Instructions for the First Research Paper

This handout is intended to provide some specifics as to how you write the first short research paper. If you have any questions regarding format or writing style, please raise these in class or during office hours. The due is on Wednesday, March 24, 3:00pm. Please turn in a hard copy of your paper to me in class or bring it to my office. No late papers will be accepted. Papers emailed me or left in my office/mailbox will not be accepted.

First, here are some basics:

1. The paper should be no longer than 5 pages, typed, and double-spaced (excluding tables, graphics, and bibliography).
2. The font size must be 11 or 12.
3. The paper should have a title page which states the title of the paper, the date, your name and PSCI4120.
4. The paper should be written to follow the citation rules in *American Journal of Political Science*.
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. Your paper has to be about public opinion in the United States. Use ANES 2008 data. Pick up one of the survey questions on people’s political attitudes, see how different their attitudes are, and then explain the differences using any factor you think appropriate. Test your hypothesis using a cross-tabulation table.
7. Attach your SPSS syntax commands to the paper.
8. Please do not use voter turnout or any other variables included in the homework assignment.
9. 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.
10. Your grade will be based on writing style, the scope and structure of the paper, as well as the evidence and conclusions provided in the text.
11. If you do not follow the rules listed above, you may lose some points.

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

- **Research Question and Hypothesis**: What type of public opinion, specifically, are you examining in this paper? What is the specific explanation that accounts for the variation in opinion? What is a logic behind your explanation?

- **Presentation of Results**: Describe what survey questions or variables you use for your analysis. Provide descriptive statistics. Make your own cross tabulation table (i.e., do not cut and paste SPSS output into your paper). Discuss the evidence which is central to your explanation. Does your evidence support your explanation?

- **Conclusion**: What have we learned from this research?