GROUP PROJECT – CREATE A COUNTRY—GRADING RUBRIC

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2. Checklist for Your Two Essays
3. Grading Rubric for the Two Final Essays
4. How to Avoid Plagiarism and its Consequences


- In this assignment, each group will work collaboratively to create their own country, by making comparisons to at least another country, and justifying the choices of selected institutions.

- There are four (4) main components of the assignment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Team research proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Extended to Nov. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) team oral presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Week 11: Nov. 16~19</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iii) peer review of group members’ participation on the project</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iv) 2 independently written essays on 2 institutions of your country</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
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40%

[2] CHECKLIST FOR YOUR ESSAYS

- This is a simplified checklist of what will be expected in each of your two (2) essays.
- Students could use this as a tool to ensure that all components of each essay are present.
- It is best for students to also read the detailed Grading Rubric, below, to ensure that you have followed all the major expectations for the essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of Each Essay</th>
<th>Checklist : Y or N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Title and Title Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Organization of Ideas (Structure) : Introduction, body paragraphs and Conclusion, and paragraph structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Research Question: The one or two research questions posed by the author are stipulated clearly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Argumentation: A clearly stated argument (thesis, position, explanation, comparison) at the top of the paper in the Introduction, developed in the body paragraphs, and restated in the Conclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Comparison: At least two comparisons made to the group’s “Spotlight” comparison country. This could be a brief reference, and need only refer to the textbook as a source. e.g. Our State “Anarchy” is an authoritarian regime, which is similar to our Spotlight country, Saudi Arabia.</td>
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</table>
6 **Support for the Argument and All Claims:**
All claims and ideas should be supported or cited, say, by quotations, author and page references to the essay’s peer-reviewed sources.

7 **Definitions:** Define all core terms studied in the course.

8 **References and Citations:** In text (in your essay) citations of the ideas/data/examples of at least three (3) peer-reviewed articles or chapter or governmental reports. One of these references may be the textbook.

9 **Editing and spellcheck:**

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### [3] GRADING RUBRIC FOR THE TWO FINAL ESSAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Evaluation Score</th>
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| **1. Topic Choice, Title & Title Page** | - Title is appropriate and clearly indicates what the paper is about, and ideally, indicates the main argument of the essay.  
- Selected topic is an institution (rule, policy, system) related our course study of Politics. (e.g. state, power, electoral system, political party, communications policy, political culture, political economy, etc.)  
- Selected topic should match the institutional topic selected in the Research Proposal for the Group Project.  
- Apply MLA citation style to create your title page, with all the relevant information (name, date, course, title, etc.)  
- For details, see Okanagan College references page: [https://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/mla](https://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/mla)  
Or see: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_fo rmatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) | - part of criteria #5 |

| **2. Organization of Ideas, and their Logical Flow** | - Demonstration of organization and logical flow of ideas throughout the paper, involving the following:  
- The three parts of any paper are evident, demonstrating sound organization of ideas: introduction, development or body, and conclusion  

[a] Introduction briefly introduces the topic; indicates the research question(s) posed by the essay; and articulates the core argument(s) or position or explanation to be developed in the paper; sets out the organization of sections in the paper that will be discussed as you advance and defend your argument. (See Argumentation, Point 3, next).  

[b] Body sets out a clear, systematic and logical presentation of ideas, ensuring that all points are developed and explained, supported by supportive points, examples, or evidence such as data or scholarly opinion/quotations, and remains relevant to the argument or topic of the paper.  

[c] Conclusion reiterates the essay’s main argument(s) or points, adding no new information. You might decide to suggest directions for future research, make a call to action, or make policy recommendations.  

- Ideas flow smoothly and coherently, and can be easily followed with clear language, effective sentence and paragraph structure, and if you wish, with subheadings.  

- Use transitional sentences and summation sentences between sections of the paper. | 20% |
| 3. Argument (or Thesis) and Substantive Content of the Paper | - A clear, complete, concise and creative argument (or thesis, or position, or viewpoint or explanation) is developed throughout the essay.  
- It helps to keep in mind that all research papers are essentially an answer to a research question or questions.  
- The essay’s argument in this Group Project will revolve around the institution (rule, system, policy, law) you have selected during the Group Project and Research Proposal.  
  e.g. In this paper, I will argue that soft power in our State of Euphoria is much more effective as a governance technique than hard power.  
  e.g. Our state’s political economy is a “welfare state” because this kind of institution is much more fair and equitable to all citizens, as I demonstrate in my paper.  
- There many ways to develop an argument. The best way to start is to ask a Research Question about the institution, and then answer it. Your answer is your argument.  
  - You might think about an argument that:  
    (a) compares your State’s institution to the Spotlight state. See the checklist above requesting that each essay make at least two brief references that compares your created state to the Spotlight state. You need only refer to the textbook’s information for this comparison.  
    (b) considers the advantages and disadvantages of this institution, or its functions  
    (c) causes and origins: Why does this institution exist (or persist) in this form? Why and how has this institution changed over time?  
    (d) What are some positive and negative consequences of this particular form of institution in your State (e.g. increases poverty, equality, stability, happiness)  
    (e) What are some suggested reforms for this institution?  

