

Rethinking Writing Assignments for Advocacy, Discovery, and Democracy

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Writing assignments do not need to be a chore in our classrooms. We can create engaging assignments that encourage our students to think about problems in their communities, states, and nation; and work towards advocating for change in our democracy. By moving away from the typical research paper assignment for classes, this work considers teaching students how to advocate for solutions to problems that they identify in their community, and, at the same time, discover what issues they care about and who they are politically. Four assignments will be discussed and explanations for discovery, advocacy and impact on democracy examined. Rethinking how we teach writing assignments in our classes is necessary because we are teaching our students to be engaged citizens and active participants in their democracy in contentious times.

Rethinking Writing Assignments for Advocacy, Discovery, and Democracy

What is the purpose of writing assignments in our classrooms? With new challenges of generative Artificial Intelligence, what is the purpose of writing? We have an opportunity, as educators, to consider ways that we can teach students about their ability to communicate ideas and engage in political conversations. After years of the traditional “research paper,” I changed the way I thought about writing and wanted students to know their own power to make change in their communities. While these assignments can be adapted to any class, I have changed the way I think about American Government to teach my students about their own ability to advocate, discover their beliefs and identity, and engage in the democratic process of problem-solving of community issues.

Previous Literature and Resources for Writing in Political Science

Much of the writing that we teach in our classrooms is towards an academic audience. However, Political Scientists have proposed other methods for rethinking writing in the curriculum, including Policy Writing (Pennock, 2011), writing to teach politics (Sherman and Waismel-Manor, 2003) and reflective writing (Josefson, 2005). Pennock suggests that we can develop different skills with policy writing than with typical academic papers and with policy writing we are better preparing students for writing that they will be doing in their future careers (2011, 144). Sherman and Waismel-Manor suggest perspective taking and adjusting the audience are critical to understanding writing in politics (2003, 755). Students develop a “deeper understanding of political actors and institutions” when students write about hypothetical scenarios (2003, 757). Josefson encourages reflective writing instead of the typical argumentative writing done for assignments in political science (2005). With reflective writing, students examine text, their preconceptions, and debates within the field, make an evaluation, and then synthesize their learning as a reflection of their experiences with the course (767).

A variety of texts to teach students research and writing in Political Science exist (Powner, 2014; Baglione, 2018; Schmidt, 2019). However, many of these resources focus on the traditional research

paper of a research question, hypothesis, qualitative or quantitative data, final paper and a presentation. Scott and Garrison highlight different reading and writing methods found within the discipline including writing a policy analysis, Amicus Curiae briefs and book reviews (2016). Getting outside the mold of a methods paper or a “research paper” where we ask students to “research”¹ a topic is valuable to teaching students skills in the 21st century.

Getting student investment into the writing process is essential. If students see the value of the assignment that they are working on, then they have more buy-in and therefore place more effort into the assignment and their course performance (Cavanagh et al, 2016, 1). On the other hand, if students think that their time is being wasted on assignments then they might approach the writing in superficial, rushed, (Brazeal, Brown and Couch, 2016, 1) or AI produced ways. By assigning writing that students could do in their future career, Sherman and Waismel-Manor find students excited and creative with writing news stories and an ad for a political campaign (756).

As faculty, we can become dissatisfied with the ability of our students to construct an argument about a topic from our course (Bob, 2001). Often, we want our students to do more than simply state the information from other sources into their own words, we want students to evaluate information, apply theory to new situations, and develop more nuanced approaches to complex issues. However, there is a mismatch between the skills we want students to learn in the assignments for our courses and the outcomes. The questions we need to ask ourselves are: What do we want out of our papers? What skills do we want to encourage? Do our current writing assignments achieve those goals?

Writing is often a very personal venture where we begin to learn what we think, work with hunches, and write and rewrite for ourselves. Considering two types of writing as writing for ourselves and writing for others (Bolker, 1998, 100-101), each of these has a different audience and purpose. Often

¹ The reason I highlight the idea of “research” is that many of our assignments tend to be superficial gathering of information on a topic and organizing it into a paper. The depth of the analysis and critical lens of our students’ research is often not what we do in political science, but it is what we sometimes teach our students what research is.

when we write for ourselves, we're writing to explain something, identify our thoughts, discover what is truly original about our work, and find what we are trying to say. If we consider these elements of writing, there are pieces embedded there that we could structure in assignments for our students—such as discovering what issues students care about, or how you identify politically. We also have writing for others when we write to explain, argue, persuade, and to put our ideas on the line for others to judge. Writing for others can often be intimidating because we are sharing a piece of ourselves, and we need to understand that our students feel the same way. With these two perspectives on writing, we can create different types of assignments that encourage students to explore what it means to write for others and ourselves (Gentry, 2010a, 2010b).

