

POLI 003: Introduction to Comparative Politics / Summer 2026

Weekly Writing Assignment Instructions

Students are required to complete six short analytical essays, with one essay due each week. Together, the weekly writing assignments count for 30% of the final course grade, with each essay worth 5%. The weekly questions are designed to encourage students to engage with the core ideas of each weekly module. Because this is an asynchronous course, the weekly writing assignment is one of the key components used to assess students' understanding of the course materials and learning objectives.

The essay should directly engage with the assigned weekly reading modules. These essays are designed to combine analysis of the reading with the student's own interpretation, argument, and reflection. The writing topic for each week will be posted in the weekly module.

- All weekly essays are **due every Friday by 11:59 PM**.
- Every essay should be **300–500 words**, not including the title or works cited page.
- Students must complete each weekly writing assignment during the week of the assigned module. Early submission for the next week's topic is not allowed.
- Late submission policy and detailed grading rubric are provided on the next page.

Expected Writing Structure

Each essay should be organized into two main parts and written clearly and directly within the 300–500-word limit. The essay is expected to have **two paragraphs**, with one paragraph focused on the reading-based explanation and the other focused on the student's own analysis, reflection, or argument.

First Paragraph: Reading-Based Explanation

The first part of the essay should focus on the assigned reading and its connection to the weekly topic. This section should not be a long summary of the entire reading. Students should show that they understand the author's argument and can explain it in their own words. In this part, students should:

- Define the key concept or idea related to the weekly question;
- Briefly explain the main argument from the week's reading;
- Explain why the concept, argument, or issue matters.

Second Paragraph: Student's Own Analysis

The second part of the essay should focus mainly on the student's own ideas. Students should clearly express their own perspective, but their ideas should still be connected to the assigned reading. In this section, students may include:

- An original argument in response to the question;
- A logical explanation of why they agree or disagree with the author's argument.
- Relevant examples that support their point.

Students should avoid only saying whether they agree or disagree. They should explain the reasoning behind their view and support their point with evidence, examples, with logical explanation. The essay should end with a brief concluding remark. This conclusion does not need to be long, but it should clearly connect the student's own argument back to the reading and the weekly topic.

Recommended Format:

- Students are encouraged to use the standard document format: Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and 1.5-line spacing.

Grading rubric

- **Articles and Sources (30 %)**
 - Did the student select the correct reading for the weekly topic?
 - Did the student accurately summarize the main idea and central argument of the assigned research?
 - Does the essay explain what the author's argument is doing and why it matters?
 - Do the sources meet the requirements explained in the assignment instructions?
- **Analysis (50 %)**
 - Does the essay show a clear understanding of the topic and begin with a reasonable connection to the assigned question?
 - Does the response present a clear argument supported by quotes or evidence from the assigned articles?
 - Does the second part of the essay include the student's own argument (agree or disagree), reflection, with logical explanation with proper real-world examples?
 - Does the essay include a brief concluding remark that connects back to the topic and reading?
- **Writing (20%)**
 - The essay should be free of typos, grammar mistakes, and incomplete sentences.
 - The essay should have clear paragraph structure, with at least two paragraphs and no more than three paragraphs in total.
 - The essay should use proper citation methods and refer to sources clearly and coherently.
 - The essay should include a works cited page.
 - The essay should use effective transition sentences between ideas and paragraphs.
 - The essay should meet the required word limit of 300–500 words, excluding the title and references.

AI/LLM Policy

- AI tools, including ChatGPT, may be used only for limited support, such as: brainstorming ideas, creating an outline, organizing thoughts, or refining your own writing.
- **AI-generated writing should not be submitted as if it were your own original work. Undisclosed AI use, hidden prompts, or clear evidence that prohibited AI-generated text was submitted will result in a zero for the assignment.**
- If you use AI in an allowed way, you must disclose it in the works cited section.
 - Example: "ChatGPT was used for brainstorming and outlining."

Plagiarism Policy

- Any uncited idea, copied wording, or improperly paraphrased text without citation will be considered plagiarism.
- Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment.
- Before submitting, please carefully check the Turnitin report. (Below 10% is recommended)
- Students should make sure that: all borrowed ideas are properly cited, copied text has not been left unchanged and no citation is missing from the essay or works cited page.

Late Policy

- 1% of the essay grade will be deducted for each hour late, for up to **48 hours** after the deadline.
- Essays submitted more than 48 hours late will not be graded and will receive a zero.