This handout is intended to provide some specifics as to how to write a research paper. If you have any questions regarding format or writing style, please raise these in class or during office hours. Due is on May 5, 2pm. You turn in your paper to Lilly Lu or drop it in her mailbox at the department office. No late paper will be accepted. First, here are some basics:

1. The paper should be no shorter than 8 pages but no longer than 15 pages, typed, and double-spaced (excluding tables, graphics, and bibliography).

2. The font size should be 12.

3. The paper should have a title page which states the title of the paper, the date, your name, your email address, and PSCI 2300.

4. The paper should be written to follow the *Style Manual of Political Science*, available in the library or on sale on the American Political Science Association web site ([www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)). You can also look at recent articles in *American Political Science Review* or my paper in *American Journal of Political Science* and follow their citation rules.

5. Keep a copy of the paper, as well as the notes which you used as you worked on it, in case the paper is lost or I have questions regarding your work.

6. Attach your SPSS syntax commands to the paper.

7. Plagiarism is prohibited and will result in your failing the course! Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, using quotes from other authors without attributing the source; expressing an idea as your own when it has been introduced by another author; changing only a few words in a quote taken from another text.

8. Your grade will be based on writing style, the scope and structure of the paper, as well as the evidence and conclusions

Second, the structure of your paper should follow the pattern below. Each section should begin with an appropriate subheading.

- **Introduction**: Provide a general idea to the reader about what the topic of this paper is. What is your research question?

- **Literature Review**: Discuss related prior research in terms of the evidence that has been offered on this general topic and what the general conclusions are. This research must be taken from books or from professional research journals such as *American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics,*

- **Hypothesis**: How does it differ from, or related to earlier research? What is the specific hypothesis that you are testing? What is the logic behind your hypothesis?

- **Research Design**: How have you structured the analysis so as to test your hypothesis? What data are you using? What is the unit of analysis? How have you measured the concepts which are stated in your hypothesis? If you are using a sample, how was it drawn? To what population is it generalizable?

- **Presentation of Results**: Provide descriptive statistics. Use tables and graphs to show the result of your analysis. Make your own word tables; do not cut and paste SPSS output into your paper. Discuss the evidence which is central to your hypothesis. Does your evidence support your hypothesis?

- **Conclusions**: What have we learned from this research? If findings are different from previous research, or different from what you expected, what could have contributed to this?

Note that you may lose some points if you fail to follow these instructions in your paper.

Third, I provide four data sets for this research project since data collection may require a lot of time. Use one of them if you find an appropriate research question. The data are available on my web site. If you want to pursue a research question that requires different types of data, please consult with me.