Political Science Discipline Specific Writing

What is fundamentally different about political science writing that makes it discipline specific is the variety of writing that we do. If we think about writing within Political Science as a spectrum, we write the heavily statistical research reports that are formatted similar to the natural sciences, and we write heavily interpretive work within political philosophy that is formatted more similarly to the humanities. More simply we have a great discipline writing diversity with expectations and writing styles that are fundamentally different based on our subfield and our research.

If we consider Political Science as a discipline that has emerged from philosophy and the social science study of humans, we can better see how Political science as a discipline has discipline specific writing. In every sense, Political Science requires an argument, regardless of specialization. But this is not particularly unique to our discipline. What is unique is the freedom to make an educated assessment. We expect students within the discipline to gather facts—statistical, observational, logical—and come to a conclusion that is based on their interpretation, contribution or argument.

When I have discussed writing in my American government class, the question often is “so, you want our opinion?” to which I promptly answer no. I want your educated assessment. I would like you to

gather the facts about the issue or problem and then provide your assessment of the situation. What I mean by educated assessment is the student's understanding of the subject which includes causes, consequences, and analysis of the problem. The need to differentiate a term like educated assessment is relevant since the layperson's understanding of our discipline is that it is about opinion and the lack of right answers.

In my work of rethinking writing assignments to advance students' ability to discover their political interests, advocate for solutions, and be a part of the democratic process, I created four assignments that scaffolded to build these skills of discovery, advocacy and participation in democracy.

The Papers as a Package

For my class, the papers are scaffolded and build different skills throughout the semester. At the center of the papers are the students; students address problems that they see in society. When political issues are important to the students, students focus on issues that are valuable to them which results in more focused writing and interest in the work. Students have enjoyed the problem-solution model introduced in the course and have built agency, so that students see themselves as participants rather than spectators of politics.

The position paper is the first assignment in the course and begins the process of discovering a problem that students recognize, and think is important. I emphasize the value of their insights into a problem and that they actually have something to say about the issue. I often say "We've solved the easy problems. The problems we face today are complex, complicated and wicked problems and we need your help." From that first paper, students stay with the same problem and develop their argument, writing, and research skills for different audiences.

Assignment	Skill Emphasis	Writing Style
Position Paper	• Discovery • Problem Definition • Identify Solutions	• Policy Memo with Outline Summary • Problem Solution

	• Evaluation • Advocacy	• Advocacy
Letter to the Editor	• Audience • Advocacy • Cost Analysis • Address Opposition	• Letter Format • How to address Editors and find venues
Letter to the Elected Official	• Policy Research • Identify Elected Official • Advocacy for problem • Advocacy for solution	• Letter Format • Find Elected Official • Find Policy Information
Candidate Profile	• Discovery • Advocate for Three Positions • Communication of ideas	• Campaign Sign • Writing or Pamphlet

Each paper builds on the last, from the position paper that is more formal and detail oriented, students then write a letter to the editor. They are working on how to convey information to a wider audience. The shift in audience from the professor to the general public develops the skill of persuasion and perspective taking. Students must address those who might disagree with them about the issue and therefore address opposition in a persuasive argument. Students in the Letter to the Editor make an argument about why this issue is a problem and advocate for the solution that they identify. Students learn how to convey facts and information within the text instead of citations or footnotes.

In the third assignment, students then contact an elected official who can address the problem. They must also do policy research on the issue. For the Letter to an Elected Official, students have to identify the level of government the problem exists in and find someone who is elected to address their concerns. Students learn to be direct and persuasive to a policymaker by telling the elected official what they want them to do. Lastly, students become candidates and write a candidate profile. Because students have practice in discovering their interests and problems that they want to solve, they are better able to communicate their policy positions. Students also research the qualifications needed for a specific office

like age and residency requirements. As a package, each of these assignments builds on the last and relates to topics we discuss in class such as public opinion, political parties, and Congress.²

[The Position Paper](#)

For the first assignment, my students often give me the deer in headlights look. They are often afraid to “get it wrong” and then be graded harshly for it. To dissuade this type of thinking, I ask my students: “Is American Government perfect?” Unanimously, their answer is no. The first assignment in my classes is the position paper. While this writing assignment is similar to a policy brief (Pennock, 2011), the students choose a problem in their community, state or nation, and propose three solutions to the problem. The students then advocate for one solution, by evaluating the other options, then explain why this is the best solution.

