

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING PAPERS

Walter vom Saal

Part 1. Guidelines for all papers.

1. Your paper should be high quality in terms of content and analysis.
2. Your paper should be high quality in terms of technical presentation. It should be well organized, clearly written, and grammatically correct. It should not have spelling errors. Proofread your paper carefully before submitting it!!
3. The paper should be printed or typed, double-spaced. If you are using a word processor, my preference is to use Times New Roman 12 font, but this is not a requirement.
4. Include a title page with the title of your paper and all of the following information: your name; course name, number, and section number; date.
5. Use this guideline to assure that the paper is well organized: use a heading or subheading every page (ideally) or at least every two pages.
6. Number your pages.
7. Include a reference section at the end of the paper that lists all references cited in the paper. Use standard APA format for your references.
8. All factual and statistical statements in the paper should be documented. That is, all such statements should have a source cited. Any quotes should have a source cited that includes the page number from which the quotation was taken. Use standard APA format for citing your references.
9. Due dates: see due dates on the syllabus or refer to dates as announced in class. I am serious about due dates. Typically I take off one letter grade for each calendar day late. Sometimes, especially for work due at or near the end of the semester, I will announce in class that papers will not be accepted after the due date.
10. IMPORTANT: do not give me your only copy of your paper. *Keep either a Xeroxed copy, or a computer file of what you submit.*
11. Keep all drafts you use in preparing your paper. I may wish to see them later.
12. In some cases it may be appropriate to include supplementary material in an appendix. Examples include questionnaires you used, responses to questionnaires, material you prepared in advance for interviews, etc. In all cases, the main body of your paper must stand alone without requiring the reader to look at the appendix.
13. Before submitting your paper, ask yourself these questions: Does this work represent my best effort? Am I proud of the work I am submitting?

Part 2. Papers submitted for additional credit.

1. In certain courses, papers may be written as a way to earn additional credit or as a replacement for missed work. Individual arrangements must be made with me regarding how a paper will be counted.

2. Papers must be on a topic approved by me. Students must submit a proposal as described in the syllabus. A written proposal must be submitted before the "last day to submit proposals for additional credit" shown on the topic outline on the course syllabus. Proposals will not be accepted past the due date. Approval of proposals will be based on the quality of the written proposal and evidence that the student is capable of independent work.

A good quality proposal is very important. It is a good idea to talk to me in advance about what you want to do, and to discuss with me what your proposal should look like.

3. In terms of expectations regarding size and scope of the paper, a wide variety of papers is possible. The following paragraphs describe one standard that many students use when writing a paper for additional course credit. *This is just one example. It is possible to write an individual contract with me for another paper that is very different.*

a. The paper is expected to be 6-10 pages, typewritten (or printed) double-spaced.

b. The paper should contain at least 5 references, using correct APA format. Some of these may be internet references, but at least two should be books or journal articles.

c. At least half the paper must be a thorough academic review of some topic, subject, or question, with appropriate references. If the paper has multiple sections, at least one main sections should be such an academic review. This section should include a careful review of what is known about the topic, along with definitions and major distinctions central to understanding the topic. A good paper will also include substantial analysis or commentary.

d. Additional optional sections of the paper might include:

i. a report of some informal research you have conducted, such as questions or interviews with other students or other individuals. Any such report should include some statements regarding limitations of the research (for example, small sample size, non-representative sample, etc.).

ii. personal material such as a personal analysis, evaluation of your personal life, personal insights, your own personal attitudes and opinions, etc. this section will be stronger if it includes thoughtful analysis and commentary (important distinctions you realized, analysis of how you developed your views, thoughtful discussion of the impact of certain experiences on you, etc.)

4. All papers should meet the general guidelines described in Part 1 above.

revised 2/16/01