

THE  
POLITICAL  
SCIENCE  
STUDENT  
WRITER'S  
MANUAL  
AND  
READER'S  
GUIDE

GREGORY M. SCOTT  
STEPHEN M. GARRISON

EIGHTH EDITION

# The Political Science Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide

*Eighth Edition*

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# TO THE STUDENT

## WELCOME TO A COMMUNITY OF SKILLED OBSERVERS

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One of the most successful books on counseling psychology is *The Skilled Helper*, by Gerard Egan (10th Edition, 2013). The title's elegant simplicity immediately directs students' attention to the essence of what they, if successful, are to become. We have written this book to help you become a particular sort of skilled *observer*. Practitioners of all the social and physical sciences are, most essentially, skilled observers. They carefully and systematically observe behavior, accurately record their observations, and then describe how they have conducted their research and the implications of what they have discovered. Underlying all these activities, most fundamentally, is the skill of writing. Much in the way a funnel directs liquid to its intended container, writing refines and directs your thoughts into clear, capable, professional literary "vessels" through which you communicate with the community of scholars. This book invites and empowers you to join the particular community of skilled *observers* known as political scientists.

The political science community is now, in 2016, officially 2,351 years old. That is because the foundational work of this discipline, Aristotle's (384–322 BCE) *Politics*, was written in 350 BCE. Yes, people before Aristotle had astutely observed and discussed politics. We cannot read Pericles' (425–429 BCE) *Funeral Oration* or Aristophanes' (450–388 BCE) satirical play *Ecclesiazusae* (392 BCE, "Women in the Assembly"), for example, without knowing that much acutely insightful discussion about politics was well under way, and Plato's (428–348 BCE) political thought was both systematic and substantial. But Plato's preeminent political work, the *Republic* (360 BCE), is an account of Socrates's (470–399) discussions with citizens in Athens, which chronicle the "gadfly's" application of deductive logic to the task of deriving a model of the perfect society.

But political science as known today was born with the very first words of Aristotle's *Politics*, his analysis of political behavior: **Observation shows us . . .** With these three profound words political science, and indeed all science, was definitively born. Aristotle then proceeded to

observe the politics of his own time, chronicle the politics of previous times, and recommend political cultures for the future. It should be noted that through the centuries, whenever political analysis has been based upon skilled observation of human behavior, political science has taken a step forward.

Political science as an academic discipline was launched in 1903 with the founding of *The American Political Science Association* (APSA). Today, political scientists study a wide variety of topics, perhaps best illustrated by APSA's list of organized sections of the discipline:

### APSA Organized Sections:

African Politics Conference Group

Canadian Politics

Class and Inequality

Comparative Democratization

Comparative Politics

Conflict Processes

Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior

European Politics and Society

Experimental Research

Federalism & Intergovernmental Relations

Foreign Policy

Foundations of Political Theory

Health Politics and Policy

Human Rights

Ideas, Knowledge and Politics

Information Technology and Politics

International History and Politics

International Security and Arms Control

Law and Courts

Legislative Studies

Migration and Citizenship

New Political Science

Political Communication

Political Economy

Political Methodology

Political Networks

Political Organizations and Parties  
Political Psychology  
Political Science Education  
Politics and History  
Politics, Literature, and Film  
Presidents and Executive Politics  
Public Administration  
Public Policy  
Qualitative and Multi-Method Research  
Race, Ethnicity, and Politics  
Religion and Politics  
Representation and Electoral Systems  
Science, Technology, & Environmental Politics  
Sexuality and Politics  
State Politics and Policy  
Urban and Local Politics  
Women and Politics Research

As you peruse this list, you will see that the breadth of the discipline offers a wide variety of opportunities to study human behavior.

We shall make two final notes about this ancient and new discipline. First, its accomplishments within and without academia are generally little appreciated and understood. Everyone understands what a historian does, but many people confuse political scientists with historians. One reason for this is that, in general, these scientists of politics eschew publicly marketing their work or their discipline. But sometimes, political scientists break into public view. Here are a few who have done so:

Zbigniew Brzezinski, United States National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter

Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize winner

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Donna Shalala, United States Secretary of Health and Human Services

Herbert A. Simon, Nobel Prize winner

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States

And this is the final note. Americans are little aware of the enormous influence political scientists continue to have on the practices of American politics, which are in some ways foundationally different from what they

were a century ago. The best example of the influence of political science is in the conduct of campaigns and elections. Today's contests are increasingly won by candidates who employ highly sophisticated techniques for identifying, locating, organizing, and mobilizing potential voters. Where did these techniques come from? Political science. Starting in the 1950s, political scientists began conducting studies to understand voting behavior, and now, decades later, their continuing efforts and insights are employed in highly sophisticated ways for practical effect. Much of the credit for President Obama's electoral victories, for example, is often given to the superior electoral organization he founded, an organization empowered by political science.