Students work on background research of the problem. They work on how a problem is defined and why defining a problem in a particular way matters (such as racist policies for street paving). They utilize research skills to get information about the problem from a variety of sources, which expands their ability to evaluate evidence.

In the position paper, students make a judgment and argument about how the problem should be understood. In this vein, students are better able to make an argument about a problem that they recognize as important, rather than a theoretical argument about a subject in political science (Bob, 2001). While students are able to write a typical paper on a problem, the model of a problem, possible solution and recommendations is different because students become active members of the process in how we, as a society, think about issues.

[The Letter to the Editor](#)

² Even though these examples are from an Introduction to American Government, these assignments can be easily transferred into other classes such as Introduction to Public Policy or Global Politics courses.

Students shift the audience to the general public in the letter to the editor. Not only do they need to be persuasive, but they also have to be concise in their communication to the audience. There are several considerations that we discuss in class about this type of writing. Students must identify what level of government their problem is. They then have to identify media sources to contribute to; typically, these are newspapers. The format of the assignment also changes to a letter format, which teaches professional communication skills of addressing a letter or email, which includes making sure that the title and name of the recipient are clear, and that there is an appropriate closing³ with contact information.

The shift in audience matters, students refocus the writing to convince “regular people” i.e. grandma, that this is an important issue and that we should do what the student recommends to solve it. Students also focus their persuasive argument on a general audience which requires them to identify the problem in a compelling way and propose one solution. The new aspect to their assignment is to address people who might disagree with you on the problem or with your solution. Not only are students making an argument, but they are considering why others might disagree and address the concerns of those who are potential opposition. Considering how people might disagree with you, students take the perspective of community members into account.

Students also estimate a cost analysis, meaning how much they expect solving the issue will cost. This is eye-opening for students because they realize that sometimes you must satisfice (Drakopoulos, 2004), where you might not get the best possible option, but you do get the option that will satisfy the needs of the affected community. Students learn that solutions are not free and that governments have to make decisions with limited resources of funds, expertise, and time. This element of the letter to the editor encourages students to think about why some problems are not solved and the choices that political communities make based on their priorities.

[The Letter to the Elected Official](#)

³ Also known as a valediction, though this term is not typically used.

Students continue to develop their writing skills and their advocacy approach with the letter to the elected official. For this paper, students continue with the topic from the position paper and then do research on policy. Students search through different policy decisions made by the level of government and governing body to find one that matches their topic. After doing the policy research, students tell the elected official what they want them to do (propose, amend, vote against). Students also learn how to identify who their elected officials are and find ways to contact them.

Students discover policy and how to find policy decisions. Additionally, they learn that not all policy gets passed or enacted. When I present this paper, I inform students that they are contacting an elected official that can do something about their problem. To provide guidance to students in the policy research, there is a class resources page on our library website that informs students how to access policy at the local, state and national level. With these recourses students are able to review what policies have been implemented or died in the process.

[Candidate Profile](#)

For the last assignment, students become candidates. In an American government course, this assignment ties together political parties, political participation, and media and politics chapters at the end of the course. Students run for an elected position where they identify three key issues to their campaign, explain their political party choice, and create a campaign theme to connect with voters. Part of this process is self-discovery where students examine their own beliefs and values. They also reflect on their political party choice or can choose to not affiliate with a political party; students explain their choice to their potential constituents. Lastly, they have to think about their messaging and how this messaging impacts potential voters. The images, language, and framing of policy matter.

This assignment is at the end of the semester partially because it has the most variability and creativity. Students enjoy the assignment and realize some important insights about themselves, their values, and their political affiliation. Students also recognize that elected officials are just regular people

who run for office and this assignment allows students to consider themselves as policy decision makers. The interesting submissions are also a joy at the end of the semester, when we can be waylaid with other grading. Students run for a variety of offices including local offices in their hometowns. The two components of the campaign profile are a paper or pamphlet and a yard sign. Professors should be mindful of the obsession with glitter (especially with seniors) and a number of prom pictures used as candidate headshots.

