

Information Literacy Component	<input type="checkbox"/> Framing the Research Question	<input type="checkbox"/> Accessing Sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating Sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating Content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using Information for Specific Purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands Context and Ethics of Information Use
Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intermediate		<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced	

Librarians at BGSU formed “Understanding Student Information-seeking Behaviors to Enhance Student Learning”, a faculty learning community through the campus [Center for Teaching and Learning](#). Members of this learning community are BGSU faculty from several disciplines across campus. Through the community we have explored ways to improve students’ abilities to contend with obstacles inherent in the research project. The community has also had opportunities to become more familiar with the University Libraries’ research tools and reflect on ways to enhance student learning. This guide pulls together readings on student research habits and recommendations from faculty about how to improve the student research experience.

The following assignment was created by one of the members of our learning community. It was reviewed by the community and established as meeting the above criteria. For additional sample assignments or information on creating effective research assignments, visit our LibGuide:

<http://libguides.bgsu.edu/studentresearch>

2011-2012 Understanding Student Information-seeking Behaviors to Enhance Student Learning

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POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
The Research Paper
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes

In this class, we will discuss different facets of Latino Politics and research in Latino Politics. Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to develop your own research project on a topic of your choosing. You will address a contemporary puzzle in Latino Politics, and there will be a series of assignments designed to guide you in the completion of this project.

Structure

This paper will include the following sections: puzzle and research question, literature review, theory, model, hypotheses, research design, analysis, findings, and conclusion. You will also need to include a works cited page. Your final product will be 12-15 pages in length, double spaced, 12-point font, with one inch margins.

Topic

The topic will be a puzzle or question of interest to you relating to contemporary Latino Politics. Our first assignment will be designed to help you select an interesting and do-able research question.

Due Dates

We will work on the papers over the entire semester. Each assignment is designed to build on the previous exercise, and help you increase your understanding of Latino Politics, research design, and the research process. The due dates for each assignment are listed below. Each assignment is due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day late.

- Exercise 1: Developing Your Research Question - Due: January 24
- Exercise 2: Annotated Bibliography - Due: February 7
- Exercise 3: Literature Review - Due: February 21
- Exercise 4: Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis - Due: March 12
- Exercise 5: Research Design - Due: March 21
- Exercise 6: Evaluate Your Argument - Due: April 9
- **Final Paper - Due: April 25**

Helpful Resources for Your Paper

These links may be helpful as you go through the process of completing your research paper.

Library and Citations

- BGSU Library: <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/>
- APSA citation: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>
- On using Wikipedia: <http://library.williams.edu/citing/wikipedia.php>
- When is it plagiarism? <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/assistance/page41070.html> and <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/studentconduct/>
- BGSU Learning Commons: <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/learningcommons/>

Public Opinion Data

- The Field Poll: <http://field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/>
- PPIC Data Depot: <http://www.ppic.org/main/datadepot.asp>
- Zogby: <http://www.zogby.com/features/zogbytables3.cfm>
- Pew Hispanic Center: <http://pewhispanic.org/>

Demographic Data

- Census Data: <http://www.census.gov/main/www/access.html>

Legislative Scorecards

- LULAC: <http://lulac.org/advocacy/scorecards/Congressional/>
- Hispanics in Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/congress/contents.html>
- Multicultural Legislators: <http://www.gmc1.org/maps/ohio/federal.htm>

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 1: Developing Your Research Question
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: January 24

This exercise will help you develop your research question for the research paper we will be completing in this class. Your research question should address a contemporary puzzle in Latino Politics. You will be working with this question throughout the semester, and want to make sure you select something that is interesting to you and that can be accomplished over the course of the semester.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

Read Chapter 2 in the Baglione Book (“Getting Started: Finding a Research Question”)

STEP 2: What Interests You?

Remember, we want to find a topic that is interesting and that you will not mind spending the next few weeks investigating. To this end, you will first want to answer the following questions. These questions are meant to act as a tool to help guide you to finding something of interest. For example, if you are an education major, you may be interested in examining how demographics affect academic performance in Latino populations. If you are a political science major, you may be interested in research that looks at how the number of Latinos in a community impacts the number of Latinos serving as elected representatives. The options are endless!!

