

THE SCHOLARLY ESSAY

Political Science 101

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- wac
- c4w
- writing initiatives
- webmail
- efs

I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of five books and 29 articles, including Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian

Recent presentations
This page contains links to pdfs of slides displayed at presentations I've given.

Books
This page displays the covers and descriptions of books I've authored, co-authored, or co-edited



Blog: Thinking About Writing
A new blog on writing-related issues

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Writing Across the Curriculum website. At the top left is the University of Alberta logo. To its right is the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta" and a large green logo with the text "Writing Across the Curriculum". Below this is a dark green navigation bar with white text links: Home, Presentations, Other Programs, Resources by Subject, Contact Us, WAC Videos, WAC Statistics, WAC Data, and Newsletter. The main content area has a yellow header with "Home > Home". Below this, there is a section for "WAC Faculty workshops in Winter 2010 start January 19." with a link to subscribe to the newsletter. A sidebar on the left features a photo of a woman writing on a whiteboard, with the text "Presentations to Classes" and a list of links: C4W, Writing@UofA, WRS Courses, Roger Graves, Blog, and Academic Honesty. The main content area continues with a question about improving student writing, followed by contact information for Roger Graves. Below that, it lists services for individual instructors and departments, each with a bulleted list of offerings. At the bottom, there is a section for "Upcoming Presentations and Workshops: WAC Events Calendar" with a calendar interface for October 2010, including navigation arrows, a "Today" button, and options for "Print", "Week", "Month", and "Agenda".

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>



CENTRE FOR WRITERS



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Centre for Writers at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta", and the "Centre for Writers" logo. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Appointments, Contact Us, Location, Coaches, Resources, FAQ, and WAC. The main content area has a breadcrumb "Home > Home" and a "Welcome to the Centre for Writers" section. This section states that free one-on-one writing coaching is available to all students, instructors, and staff. It lists the types of writing projects that can be assisted, such as theses, essays, and lab reports. A red link "Request a class room visit by a tutor." is provided. Below this, a notice welcomes back for the Fall 2009 term, stating that tutoring hours begin on Monday, September 14, and that an online appointment-booking schedule will be available soon. On the right side, there is a date stamp "9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM", an "Express News" section, a "Twitter Updates" section with a tweet about the center opening for the fall term on Monday, September 14, and a "follow me on Twitter" link. At the bottom right, there is a "GramWOW" section with a video player showing a person holding a sign.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta
Centre for Writers

Home Appointments Contact Us Location Coaches Resources FAQ WAC

Home > Home

9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM

Welcome to the Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization and idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

Request a class room visit by a tutor.

Welcome back for the Fall 2009 term! Tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14. The online appointment-booking schedule will be available to clients as soon as possible prior to this date. We look forward to working with you!

Express News

Twitter Updates

The Centre for Writers will open for the fall term on Monday, September 14! 5 days ago
[follow me on Twitter](#)

GramWOW

YouTube

<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>



NOTE THE VERBS: WHAT MAKES IT SCHOLARLY?

- Examine
- Analyze
- Critically analyze
- Historically analyze
- Assess
- Interpret
- Debate
- Consider
- Illustrate
- Evaluate
- Identify
- Engage
- Explore

What do these terms mean to you?



TRANSFORM QUESTIONS INTO VERBS

Q3. What is the basis for these claims and what is your position?

Does this mean

- “examine” the basis for these claims?
- “assess” the basis for these claims?
- “evaluate” the basis for these claims?
- “identify” the basis for these claims?



QUESTION 4

- Choosing two or three examples, **explore** the benefits and drawbacks of a strong national identity.

What does **explore** mean here?

How does the question tell you to organize your essay?



QUESTION 2

What are the benefits and drawbacks of mandatory voting?

Again, what verb should you employ here:

- “examine”?
- “assess”?
- “evaluate”?
- “identify”?
- “compare”

How does this question tell you to organize your essay?

Although M. V is usually great because leads to greater representation of the population, in the case of . . .



QUESTION 7

- What are anarchists and what were they doing at the G-20 summit in Toronto this past summer?

Again, what verb should you employ here:

No government; lack of societal constraints;
absolute freedom;

Protesting globalization; opportunity to get points
across protesting big govt; collaboration of govts
—opposed to;

It was a good thing that anarchists protested
globalization in TO because big govt results in
less personal freedom, to record ideas that the
mainstream media suppresses; expose abuse of
power



INVENTION: GENERATE IDEAS

- Brainstorm, Q:
idea maps,
questions



THE ESSAY

- Write an interesting and well-argued paper, based on scholarly sources.
- Use the work in the annotated bibliography as your sources



THE AUDIENCE?

- You aren't told who the audience is, so you must assume the audience is the professor.

What do we know about her?

- Values research and evidence from credible sources: what does she think is credible? What is not credible for her?
- What evidence counts in political science? (rubric says “making direct reference to readings and lecture material”—are you supposed to quote from sources or not?)
- “clear, focused & well-developed argument”: what does that look like?
- How do you demonstrate “thorough knowledge of subject matter”?
- Requires Chicago reference style (historians use this)—where will you find out about that?