Discovery, Advocacy, and Democracy

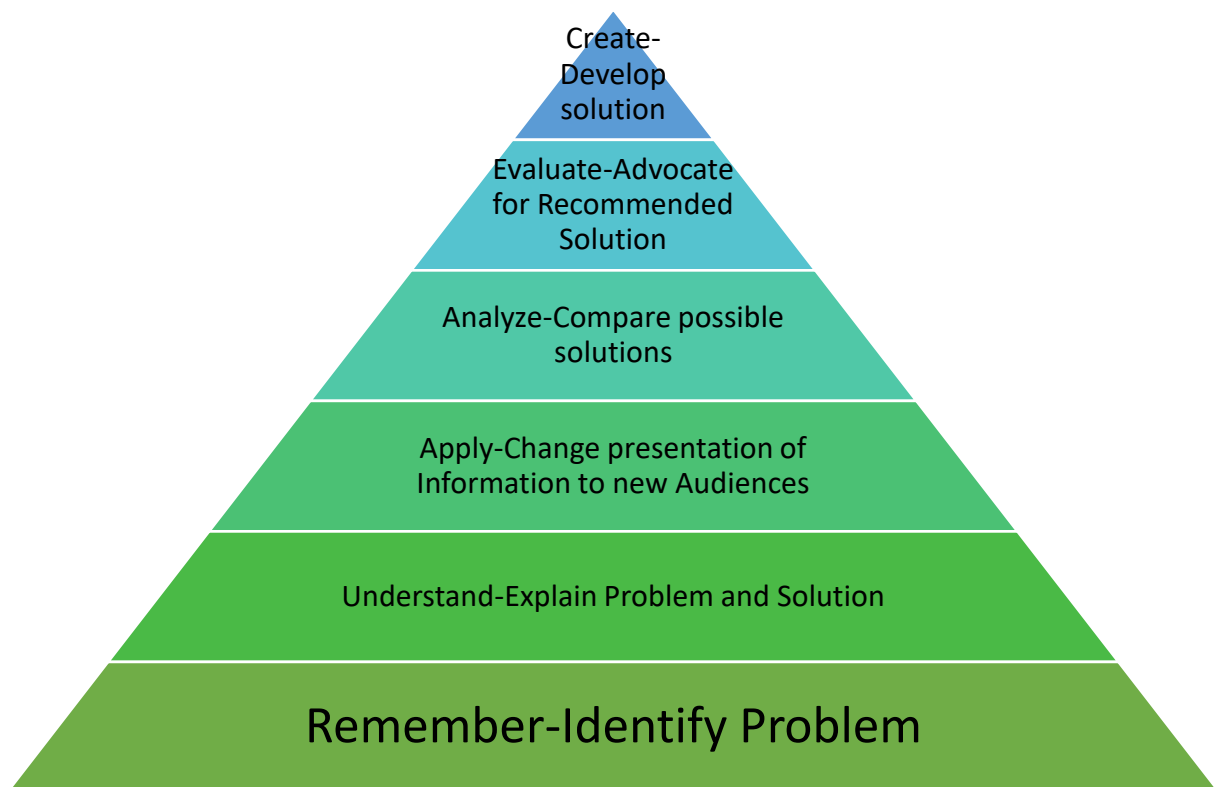
For each of these assignments, students are discovering something new. The discovery component of the position paper includes students discovering problems that matter to them. They also discover or create possible solutions to the problem. For the letter to the editor, students discover how to convey the importance of this problem to a more general audience and examine how others will disagree with them. The shift in audience requires students to rethink how they are presenting information and how they utilize sources. Rather than ignoring opposing viewpoints, students address the opposition and strengthen their advocacy by taking other perspectives into account.

Students from all majors are able to discover how politics impacts their lives and their communities. From the very beginning, students are advocating for the problem definition and the solution. The skills that students are developing include evaluation, advocacy, and research of a problem. These skills are examples of career competencies for any position (NACE, 2023) and can easily translate into problem solving strategies in other areas of life.

All four papers use advocacy, specifically advocating for recognizing a problem and for a solution. The advocacy evolves throughout the process with advocating for a specific solution in the position paper, addressing the opposition in the letter to the editor, and advocating for specific action to be taken by the elected official. In the campaign profile, students advocate for themselves as candidates and advocate for three policy positions. The level of sophistication increases with each assignment and the

type of learning that students are doing levels up in Bloom's Taxonomy (1956; revised Krathwohl, 2002; Please see Appendix E for the revised [taxonomy](#)). Students are creating new solutions, evaluating available solutions, and presenting this information to new audiences and contexts.

