b>THE AUDIO-VISUAL LIBRARY</b>
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The AVL houses audio visual materials. These materials may not be borrowed, but can be viewed on the premises. It is now located in the General Library.