1. What is your major?
2. Why are you taking this class?
3. What current events are of interest to you?
4. What about Latino Politics (or what you understand of it so far) interests you?
5. Is there something relating to politics or political behavior that you find puzzling?
6. If this research paper could be on anything, what topic would you choose?

STEP 3: Take a First Shot at Your Research Question

Take a first shot at your research question by formatting the question in the following manner:

How does _____ affect _____ in the Latino population?

Each blank should represent a variable of interest.

Remember, the more specific you are regarding your variables and your population, the easier your research will be (usually).

STEP 4: Justify It!

Think through your question, and in a paragraph or two answer the following questions:

1. What is puzzling or surprising about your question?
2. Why is your question interesting?
 - (a) To you?
 - (b) To political scientists?
 - (c) To policymakers?
 - (d) To the general population?

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 2: Annotated Bibliography
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: February 7

Congratulations! You now have a research question and get to begin the fun part - finding appropriate academic sources. This exercise asks you to create an **annotated bibliography** similar to the example on page 49 of the Baglione book. Your annotated bibliography will help you organize your research and sources, and may grow throughout the course of the semester. To get you started, you will be required to turn in your annotated bibliography with a minimum of six **appropriate** sources published in the **last 10 years**.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapter 3 in the Baglione Book (“Learning Proper Citation Forms”)
- Review APSA citation at <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>
- Read this discussion from Williams College as to when it is and *is not* appropriate <http://library.williams.edu/citing/wikipedia.php>

STEP 2: Find Appropriate Sources

For the annotated bibliography, you will need to find six appropriate academic sources from the last 10 years. Remember, an appropriate source is a book published by an academic press or an academic journal article. Not sure if your source is appropriate? Ask Dr. K-H, the TA, or the librarians!

STEP 3: Create Your Annotated Bibliography

Create your annotated bibliography.

1. List your sources by bibliographic information in APSA style.
2. Summarize the main argument from each of your sources.
3. Organize your sources by theme. How are they related to your research question? Do the present similar arguments or solutions?

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 3: Literature Review
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: February 21

Hopefully you have expanded your annotated bibliography to at least 10 sources by now (if you haven't, you need to). This is the literature review that will be included in your research paper. As you write this section, you want to remember that this part could serve as a stand-alone essay – with a purpose all its own – but it also serves a greater function: to communicate the conceptual basis of your interesting research! This section should be about 5 pages, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins.

Central to creating a successful literature review is finding quality sources. If you have not had success so far, now is the time to remedy that. Stop what you are doing and talk to Dr. K-H, the TA, or a librarian.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapter 4 in the Baglione Book (“Making Sense of Scholarly Answers to Your Research Question”)

STEP 2: Organize Your Sources

If you haven't been keeping up with your annotated bibliography, now is the time to do so! Organize your sources by argument or schools of thought to figure out the best way to organize your literature review. The literature review will set the stage for the rest of your paper.

STEP 3: Create the Literature Review

Start writing! Your literature review should answer the questions presented on page 59 of the Baglione book. Your literature review should focus on factors that explain (possible independent variables) the development you are interested in studying (dependent variable). This section should be about 5 pages, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins.

1. What are the different schools of thought that have developed in response to your research question, in both its general and its specific form? Who are the most important authors identified with each school, and how have they influenced subsequent scholarship?
2. How would each school answer your question?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the answers of each school?
4. Which school's argument is the best for your purposes and why, or which school would you like to continue to pursue and why?

When completed, you should be able to answer “YES” to the following questions from page 71 in the Baglione book (more detail in the text).

1. Does your literature review have an appropriate title that communicates the purpose of the section?
2. Does the literature review have an introductory paragraph that provides an overview of the whole paper?
3. Would a reader of the literature review know what your research question is?
4. Have you identified at least two theories or schools?
5. Have you provided different scholarly answers to your research question and grouped them accordingly?
6. Have you explained the logic of each argument and associated strengths and weaknesses?
7. Does it focus on factors (independent variables) that explain the development you are studying (dependent variable)?
8. Have you written a concluding paragraph for your literature review that explains your preferred school or answer?
9. Have you added any new sources to your annotated bibliography (trust me – this will make your life easier)?
10. Did you include a works cited list?
11. Have you spoken with Dr. K-H or the TA if you need help?

