

Political Studies Program Moderation Paper Guidelines

(revised February 4, 2014)

You are asked to select one reading of the several listed under the “documents” section of the politics website for your moderation paper. Choose the one whose argument you find most provocative and/or relatable to your own interests and intellectual background. In preparing your response to the moderation reading, please adhere to the following format. First, write clearly and in complete sentences and limit your response to a minimum of 5 double-spaced pages and a maximum of 7 double-spaced pages. Second, organize your paper as follows:

PART ONE: The Argument. This section provides a summary statement of the argument of the article. It should include a clear statement of the question(s) being examined, a concise summary of the article’s main argument and a brief overview of the literature(s) and/or controversies the author is addressing or challenging. This section of the paper should be no more than 1.5 pages long.

PART TWO: Approach/Methodology. This section offers a characterization of the "strategy" of the article; in other words, how the author goes about proving his or her case. There is no general way to write this section, since political analysis varies greatly in approaches and methodologies, but your response should address some of the following questions. What approach does the author take in answering the question? What is the evidence brought into the analysis by the author to demonstrate his/her argument? You may also comment on the methods by which the author reached his/her conclusions: historical analysis, statistical or survey data, case study analysis, or multi- national comparisons. This section of the paper should be no more than 1 page long.

PART THREE: Critical Evaluation. This section offers you the opportunity to freely discuss the subject of the reading and offer your own assessment of the analysis. How successful is the author in executing the research agenda? Was the argument persuasive? If not, why? Can you conceive of alternative arguments to those set forth by the author? What does the article contribute (or fail to contribute) to your understanding of any of the issues that attract you to the study of politics? If the article addresses an issue or topic from the past, how does the analysis contribute to contemporary debates in political studies? You should, in your assessment of the article, *develop an argument* about its strengths and weaknesses.

The Political Studies moderation essay is due by 4pm on the day you hand in your short moderation papers to the registrar. For those planning to moderate in Spring 2014: Friday, March 21, 2014.

Please bring THREE copies each of the two short essays and THREE copies of the PS moderation essay to Leslie Clockel’s office in Albee B101 (the faculty secretaries’ offices in the basement of Albee). Each essay should be clearly marked with your name and your advisor’s name.