# TO THE TEACHER

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE EIGHTH EDITION?

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While at times today's world appears to be an uninterrupted stream of reinvention, some things change slowly, if at all. That is why this book's primary value to you, the teacher, has remained the same for more than two decades. This book helps in dealing with three problems commonly faced by teachers of political science:

1. Students increasingly need specific directions to produce a good paper.
2. Political scientists, as always, want to teach political science, not English.
3. Students do not yet understand how and why to avoid plagiarism.

How many times have you assigned papers in your political science classes and found yourself teaching the basics of writing—not only in terms of content but form and grammar as well? This text, which may either accompany the primary text you assign in any class or stand on its own, allows you to assign any of the types of papers described in [Parts 2](#) and [3](#), with the knowledge that virtually everything the student must know, from grammar to sources of information to reference style, is in [Part 1](#) of this one volume.

### ***What's New in [The Political Science Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide, Eighth Edition](#)***

*Every chapter and chapter section has been updated and revised, many substantially.*

*Twelve new chapter sections have been added to the 8th edition:*

[Reading Politics Analytically](#)

[Reading News as Political Power](#)

[Skillful Reading Techniques: How to Read the News Like a Political Scientist](#)

[Analytical Reading Techniques: How to Read Editorials and Op-Ed Essays](#)

Welcome to the National Archives  
Welcome to the Library of Congress  
How to Read the *Congressional Record*  
How to Read the *Federal Register*  
The Presidential Decision-Making Process  
The Law-Making Process  
How to Read Political Science Scholarship  
Discover the Network of International Relations Agencies

*Twenty-two new reading and writing exercises have been added to the eighth edition:*

**Read & Write:** Analyze a Presidential Address  
**Read & Write:** Compare the Slants of Front Pages  
**Read & Write:** Critique a Lead News Article  
**Read & Write:** What to Say? Explain or Persuade?  
**Read & Write:** Freewriting  
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**Read & Write:** Jargon and Descriptive Writing  
**Read & Write:** Identify the Sentence Fragment  
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**Read & Write:** Create an Actually Usable Bibliography  
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**Read & Write:** Locate a Dozen High Quality Sources  
**Read & Write:** Write a Political Philosophy Paper

We hope you find *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide, Eighth Edition* to be helpful to your students and you and we wish you all success.

**PART 1**  
**READING AND WRITING FOR**  
**INTRODUCTORY POLITICAL**  
**SCIENCE COURSES**

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# 1

## READ AND WRITE TO UNDERSTAND POLITICS

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### 1.1 READING POLITICS ANALYTICALLY

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#### Getting Started

It doesn't matter how good a reader you are right now, how much you enjoy reading, how often you read, what sorts of texts you like or avoid, how fast you read, or how effective your level of retention is. The fact is that the remainder of your academic career—the remainder, in fact, of your life—would be made richer if you were better at reading than you are now. This book attempts to make you a better reader—first, by offering you tips for improvement and suggestions aimed at enhancing your enjoyment and understanding of any text, and second, by supplying you with exercises to improve your reading in the specific discipline of political science.

But why do we need improvement in writing? It's such a basic skill, something we all learned to do in grade school. Right?

Well, sort of. Our grade school teachers taught us the basics: how to distinguish words in the characters on a page and how to pace ourselves through a sentence or a paragraph to arrive at a coherent meaning. Without these fundamental skills, we couldn't read at all. That's what secondary school focuses on: giving us the basics.

The problem is that there is more to reading than just those first few steps. If there weren't, then we would all be able to read any text pretty much as well as anybody else. It goes without saying, however, that all of us read at different levels of comprehension and with varying degrees of enjoyment, depending on what we're reading. We are all different people, each with our own preferences, a unique set of experiences that resonate with certain stimuli and less so with others.

Think of all the different worlds you inhabit, your favorite pastimes, hobbies, sports, and school subjects. Each is its own world, with its own set of rules and traditions, modes of behavior and thought, and its own language. Do you remember the first time you watched a professional basketball game on television? The action on the court was no doubt dizzying, but so was the conversation by which the sportscasters and commentators explained each play as it happened. What’s a “pick and roll”? A “double double”—or, for that matter, a “triple double”? Why do some penalties allow for a free throw or two, while some don’t? Basketball is a world with its own rules, its own ways of thinking and speaking. How long did it take you to become comfortable in this world—to become an *insider*?

Okay, so what about politics? If you are a politics junkie, you will understand every word of the following paragraph that a blogger might write to criticize Ted Cruz and some of his followers:

Critics of Ted Cruz decry his pandering to the Tea Party, also known as Baggers—a bunch of disgruntled Kool-Aid drinkers, mostly RINOs and former blue dogs. Recent studies show they are mostly unaware of the greenwashing that sanitizes their Frankenfood. Looking forward to be rid of the lame duck in the White House, they cling to Cruz, a birther whose own lineage is finally helping him grow in office.