Figure 1. Application of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to Rethinking Writing Assignments



The Democracy element of all the assignments are to build the skills and practice engaged citizenship. Identifying a problem and working to solve it is essential to active citizen participation in democracy. Not only are students identifying a problem, they are evaluating the available solutions. Students are examining evidence of a problem, and making an argument about why this is a problem to a wider audience in the letter to the editor; a political activity that less than 4% of the American Public has done (ANES 2016). Students are actually practicing contacting elected officials, something that less than 14% of Americans do (ANES, 2020). When students run for office, they are engaging in an activity that

only 2% of people in the United States have done (Motel, 2014). The practice of engaged citizenship allows students to see how they can engage right now and, in the future, and it takes away the mysticism of learning how to engage.

Challenges

As with any type of assignment, there were a few challenges. Some faculty may not want to allow their students to write on subjects that they know very little about; however, I deeply enjoy learning about what issues students think are important and what drives them. Due to the requirement of concrete evidence, students engage in researching a topic and provide citations for their sources. Another hurdle has been the deer in headlights look from students when you ask them to identify a problem that they want to solve. Choosing a topic is part of the discovery process and allows students to find a topic that matters to them. I work with students to come up with topics if they are at a loss. I also provide examples of topics from previous students.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is teaching students about policy research. Teaching students about resources available to them, where local, state and national government information is, and researching meeting minutes and proposals can be a challenge. Working with a research librarian is essential to providing students with a guide to legislative investigation. Lastly, providing students with examples helps students see how others have completed the work.

Conclusion

Creating writing assignments for courses should begin with what we want students to get out of the course, both knowledge and skills. Changing from a research paper where students provide information about a topic to a set of papers where students practice engaged citizenship has been rewarding as a faculty member. Many of my students come back and tell me about the impact that these assignments had on them, and a few have pursued elected office. When we rethink our writing to include discovery, our students are better able to know more about themselves, their values, and the issues that

they care about. When we include advocacy, students can learn the skills to participate in engaging conversations about community problems and recognize different audiences involved in decision making. When we offer writing opportunities for our students to engage, we demystify forms of participation so that students become actors and not spectators to the Ragnarok⁴ of politics. At the end of the day, I want to empower my students to be the change they wish to see in the world.

⁴ Thank you for getting to the end of the paper—hope you enjoyed the reference! Remember it is always important to read the footnotes.

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Appendix A.

Position Paper Guidelines

The purpose of this paper is to solve a problem. Write as if you are on the staff of an elected official or as if you are on a community committee to solve an important issue in politics. Remember that all politics is local.

-The format for this assignment is the first page should be an outlined summary page, then the next two pages should be the paper itself. Review the excellent example here for clarification.

-Create an outline page that is a single page, describing and defining the problem, the possible solutions, and the recommendation.

-You need to begin by specifying a problem-Define the problem. What is the problem? What is the history of the issue? How is the issue presented? How might different groups define the problem?

-Come up with a solution to the problem.

-Evaluate different types of solutions to the problem.

-Recommend a course of action to take to solve the problem

-Provide a context for the problem-history, how it is currently seen, and possible future of the problem—if it is not a dire issue now, when might it be a dire issue?

-Include relevant information, but limit your scope of information. You have to continually ask yourself, is this a NEED to know piece of information, or just interesting to know.

-When choosing a topic-Choose something that is interesting to you or choose something that will deal with your future career. Do not choose something that is too complex, or legal questions.

-Research information from newspapers, government websites, & official government documents

-For research look in government documents, policy journals, and official documents for organizations (Interest groups)

-Address possible unintended consequences to the possible solutions-how might it be seen in the public eye, could this solution create more problems than it solves? Is this solution better than doing nothing?

-Formal information: This paper will be 4 pages long with the first page being a policy brief, double spaced in 12pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. I do NOT accept late papers. If your paper is not turned in on time it will receive a grade of ZERO. You will need to turn in the paper on January 30th on Canvas! You may submit a Draft of the paper on January 28th before 12pm!