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 4: Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: March 12

In this exercise, you will develop your thesis, model, and hypotheses. Your thesis is a declaration or description with which reasonable people could disagree. For example, I could propose a thesis that says the following “This set of assignments will contribute to your development as a scholar.” While you could disagree, it is an assertion that could be supported with evidence or proven wrong (but hopefully won’t be). The model is a representation of thought that was identified in the literature review, for example, something like X (independent variable) \rightarrow Y (dependent variable). Your hypotheses are the implications we should see *if your model is correct*. This section should be a draft of this part of your paper and about 2-4 pages, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins.

FOR EXAMPLE, if we were interested in why Starbucks iced tea has a positive impact on your Professor’s attitude, you could present a literature review containing research on taste and caffeine and people’s attitudes. Your model would then articulate that your professor’s attitude is a function of her caffeine intake. Your hypotheses (implications of your model) could then include: Diet Coke makes your professor happy, water has no impact on your professor’s mood, etc.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapters 5 and 6 in the Baglione Book (“Effective Distilling Your Argument: The Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis” and “Revising and Editing Your Work”)
- Read the excerpt from the Lave and March book posted on Canvas

STEP 2: Your Thesis

If you have not done so already, now is the time to come up with your thesis.

STEP 3: Drafting Your Model and Hypotheses

Your model and hypotheses should follow directly from your literature review, and the sections are all closely related. In a simplified sense, your model should be framed around the idea that ‘Given what we know about X from the literature, Z can be explained as a function of A, B, and C.’ This section should be about 2-4 pages, double-spaced, size 12 font, 1-inch margins. Consider and answer the following questions.

HINT: Review some of the academic articles we have read for class. These can provide a nice example of formatting for your research paper. Take note of how the authors transition from section to section, how they discuss their model and hypotheses.

- Recall your literature review, which school of thought or argument did you find most persuasive? This will become your thesis.

- What is the underlying argument of this school? What factors affect the phenomenon at stake? (Your literature review should focus on factors that explain (possible independent variables) the development you are interested in studying (dependent variable).)
- Present your model – this can be done as a diagram or articulated. Independent variables should be on the left and dependent variables on the right. See the text for more discussion.
- What kind of values (discrete or continuous) your variables will take.
- In a second section, use precise words to express your hypotheses.
- Use headings to separate your model and hypotheses sections
- Don't forget to include a works cited list

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 5: Research Design
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: March 21

In this exercise, you will formulate your plan for how will you determine whether your thesis can be sustained. You will defend the choices you make regarding what you are going to study, how to translate your concepts into knowable entities, and which sources of information you will use to determine their value. In addition, you will explain exactly how you will perform your analysis.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapter 7 in the Baglione Book (“Making Your Plan and Protecting Yourself From Criticism”)

STEP 2: Thinking through your Plan

Specifically, this section draft of your paper will do the following:

- Select cases for study
- Define the key concepts and establish a strategy for knowing their value and identify sources (for example, if you are interested in demographics, you may rely on the number of Latinos in an area. This data is available from the US Census Bureau.
- Discuss what you will do and how (for example, if you are interested in the relationship between Latinos in a population and Latino legislators, you can examine the correlation between the two and see if as the number of Latino residents increases, so too does the number of Latino elected officials).

Think this part through - when you do the write up, this part of your paper should be 2-3 pages long.

STEP 3: Write it Up!

In the 2-4 pages, you should do the following:

1. Write an introduction to this section
2. Choose your cases, time period, etc.
 - If your research question is specific enough, you should have already done this.
3. Operationalize your variables!
 - This section will translate your concepts (variables) into identifiable entities and specify how you will measure them
 - Values may be numbers, categories, or qualities

4. Identify your data sources

- Where will you find your data?
- Consult the list of possible data sources, talk to Dr.K-H, the TA, or the librarians. All can help you identify possible data sources.

5. Methodology

- What will you do with the data? Remember, create a plan that you can actually accomplish!
- Consult the list of possible data sources, talk to Dr.K-H, the TA, or the librarians. All can help you identify possible data sources.