If some of this paragraph is not quite intelligible to you, you have yet to become a *political insider*.

To read well in virtually any subject, particularly in any school subject or profession, it is essential that you acknowledge to yourself, as you begin to read, that you are entering a new world, one inhabited by insiders and one that can be difficult to understand for people who aren’t insiders.

Difficult, but not impossible.

It is possible for us to learn how to tailor our reading skills to texts in different disciplines, including those for which we do not have a natural affinity or a set of closely related personal experiences. It requires energy and imagination and, above all, a shift in attitude.

Whether you are reading a textbook chapter, a newspaper or magazine article, an essay in a journal, a book, or a blog, here are some tips to help you master the text.

## **Read with Patience**

Different texts require varying degrees of patience from the reader. When you read a text written in an unfamiliar discipline, be sure you are reading carefully to allow the material—and the world from which it comes—to sink in. Reading with patience means performing certain prereading activities that can help you in mastering the text. Some of these activities are discussed below.

Reading with patience requires making sure to give yourself plenty of time to read the text. If it's a homework assignment, don't start reading the night before it's due. The sense of urgency—if not panic—that attends a rushed reading assignment can drive the material right out of your head before you can master it. Reading with patience also means eliminating distractions—the television blaring in the next room or the MP3 player driving songs through those earbuds you're wearing. Too many people in the apartment? Go find a coffee house with only a few customers or hit the library and find a comfortable chair in the reading room. Would a snack help or hurt your ability to immerse yourself in the text?

To read with patience means arranging your environment to enhance the clarity of your reading experience. The optimal environment is different for each person. What if you actually find television noise or earphone music helpful to your reading? If so, use it, but be honest with yourself about the effect of external stimuli on your reading. The point is to do whatever you can to *reduce your resistance to reading*.

## **Clarify Your Goals Before You Begin to Read**

What is it *exactly* that you hope reading this text will do for you? Are you merely looking for a few facts to shore up a point you are making in a paper? Are you cramming for a test? Are you working to establish a general understanding of a particular topic, or the contours and details of a many-sided argument? Or are you simply reading to amuse yourself? Whatever the reasons that sent you to the text, remind yourself of them from time to time as you read, comparing what you are finding in the text to whatever you are hoping to find. Be ready to revise your goals depending on what you learn from the text. If, for example, you begin reading an article in the *New Republic* examining Republican Congressional opposition to funding gun violence studies, would you become interested in examining the National Rifle Association's (NRA's) campaign contributions to members of Congress?

## **Explore the Text's Format**

*Reconnoiter before diving in.* You need to remember that the writer, whoever it is, wants you to understand his or her writing and has used a variety of devices to help you. If the text has headings and subheadings, read through them first to see if they give you a sense of the author's direction and purpose. Note any distinctions among the headings, some of which might use larger type or bold print to underscore their organizational importance. Understanding the relationship among headings can help you determine the shape of the text's argument.

Are there illustrations? Graphs? Charts? Photographs or drawings? If so, a quick study of them will enhance your understanding of the text's goals and its potential usefulness to you.

## Keep in Mind the Writer's Goals

Read carefully the first paragraph or the first page of the text looking for the writer's main idea and strategy for presenting it. Even if you don't find a specific thesis statement—a sentence or two explaining clearly the purpose of the text—most writers will find a way to signal what it is they hope their text accomplishes. Often the thesis is in the title, as it was for a December 30, 2015, *New York Times* article by Noam Scheiber and Patricia Cohen with the following, rather long-winded title: “For the Wealthiest, a Private Tax System That Saves Them Billions: The Very Richest Are Able to Quietly Shape Tax Policy That Will Allow Them to Shield Billions in Income.” Note how the first paragraph of this article neatly answers the question implied in the title, namely, “*How do these billionaires shape tax policy to suit them?*”

WASHINGTON—The hedge fund magnates Daniel S. Loeb, Louis Moore Bacon and Steven A. Cohen have much in common. They have managed billions of dollars in capital, earning vast fortunes. They have invested large sums in art—and millions more in political candidates. Moreover, each has exploited an esoteric tax loophole that saved them millions in taxes. The trick? Route the money to Bermuda and back.<sup>1</sup>

Remember, too, that there is always another goal the writer hopes to achieve: *he or she is writing to change you* by inviting you to step a little further, and at a slightly different angle than before, into the world of the text, whatever that might be: politics, cuisine, sports, fashion design, music, animal physiology, higher mathematics, or film history. The text is the writer's way of asking you to pass through a doorway into an environment with which you may not be familiar but which, the writer is convinced, offers you a worthwhile experience. As you read and