Aspect of Paper	Not Present	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Outline	Outline is not present. Student simply begins paper	Outline is present, but does not have one or more components such as problem definition, three solutions, or advocacy for a single solution.	Outline is present, has all required components, but is unclear, poorly written, or too short to convey enough information.	Outline has all elements, is clear, provides detail, and is written well.	Outline has all elements, provides detail, and is written well. The outline engages the reader and encourages them to want to read more.
Problem definition	The problem is not in the paper.	Student brings up the problem, but it is unclear or poorly defined.	The problem is defined, but vague or not fully fleshed out.	The problem is specific, clearly defined.	The student convinces the reader that this problem is one to care about and gets the reader interested.
Evidence	No evidence is present.	Some evidence is present but it is not cited, is poorly sourced, or is too personal.	Some evidence is cited, while other evidence is not. Citations are missing, or evidence is anecdotal.	All evidence is cited, citations include in-text and a works cited page. Student has carefully considered what sources to use and how to use them.	All qualities of good evidence, but goes above and beyond to use evidence strategically to convince the reader that the problem is important.
Solutions	No solutions are present.	Student presents only partial solutions (2 or fewer) or presents three solutions with	Student states three solutions and has some explanation why these solutions will	Student includes all three solutions and has clear explanations as to why each	Student has creative and thoughtful solutions that are explained fully.

		no follow through.	work. Explanation may be unclear.	solution will work.	
Advocacy	Student does not advocate for one solution	Single solution is mentioned but not explained or is unclear.	Single solution is described why it is the best solution, but student does not address others who might disagree or is unclear.	Solution is explained as the best solution and has an argument that addresses questions or critiques of people who might disagree	Solution is advocated for by addressing its good qualities, addressing multiple arguments against it, and convinces the reader.
Writing Quality	Several errors in the paper make the unreadable.	Spelling and grammatical errors are rampant, but do not directly affect readability of paper.	Some errors are present with spelling, grammar, or citations. Paper has major errors.	Few errors are present. No major errors, some minor errors	Paper is error free or has one or two minor errors.

Appendix B.

Guidelines for Letter to the Editor

PSCI 210 American Government and Politics

The purpose of this assignment is to communicate to the American public why your problem matters. You will use the SAME problem you identified in your position paper assignment. You will practice engaging in a civil dialogue with the public through written communication. This assignment will provide you with practice on civil discourse so that you can engage in this type of participation in the future.

- Address the letter to the specific editor and include the address in the upper left hand corner.
- Provide your **argument**: explain why your opinion of the matter is correct
- Thesis: should be clear, concise, and to the point. Your paper should have a reasoned argument that means you have an answer to the question posed and provide evidence that supports your thesis.
- Make sure you are talking about a *political* issue that YOU care about
- Address the opposition (Who might disagree with you? How would they disagree? What can you say that would change their mind?)
- How much will this policy cost?
- Include an interesting introduction
- Give the “so what?”, why is this an important issue for the editor to care about or the general public
- Use transitions-transitions are the threads that tie your ideas together-make sure that there are transitions between paragraphs, sentences, and ideas
- Provide **EVIDENCE**. What information can you cite that would back up your argument?
- Be mindful of your **audience**. Who do you want to read this letter? Who do you want to inform? Remember that I will be mailing these letters out. Others will see this work and perhaps publish it. Provide your contact information at the bottom.
- Conclude with something memorable
- An Excellent (A) paper requires some amount of creativity and thought. Based on the writing, you have attempted to answer the question while also taking ownership of the thoughts. I **VALUE** what you have to say on your topic. Please share your thought.

-Remember writing is a **process**, you'll need to do multiple drafts of this work. I will read early drafts up to 48 hours in advance.

-Extra credit will be given for letters that get published.

-Formal information: Formal information: This paper will be 3 pages long, double spaced in 12pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. I do NOT accept late papers. If your paper is not turned in on time it will receive a grade of ZERO. You will need to turn in the paper in class at 11:59pm on October 17th. You may submit a Draft of the paper on Saturday October 15th before 11am!

Aspect of Paper	Not Present	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Audience	Student does not change the paper from the position paper.	Most of the paper is cut and pasted from the position paper.	Student has begun to revise the paper addressing any issues in the previous paper.	Student considers how their audience would react to this policy solution and writes in terms average people can understand.	Student engages the reader by really understanding their audience and writing to them.
Evidence	No evidence is present.	Some evidence is present but it is not cited, is poorly sourced, or is too personal.	Some evidence is cited, while other evidence is not. Citations are missing, or evidence is anecdotal.	Evidence is cited using transitional phrases. Student has carefully considered what sources to use and how to use them.	All qualities of good evidence, but goes above and beyond to use evidence strategically to convince the reader that the problem is important.
Addresses Opposition	Student does not address opposition.	Student dismisses opposition, such as some might disagree.	Student attempts to address opposition without providing arguments as to why the opposition is wrong.	The oppositions' multiple points are addressed and discussed. Student makes valid arguments to disagree.	The student uses convincing arguments to get the reader on their side while also addressing the arguments of the opposition.

