

Department of Political Science Scholarly Writing Rubric

Intended learning outcome assessed with this instrument: “Ability to write clearly about political issues, including the ability to access and assess the wide range of information sources available and use these appropriately to make assessments and support arguments.”

Student work assessed: Abstracts of major research papers prepared by students in Level III seminars

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
Presence of a clear and compelling thesis that makes a claim	Claim is explicit, contestable, and interesting, and refers to scholarship and/or theory	Claim is explicit, contestable, and interesting	Claim is implied and/or unsophisticated	
Reference to relevant evidence and reasoning	Detailed and specific; includes rationale for conclusion. Explains <i>why</i> and how conclusion reached	Adequate information about evidence and sources; explains <i>what</i> was examined	Limited information about evidence and sources	
Use of disciplinary or interdisciplinary tools to interpret/analyze the topic	<i>Critically engages concepts or methods:</i> Engages theoretical or conceptual debates and/or seeks to overcome shortcomings in the scholarship	<i>Applies concepts or methods:</i> Frames the subject matter by applying disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary concepts, theories, scholarly debates, and/or modes of analysis	<i>Uses terminology:</i> Uses a few disciplinary or interdisciplinary term(s)	
Clear and engaging writing style	Vivid and compelling language and artful organization of ideas	Consistently clear language and sequencing of ideas	Sometimes vague, confusing or hard to follow	

Note: This rubric is adapted from the “Effective Writing” rubric template developed by the interdisciplinary St. Olaf Collaborative Assessment for Liberal Learning (CALL) Effective Writing Team in Spring 2009.