- The paper engages in thoughtful, careful, and critical analysis. Analysis or explanation is valued over description of an organization, event, or mere listing other people’s ideas on the topic.  
- Description devoid of analysis will be accorded a low grade.  

Bad example: This happened, then that happened, and then look over there, that happened too. Things just keep on happening.  
Good example: This event happened. The question is why? It appears that fear and uncertainty of the population are the causes of this event occurring.  

- Analysis is thorough and the depth of research is made apparent by efforts to draw on and cite from a wide range of reliable and up-to-date sources on the institution under study.  
- Evidence of the student’s critical thinking is provided, showing that the essay is more than merely a description of a topic or phenomenon. Critical thinking includes, for instance:  
  (a) identify, compare and critically evaluate major argument(s) in the theoretical or policy literature; (b) recognize the debates, tensions, issues that the author is addressing from the wider literature; (c) identify and critically assess the scholarly ideas such as definitions and conceptions (e.g. “development”); or supportive evidence to substantiate the argument (e.g. examples or cases used, data, measures); or the general approach, theory, methods applied by scholars or policy makers or practitioners. |
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<tr>
<td>4. Support for the Argument and Claims Made in the Essay</td>
<td>- Substantiate your claims, points, arguments with empirical evidence (e.g. numerical data, scholarly quotation, real world examples drawn from the media or other reputable sources).</td>
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- Supporting evidence or examples is/are clearly articulated, persuasive, authoritative, and logically presented.

  e.g. Freedom is the most important value.

  ➔ Really? Is it? Why do you think so?

  e.g. Democracy is dead.

  ➔ really? Is it? What evidence supports this claim?

- Avoid making unsubstantiated or exaggerated claims.

  e.g. America is most democratic nation on this Earth.

  e.g. First Past the Post is an antiquated electoral system, that nobody likes.

- Define all key terms in the paper. This can be done by a parenthetical comment (like this), or a footnote, or just using prose.

- Use scholarly sources for definitions.

5. Language, Citations & Writing Mechanics

- Writing style is clear (not overly vague) and uses academic language that is slang-free, with jargon defined.

- Writing is coherent in diction and expression, with proper flow and transitions in the sentence structure. Arguments flow from one to the next.

- Paragraphs each contain one major idea, often starting with a thesis statement.

- Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, and word choice bereft of slang or overly biased terms. Avoid awkward or run-on sentences.

- Students' use of first person (i.e. “I believe that…” is a personal stylistic choice, with no bearing on the grade

- MLA citation style is used correctly and consistently. (You may select another citation style if you wish; just follow it correctly.)

- Students draw from and cite a sufficient number of references cited. At least three (3) academic or peer-reviewed references are cited (used) in some way in *each of the two (2) essays. This is a minimum number of cited references to get top marks for each essay. You will likely use more.

- One (1) of your three (3) references may be the textbook.

- References or Works Cited page with proper, accurate references. (i.e. author, date, etc.).

- Apply MLA citation style to create your title page, with all the relevant information (name, date, course, title, etc.)

- For details, see Okanagan College references page:
  https://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/mla

  Or see:
  https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formattin g_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html

- To cite an academic reference in your essay, you might refer to a piece of data, a quote, an idea, a concept or a definition. You will read many more references on your topic than these 3 references; but not all of your reading sources will be cited.

- I will accept “grey literature” as academic/peer reviewed resources. Grey literature includes reports from governments, political parties, think tanks/research institutes, or non-governmental organizations or businesses.

- Note that using primary source documents (e.g. international treaties, national laws, or government documents) counts as an “academic source” and is always impressive.

- Always cite the actual document, not a secondary source such as Wikipedia. Wikipedia is not considered to be an academic “peer reviewed” source.
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<tr>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
<th>5% of the Project, but not part of the Essay Grade.</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Demonstration of preparation through fluid oral presentation of each speaker.</td>
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<td>- Logical flow of ideas in the presentation of a case study the audience likely knows little about.</td>
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<td>- Effort to leave the audience with a few “gems”; i.e. a succinct and powerful presentation of a few key ideas.</td>
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<td>- Engagement of the audience, by a physical presence, or props such as a PDF handout, or Powerpoint slides)</td>
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<td>- Ability to ask and answer questions from the audience.</td>
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*********[4] HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES***********

- Plagiarism is an academic offence with serious consequences. As we’ve discussed in class, generally the consequences include: 0 or low grades for an assignment; failure of the course for certain cases of flagrant plagiarism; a dishonesty grade on your transcripts; expulsion from an institution; lost job.

- If you feel unfamiliar with the expectations of writing an academic paper in a way that avoids plagiarism (e.g. cutting and pasting others’ ideas without paraphrasing, or lacking and improper attribution of others ideas/quotations or sourcing data), then you can do the following:

  i) Read the Syllabus and the instructions on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.

  ii) Read the Okanagan policy and procedures with regard to cheating and plagiarism. [Link](https://webapps-5.okanagan.bc.ca/ok/Calendar/AcademicIntegrity)

  iii) Review the Plagiarism tutorial and quizzes completed for the Plagiarism Statement of Understanding back in September.


  Or search the Internet to find sources like this: [Link](https://smu.ca/academics/avoiding-plagiarism.html)

  v) Talk to the instructor, or a Librarian, or to the fine people at the Writing Centre or Success centre at your campus (Vernon, Salmon Arm, Kelowna).