Advocacy	Student does not advocate for one solution.	Single solution is mentioned but not explained or is unclear.	Single solution is described why it is the best solution, but student is missing some additional explanation.	Solution is explained as the best solution and has an argument that addresses questions or critiques of people who might disagree with the solution.	Solution is advocated for by addressing its good qualities, addressing multiple arguments against it, and convinces the reader.
Writing Quality	Several errors in the paper make the unreadable.	Spelling and grammatical errors are rampant, but do not directly affect readability of paper.	Some errors are present with spelling, grammar, or citations. Paper has major errors.	Few errors are present. No major errors, some minor errors	Paper is error free or has one or two minor errors.

Appendix C.

Guidelines for Letter to the Elected Official

This assignment is somewhat different from the letter to the editor assignment. Your audience is decision-makers who have some knowledge about issues, but may not be an expert in the issue that you are interested in. The purpose of this assignment is to do one of two things: get the government official to DO something or NOT do something.

- This assignment must be based on your position paper problem.

- You should begin with what you would like the elected representative to do (or not do). Tell the elected official what you want them to do in the **FIRST paragraph**! Amend, repeal, support, propose a policy, vote for or against.

- What's New in this paper**: You will need to look at a specific policy. Find out what policy affects your issue. Look up laws, court decisions, or bureaucratic implementation. What specific policy affects your problem? Are there example policies from other communities or states that work to solve your problem?

- Remember that this is a revision of the previous paper on the letter to the editor, your evidence should still be convincing, but is much more geared towards those who make decisions rather than persuading opinion of your audience.

- Use the title of the elected official in your greeting.

- You have to be specific. Be specific about the policy you would like changed. This assignment should be concise and to the point.

- Is there a bill or law that you would like them to vote NO on or repeal or change a certain law? What is the status of the legislation?

- Be persuasive! You are attempting to change the WORLD, convince someone who can make a decision to change your life of what You think about the issue.

- EVIDENCE**-use examples, facts and anecdotes to give your argument credibility

- You must provide an address to the elected official and their title at the top of the first page

- An Excellent (A) paper requires some amount of creativity and thought. Based on the writing, you have attempted to answer the question while also taking ownership of the thoughts. I VALUE what you have to say on your topic. Please share your thought.

- Remember writing is a **process**, you'll need to do multiple drafts of this work. I will read early drafts up to 48 hours in advance, after this time I will read drafts at my discretion.

- Formal information: Formal information: This paper will be 2-3 pages long, double spaced in 12pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. I do NOT accept late papers. If your paper

is not turned in on time it will receive a grade of ZERO. This paper is Due November 7th. You may submit a Draft of the paper on Saturday November 5th before 12pm!

Aspect of Paper	Not Present	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Audience	Student does not change the paper from the position paper or the letter to the editor. Student does not tell the elected official what they want them to do.	Most of the paper is cut and pasted from the position paper or the letter to the editor. Student vaguely mentions what they want the elected official to do.	Student has begun to revise the paper addressing any issues in the previous paper. Student clearly states what they want the elected official to do, but doesn't elaborate.	Student considers how their audience would react to this policy solution and writes to an elected official that can do something.	Student engages the reader by really understanding their audience as an elected official and writing to them.
Policy Research	Student does not have policy research.	Student mentions a policy but does not explain or elaborate on the policy.	Student discusses a current policy and provides some explanation but does not connect to their problem.	Student discusses one or more policies dealing with their problem, explains and connects to their problem.	Student engages the reader by weaving multiple examples of policies, explanations, and thoroughly connects to their problem.
Evidence	No evidence is present.	Some evidence is present but it is not cited, is poorly sourced, or is too personal.	Some evidence is cited, while other evidence is not. Citations are missing, or evidence is anecdotal.	Evidence is cited using transitional phrases. Student has carefully considered what sources to use and how to use them.	All qualities of good evidence, but goes above and beyond to use evidence strategically to convince the reader that the problem is important.