METHODS THAT WORK TO IMPROVE WRITING QUALITY

1. **Direct instruction (.80 effect size)**
2. **Peer assistance (.75)**
3. **Setting product goals (.70)**
4. Word processing software (.55)
5. Sentence combining (.50)
6. **Process approach (.32; .80 done well)**
7. Prewriting (.32)
8. Inquiry (.32)
9. Models (.25)



WHAT QUESTION WILL YOU STUDY?

- Identify a question
- Translate that question into a thesis by stating what your attitude is to that topic
- Despite the recent globalization of the world—and the interconnectedness of trade, finance, migration, and culture—the idea of sovereign nation-states perseveres and will remain strong as the world comes to terms with the scarcity of oil and the restrictions on trade and the movement of people that will result. (J. Rubin, *Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*)



TURN A TOPIC INTO A THESIS

- Anarchists, Toronto 2010
- **Anarchism** is a political philosophy which considers the state undesirable, unnecessary and harmful, and instead promotes a stateless society, or anarchy.^{[1][2]} It seeks to diminish or even abolish authority in the conduct of human relations.^[3] Anarchists may widely disagree on what additional criteria are required in anarchism. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* says, "there is no single defining position that all anarchists hold, and those considered anarchists at best share a certain family resemblance."^[4]
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism>, November 4, 2010

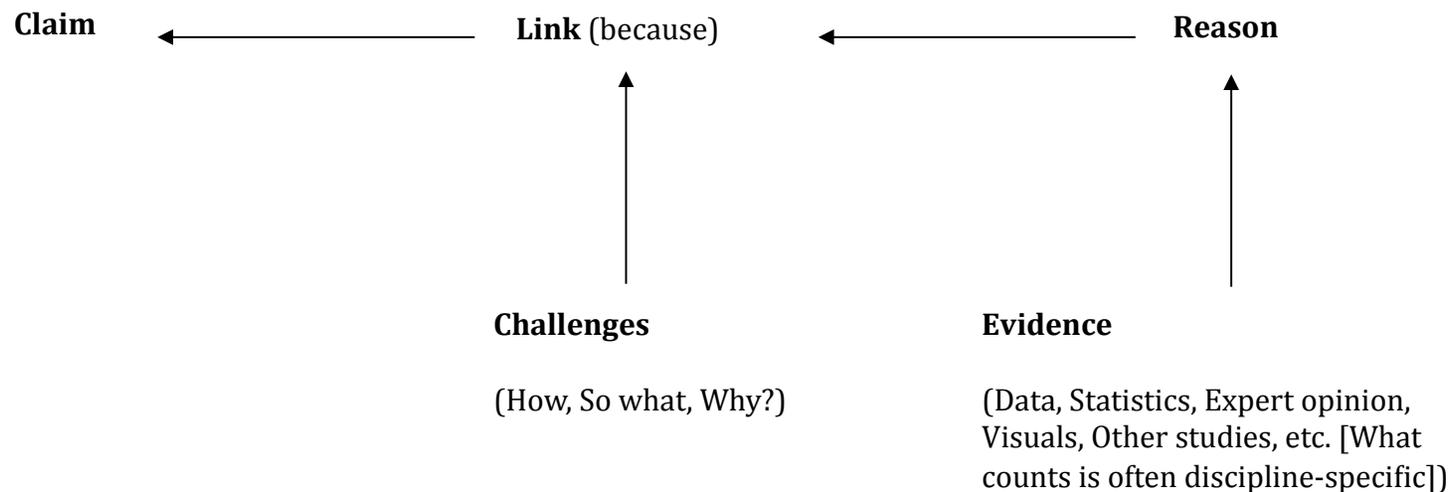


YOUR ARGUMENT

- Main claim
Anarchists gathered in Toronto in 2010 at the G-20 meetings because the convergence of representatives from those countries provided an focused opportunity to protest government control of society generally, and class-based privileges afforded to the governing classes specifically.
- Subsidiary claims



INFORMAL ARGUMENT AND ACADEMIC WRITING



Ex.. While a lack of voting suggests problems within a democratic society, it should not be confused with a lack of political participation because political participation is a broad category that includes, among other things, voting.



CLAIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Claim + stated reason rest upon an unstated reason
- Both the stated and unstated reasons rely on shared assumptions of value between the writer and the reader
- Evidence demonstrates the validity of the stated or unstated reasons
- When values are shared, less evidence is needed to convince the reader



A CLAIM IN 3 PARTS

- Using examples drawn from Canada, Spain, and India, I argue that national identity is a flawed concept that nevertheless works because it allows groups of people to organize themselves and negotiate their differences relatively peacefully.
- Example/evidence: Canada
- Example/evidence: Spain
- Example/evidence: India
- Conclusion



GETTING ORGANIZED

- **Thesis= main claim, argument**
national identity is a flawed concept that nevertheless works because it allows groups of people to organize themselves and negotiate their differences relatively peacefully
- **Body: subsidiary claims**
- The work done to build a sense of nationalism in Canada succeeded in creating a strong, internationally respected community even though it also resulted in a resurgence in nationalism within the French-Canadian community.

