

Writing Assignments
In Mr. Sexton's PS 103 Class:

AFTERALL THIS IS A UNIVERSITY STUDIES CLASS

It is true that United States Political Systems (PS 103) is a political science class. But, it is also a University Studies class. This means that the class is designed to do more than simply educate you about issues and facts as they relate to the political structure and system used by the United States. During the course of the semester you will encounter a variety of assignments. Some assignments will require you to communicate your thoughts, opinions and knowledge through the written word. With that fact in mind, the following outlines my expectations of you when you complete ANY writing assignment this semester.

- 1) All written assignments, both those completed out of class and those completed in class, should be written in complete sentences, with proper paragraph structure. This means that at no time should you use bullet points to answer a question.
- 2) DO NOT wait until the last minute to complete an assignment. It becomes very apparent when a person has waited until the last minute. The quality of the product almost always suffers.
- 3) Your written answers should include the following three parts:
 - a. Introduction (tell me what you are going to tell me)
 - b. Body (tell me the answer to the question)
 - c. Conclusion (tell me what you just told me)
- 4) There should always be 1" margins on all typed assignments. That means a 1" margin on the left, right, top and bottom. For example, if you are assigned a two-page assignment do not use the first third of the first page to identify the date, the semester, your name, your class and the name of your professor. If you find it necessary to provide all that information as part of your assignment, use a coversheet or title page. The coversheet or title page WILL NOT count towards the page total for the assignment.
- 5) Unless otherwise told, ALL writing assignments MUST be typed.
- 6) ALWAYS use 12 point, Times New Roman or Arial font.
- 7) ALWAYS double-space and no more than double-space.
- 8) While I am not going to grade the paper based entirely on grammatical correctness, any paper repeatedly using improper grammar will have its grade reduced accordingly.

- 9) DO NOT PLAGERIZE. If you use someone else's words or ideas make sure you give them proper credit. That does not always mean you must have a Work Cited page. Rather, you can usually simply state where or from whom the following or preceding information came. Plagiarism is considered cheating, and violates the University's Academic Honesty Policy.

KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND WHEN COMPLETING A WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS CLASS: ***"BLOCK COPYING" MATERIAL FROM ANOTHER SOURCE AND CREDITING THAT SOURCE (WITH QUOTATION MARKS), WHILE IT MAY NOT BE PLAGIARISM, DOES NOT MEET THE DEFINITION OF "WRITING A PAPER," AND MATERIAL SO SUBMITTED IS LIKELY TO RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO.***

- 10) DO NOT assume that I understand what you are thinking as you write your answer. The best way to write an academic paper (or answer to a question) is assume the audience, the person reading your answer knows nothing about the topic on which you are writing.
- a. Therefore, if you use words or terminology specific to the topic of the paper or question, make sure you show that you know that the word or phrase means.
 - i. I can teach a parrot to repeat the words "De Jure" and "De Facto", but that does not mean they know what those words mean. My writing assignments are designed to let you show me what YOU KNOW, not what you have memorized or what someone else knows.
- 11) Use the Campus Writing Center when completing any writing assignment. If you develop a practice of taking your assignments to the Writing Center your papers should become more organized and more clearly written. An organized, clearly written paper is much easier to grade, and assuming you put the correct information in your paper, will always receive a higher grade.
- 12) Finally, ASK QUESTIONS. If you do not understand the directions, do not wait until after you get your paper back and say "Those directions were unclear." If the directions appear unclear to you, contact me and I will clarify them. BUT, remember if you wait until the last minute to start an assignment, you will not have enough time to clarify any ambiguity in the directions.