Advocacy	Student does not advocate for one solution.	Single solution is mentioned but not explained or is unclear.	Single solution is described why it is the best solution, but student is missing some additional explanation.	Solution is explained as the best solution and has an argument that addresses questions or critiques of people who might disagree with the solution.	Solution is advocated for by addressing its good qualities, addressing multiple arguments against it, and convinces the reader.
Writing Quality	Several errors in the paper make the unreadable.	Spelling and grammatical errors are rampant, but do not directly affect readability of paper.	Some errors are present with spelling, grammar, or citations. Paper has major errors.	Few errors are present. No major errors, some minor errors	Paper is error free or has one or two minor errors.

Appendix D.

Candidate Profile Assignment Guidelines

The purpose of this assignment is to think about how candidates pursue voters and what makes a candidate convincing. In addition to becoming more knowledgeable about how candidates promote themselves, this is also an introspective look at who you are politically. What is your political personality and what does politics mean to you?

-What elected position are you running for? What are the rules and norms that you need to know to be that candidate? Will you say you are a part of a political party or are you Independent? Or bipartisan?

-Create your three word (or less) theme. The theme of a campaign is what ties all of the pieces together. It encompasses who you are as a candidate and will be a part of your marketing campaign.

-What three issues are your top priorities? Why are they your top priorities? Which side do you support on these issues? Consider HOW you are going to present these to your voters.

-Consider gearing this message to potential voters. Who are the voters that would automatically vote for you? Which voters are you persuading to vote for you? What types of events would you host or would like to be a part of to promote your candidacy?

-How will you talk about yourself? Your background, how you grew up, and why you want to be involved in politics?

-Why are you qualified for the position? (Taking a course in US government does not count.) Have you lived in the community a while? Have you done some sort of community action?

-If you want to run for a position that you are not old enough now, figure out what election year you would be able to run based on you meeting that age requirement.

-Campaign signage. Come up with a **yard sign** based on your candidacy. What should be included on it? What colors should be there?

-You may choose to turn this in as a formal paper or you can create a candidate pamphlet. Either option is fine. With the pamphlet you can put your picture and answer all of these questions above.

-Be creative. If you want to run for an elected office that requires you to be older calculate what year you would need to run.

-Formal information: This paper will be 3 pages long, double spaced in 12pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. If you choose to do a pamphlet, it must be double sided and in three column format. You must also create a Yard sign to accompany your paper or pamphlet. I do NOT accept late papers. If your paper is not turned in on time it will receive a grade of ZERO. You will need to turn in the paper on Canvas by 11:59pm on November 30th. You may submit a Draft of the assignment by November 28th at 12pm.

Aspect of Paper	Not Present	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Audience	Student does not write to potential voters.	Student acknowledges there is an audience but does not adjust their work to it.	Student begins to write convincingly to the potential voters.	Student uses a variety of language to address the audience.	Student has done research on their constituency and knows what their audience wants and addresses that in the work.
Campaign Theme	Student does not have a campaign theme.	Student mentions a theme but does not explain or elaborate on the theme.	Student discusses a campaign theme, but does not connect the theme to the entire campaign.	Student discusses the campaign theme and makes clear connections to the overall campaign.	Student uses creativity and ingenuity to have an encompassing campaign theme that ties the entire campaign together.
Three Issues	No issue is present.	Some issue is present but it is not explained.	Some issue is present and explained but not all three.	All three issues are present and explained.	All three issues are presented and fully explained in their importance.
Qualifications and Position	Student does not articulate any qualifications for the specific position.	A qualification is mentioned but not explained OR student does not mention a position.	Qualifications are present but not fully explained.	Qualifications are present and explained fully.	Qualifications are present and explained fully, and the student considers what qualities are important to voters.
Campaign Sign	Student does not have campaign sign.	Sign is not clear and does not communicate the candidate's intended position.	Sign is missing some aspect such as candidate's name, position, or theme.	Sign is clear and nicely done by including all elements.	Sign is clear, thoughtful, and communicates the intention of the campaign.
Writing Quality	Several errors in the paper make the unreadable.	Spelling and grammatical errors are rampant, but do not directly affect readability of paper.	Some errors are present with spelling, grammar, or citations. Paper has major errors.	Few errors are present. No major errors, some minor errors	Paper is error free or has one or two minor errors.

Bloom's Taxonomy