6. Write a conclusion to this section

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Exercise 6: Evaluate Your Argument
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: April 9

In this exercise, you will analyze relevant information to assess your thesis. Your analysis can be qualitative or quantitative in nature. With qualitative analysis, an investigator assesses evidence in the form of words or images to determine where the weight of it lies - on the side of the thesis or against it. With quantitative analysis the evaluation is based on statistics, and the investigator rejects a hypothesis if the data show that the relationship posited among the variables is not statistically significant. This is the fun part, and you are almost done with your research paper!

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapter 8 in the Baglione Book (“Evaluating the Argument: The Analysis and Assessment Section”)

STEP 2: Selecting Your Plan

This section will be different for everyone. The goal is to find some way (qualitative or quantitative) to assess your argument.

For Qualitative Analysis

If you are choosing to use a qualitative approach, the first thing you will want to do is create a hypothesis and data chart similar to the one on page 133 in the text. Where you will find the data will be different for each person, and it is recommended that you consult the helpful source list, the librarians, Dr.K-H, or the TA for some ideas. Once you have your data chart, you will need to determine the values of your variables. Once this is done, you should have an idea as to whether or not your hypotheses are correct. Then, you will want to consider whether you can see causal connections between the independent and dependent variable, and try to explain how and why you see changes in the cause creating the effect. The example in your text can prove quite helpful in this activity.

For Quantitative Analysis

If you choose a quantitative approach, you will first need to identify what kind of data you will be using – continuous or discrete – and then be sure you have sufficient cases to make the statistical analysis valid.

Once you have your data, the approach you use to analyze it will be up to you and your level of knowledge of statistics. You are welcome to use excel, SPSS, or any other program you may be familiar with. If you have questions or are unsure of how to do something you want to do, ask Dr. K-H or the TA. The example in the book can also be quite helpful.

STEP 3: Write it Up!

In the 2-4 pages, you should do the following:

1. Write an introduction to this section (see pg. 148 for more)
2. Explain your dependent variable
3. For qualitative analysis, begin with your first case study, and explain the value of your independent variable. This may be a separate section. Once the value of the dependent variable is clear (here or earlier), consider whether the thesis holds. If it is a causal hypothesis, be sure to think carefully about any evidence that supports the idea that the cause creates the effect.
4. For quantitative analysis, remind the reader of your hypothesis, explain what you are doing, and show the data you have used (in a summary chart). Present the outcome of the test (in a nice looking table or plot), and explain your results.
5. Remember to stay focused on the thesis and plan of action you set out in your research design in the earlier exercise. Do not include any extra information. Your job is only to evaluate your argument, not persuade the reader.
6. Write a conclusion that explains what you found and why.

POLS 4000: LATINO POLITICS
Final Paper
Spring 2013 - Dr. Kalaf-Hughes
Assignment Due: April 25

Now is the time to put it all together. If you have not been doing this throughout the semester, it is now time to make the recommended changes, refine your writing, make sure each section flows and transitions well to the next, and write your introduction (if you have not done so already) and conclusion. Remember, the final project should be 12-15 pages in length.

STEP 1: Do the Reading

- Read Chapter 9 in the Baglione Book (“Bringing the Paper Together in Three Essential Ways”)

STEP 2: Introduction and Conclusion

Let’s get writing! In brief, your introduction should do the following:

- Communicate your research question and answer (thesis)
- Indicate the cases you are studying
- Provide a road map to your paper

Your conclusion, on the other hand, should do accomplish these tasks:

- Tie the paper together by repeating the argument and reporting the findings
- Remind the reader why the argument is important to different audiences
- Assess the extent to which your thesis can be extended or must be limited
- Return to the choices or compromises that you made and evaluate their impact on your work
- Establish a productive path for future research

STEP 3: Put it Together

Assemble your paper. Proofread your introduction and conclusion. You will want to refer to the checklist on pages 169-171 in the Baglione book. Make sure you can answer yes to each of the items, and if you cannot, make sure you have a good reason why. If you are not sure, ask Dr.K-H or the TA.

Remember, your grade for the final paper is based not only on each of the sections and the quality of the research and writing, but also on the finished product, including things like proper formatting, proofreading, correct citations, etc. You are **strongly** encouraged to make an appointment with the Learning Commons a week before the final paper is due and have the assist you in editing and proofreading.