

POLS 103 A

Analysis assignment 1

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to practice thinking like a Political Scientist. This exercise will allow you to not only demonstrate your understanding of the course material, but also, and most importantly, help you to think critically about some key aspects of comparative politics, engage with scholarly work, and analyze important political phenomena.

Your task in the assignment is to answer the following question: Are all states stationary bandits?

The assignment should follow the following format:

1. In the opening paragraph, you will specify the research question that you answer in the assignment, if appropriate specify the empirical puzzle that you address, and provide a thesis that you advance in the assignment.
2. In the next few paragraphs you will develop an argument that supports your thesis statement. You should normally devote one paragraph to each major component of your argument. The number of paragraphs in your assignment will thus depend on your argument and vary across different students' assignments. You should illustrate your claims with empirical evidence.
3. Next, you will discuss how you could empirically test your claims. To this end, you will need to explain how you would operationalize your argument, specify the independent and dependent variables and the nature of the relationship between them, and propose a research design and a selection of cases (explicitly specifying the level and units of your analysis) that you could use to empirically investigate the veracity of your argument.
4. Finally, you will write a concluding statement that succinctly summarizes your main claims and the value of your chosen research design.

You may only draw on material covered in the course in this assignment. You can consult syllabus readings that we have not yet discussed in class, but you should focus your attention on the first three chapters of the textbook, the Olson and Tilly readings, the media articles on inequality, populism, and Venezuela, and the video on Venezuela (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7h4sq-WO8Ac>). You can use all or only some of these sources in your assignment.

The assignment should be 2 pages long. Like all assignments in the course, it should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in Times New Roman 12-point font. All citations should follow the Chicago author-date style. (This is the style used in the syllabus.) The lists of sources, which you must submit with every written assignment, do not count towards the specified assignment length. If you choose to include a cover page, it also does not count towards the assignment length.

Assessment of the assignment will be in two parts.

First, you will prepare and submit to me a draft assignment and sign up to meet with me during the assignment workshop on February 11. During the meeting you will read the assignment to me and I will provide you with feedback and assign the first grade for the assignment.

Second, you will revise the assignment based on the feedback you received. The second grade for the assignment will assess the improvement that you have made to the assignment and its correspondence to the criteria contained in the assignment rubric.

The initial and final drafts are due on February 10 and 17, respectively.

You will submit both electronic and paper copies of both drafts of the assignment. The electronic copies should be submitted on Blackboard by 11.59 pm on the day a draft is due. You can leave the paper copy in the box on the door of Guerry 211 on the same day or bring it to the next class. Later submission of either copy will attract penalties specified below.

The electronic and paper copies must be identical.

All written work must include the pledge.

I strongly advise you to keep rough and draft work *and* final copies of all of your assignments. You should keep all assignments until the marked assignments have been returned to you and the grades have been posted. You must also retain the initial drafts of your assignments until you can resubmit them along with the final drafts.

I will apply a late submission penalty of 1% of the assignment grade per weekday (Monday to Friday) to the final draft if submitted after the submission deadline.

Initial draft rubric

I. Analysis, argument and evidence (including use of required sources)

1. Provides a convincing thesis statement that answers the question.
2. Supports the thesis with cogent argumentation that draws on course readings, classes, and in-class video) and may include relevant empirical evidence from those—and no other—sources.
3. Answers include sufficient depth and detail and show understanding of key course concepts.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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II. Organization/structure

1. The assignment is well-structured: introduction includes a brief overview of the argument and conclusion explains the implications of the issues discussed.
2. Ideas are logically ordered throughout with clear transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
3. The connection between each supporting argument and the thesis statement is made clear.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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III. Style and grammar

1. Sentences are clear and correct.
2. Good presentation of how the points made fit into a broader argument (for example, each paragraph should have only one main idea and a clear topic sentence).

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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IV. Citation style (including bibliography) and format

1. Follows all assignment instructions.
2. Cites the appropriate sources correctly using the Chicago author-date style, and includes a complete and correct bibliography.
3. Follows all format requirements.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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Final draft rubric

I. Analysis, argument and evidence (including use of required sources)

1. Provides a convincing thesis statement that answers the question.
2. Supports the thesis with cogent argumentation that draws on course readings, classes, and in-class video) and may include relevant empirical evidence from those—and no other—sources.
3. Answers include sufficient depth and detail and show understanding of key course concepts.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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II. Organization/structure

1. The assignment is well-structured: introduction includes a brief overview of the argument and conclusion explains the implications of the issues discussed.
2. Ideas are logically ordered throughout with clear transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
3. The connection between each supporting argument and the thesis statement is made clear.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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III. Style and grammar

1. Sentences are clear and correct.
2. Good presentation of how the points made fit into a broader argument (for example, each paragraph should have only one main idea and a clear topic sentence).

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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IV. Citation style (including bibliography) and format

1. Follows all assignment instructions.
2. Cites the appropriate sources correctly using the Chicago author-date style, and includes a complete and correct bibliography.
3. Follows all format requirements.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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V. Response to feedback

1. Shows improvement over the initial draft.
2. Incorporates instructor's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Failure	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
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