

EVS185 Public opinion in the EU: Seminar paper guidelines

In this assignment you will have an opportunity to analyze two academic resources in detail and think about what their findings mean for democratic theory. By doing this, you will practice connecting empirical findings back to theories. You will also practice critical reading and writing skills as well as giving and receiving feedback.

Your work on this assignment will be broken up to many stages to help you write a good-quality paper. First, you will pick your topic and your articles and you will prepare a bullet-point outline of your paper. You will discuss this outline with your colleagues. Then you will write a draft of your paper and discuss it with your colleagues. And then you will edit the draft until the final draft is ready.

Stage 1. Pick your topic and your two academic sources and read them critically. Due Nov 12 at the start of the class.

A) Pick a topic related to public opinion in the EU

(Examples of such topic include political knowledge in the EU, utilitarian theory of support for the EU, public opinion on an EU policy, public opinion on EU enlargement, an EU-related referendum, and many others. Pick whatever interests you.)

B) Find two academic resources on this topic. Use only academic articles and chapters from academic books. Do not use entire books or working papers or conference papers. Do not use review articles or articles from journals that do not have an impact factor (go to the journal's website where you should find what its impact factor is or simply google for "the-name-of-your-journal AND impact factor". If you can find its impact factor, then the journal has an impact factor). Your sources may *not* come from the list of required readings in the syllabus (they may come from the recommended readings though).

C) Prepare bullet-point answers to the following questions (for each of the two academic sources). Bring a hard copy of your answers to the class.

- 1) What is your topic?
- 2) What is the question your sources ask about this topic? (each academic article asks a question at the beginning and the rest of the article answers the question)
- 3) What is the authors' argument?
- 4) What are the author's assumptions? (assumption is something we take as given, as a basis for our analysis)
- 5) Are the assumptions plausible?
- 6) What evidence do the authors present to support their argument?
This point should include answers to subquestions, such as: What research method do the authors use? What data do the authors use? Do they look at individuals or countries?
- 7) What are the limitations of the data? Do these limitations threaten the argument?
- 8) Is the connection between the empirical evidence and the theoretical argument sound? (in other words - does the evidence really mean what the author claims it means?)
- 9) What is strong about the paper? Why?
- 10) What makes one article stronger than the other? Why?
- 11) What would make the author's argument stronger?

12) What are the implications of the articles' findings for the theories discussed in class?

- for the theories of democracy we discussed
- for the theories of support for the EU
- for theories of sources of public opinion

It may happen that you will find it difficult to answer some of the questions, that's OK. Make sure, however, that you have answers to questions 1-3 and 9-12.

Submit your paper outline in the Paper outline folder in IS:

Study materials --> Learning Materials --> Seminar paper submissions --> Paper outline submission (upload your outline in this folder)

Stage 2. Writing the first draft. Submit your first draft to IS by Nov 26.

Write a draft of your paper according to the instructions below. Your answers to the questions from Stage 1 should be helpful here. Use font size 12, double spaced, standard margins. Do not include a cover page. Use the APA in-text citations style (more information about APA can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/03/>).

Required structure:

Introduction (approx. 1/2 page). The introduction introduces the topic, the two articles, and states your conclusions about how these articles relate to the theories discussed in class. It should include the following: State your topic. Briefly define the key concepts. Briefly state what the two articles argue. And briefly state how the articles relate to one theory discussed in class. (Hint: It is a common practice to write the introduction as the last piece of writing.)

Summary of the articles (approx. 1.5 page). Summarize articles 1 and 2. This should include defining concepts, presenting the argument in greater depth, describing the evidence that supports the argument. Make sure you relate the articles to each other (or contrast them against each other), do not write this section as two separate parts.

Critically evaluate the arguments (approx. 1.5 page). Critically discuss three issues. This means to discuss the worth, merit or value of the arguments by raising three critical points about these articles. Note that "critical" does not necessarily mean negative evaluation. Critical evaluation can be positive as well, you just need to make sure you explain why you hold this opinion (and this holds for negative evaluation as well). Involve both articles in your discussion (this doesn't mean that all three issues must relate to both articles but have at least one critical point about each article). Ideally, use one paragraph for one critical point.

Questions 4-11 from Stage 1 will help you identify these points.

Conclusion (approx. 1/2 page). Briefly summarize the article's arguments and your critical evaluation and then discuss the following: What are the implications of the articles' findings for the theories discussed in class? Your articles may be more relevant for some theories than for others. Pick therefore one theory and discuss how your article relates to it (Does it provide support for the theory? Why? Why not? Do the implications of the article put the theory under question?)

Total length of the final draft: 4-5 double spaced pages. Your first draft may be a lot longer to 6 or 7 pages or more. You will cut a lot of text as you edit the draft.

Submit your first draft here:

Study materials --> Learning Materials --> Seminar paper submissions --> Draft 1 submission

Stage 3. Editing the draft.

In this stage, you will be improving your paper, helping each other with the editing. Take your first draft, read it and make edits (correct clumsy phrases, make the text more concise by deleting redundant sentences, rearrange the text to make the flow of your ideas more logical). Use the "Track changes" option in MS Word to track changes you make in your draft. Submit the edited draft of your paper (with the "Track changes" markup) in IS by **December 3**.

Submit your second draft here:

Study materials --> Learning Materials --> Seminar paper submissions --> Draft 2 submission

Stage 4. Giving and receiving feedback.

Read your colleague's seminar paper that was assigned to you. Fill out the feedback sheet and bring the feedback sheet as well as your colleague's paper to class on **December 10**. You and your colleague will give each other feedback on the paper in class.

Stage 5. Implementing feedback.

Revise your paper using the feedback you received from your colleague. Upload the third draft of your paper to the appropriate folder in the IS by **December 17**.

Submit your third draft here:

Study materials --> Learning Materials --> Seminar paper submissions --> Draft 3 submission

The final draft is due on Monday January 11 at 5pm. It is a good idea to read the paper again and do final polishing before you submit the final draft.

Submit your final draft here:

Study materials --> Learning Materials --> Seminar paper submissions --> Final draft submission

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the instructor.