Research Paper Details

Below are instructions regarding the research paper assignment. If you have questions about any aspect of the assignment, please ask me. Not understanding what I am asking is not an excuse for not completing the assignment in the manner required.

The paper must be **10-15 written pages**. The written page count does not include the title page or reference page. Double spaced, times new roman, include page numbers. Title page should include title of paper, your name, course name and semester. The paper should include an introduction and conclusion. You must use in text citations and format the reference list in the appropriate reference style.

*Citations & References*

**This link provides a formatting guide and other information on appropriate paper and citation format:**[**http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/**](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

The examples below are the American Psychological Association citation style (commonly used in public administration).  
It is important to include references in papers. References help to validate the ideas and arguments as well as avoid plagiarism, i.e., claiming someone else's work as your own. Plagiarism is unethical and discredits those who engage in the practice. Plagiarism can cause you to fail my course.

Paraphrasing occurs when you "summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words" (APA, 2001, p. 349). You must refer to the source in these cases even if they are just ideas.

For direct quotes [using exact words from the text]:

 "The sentence is between the quotation marks" (Author, year, p. ).

Author (year) found that "the law was unconstitutional" (p. ).

Reference Lists (Works Cited, Bibliography)

Journal Articles: Last name, A.B. (year). Title of article. Name of Journal, Volume, p. #.

Books: Last name, A.B., & Last name, C.D. (year). Name of Book (Xed.). Location of publisher: Publisher.

News Articles: Last name, A.B. (year, month day). Title of article. Name of Newspaper, p. #. Retrieved Month day, year from [http://www](http://www/)….

Websites: Title of webpage. (year, month day). Retrieved month day, year, from [http://www](http://www/)...

\*\*If you cannot find the date for the webpage then use (n.d.) which stands for no date.

\* Source: American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Conducting Academic Research

Academic research should be done in an objective manner, by analyzing and providing information that has been validated through studies, experiments, and/or peer reviewed procedures. While the use of some websites that are official websites (so not blogs, Wikipedia, personal websites, about.com, etc) can add to a paper and can provide useful information, an academic paper cannot rely on one organization’s website for all sources. A research paper is not a recitation of a few websites. Research papers should include sound academic references such as academic journal articles, books and some web sources preferably items such as policy reports and official government documents. The research should be used to respond to whatever question/issue you have chosen to address. You should have some of your own interpretation in the research paper, not just a regurgitation of other materials. For example, if you are examining one organization be sure to provide all perspectives on the organization. A research paper is not an advertisement for an agency. Ask questions and look at the criticisms of the organization. You can then determine whether those criticisms are correct and/or suggest ways the organization can improve itself.

If you need aid in finding research you can contact the librarian at SFA who has a focus in public administration. SFA Public Administration Librarian: <http://library.sfasu.edu/research/subject/liberal-and-applied-arts/public-administration/>

What is a peer reviewed academic journal and why do we want you to use them? Peer reviewed academic journal articles are written by experts whose work has been examined by other experts in the field. They are not news or magazine articles. The main reason we ask for this type of research is the process that the research must go through. Other experts examine, critique and may require revisions in the research to help ensure it is accurate. (for more see <http://www.lib.jmu.edu/help/peer.aspx>) When you conduct research using online databases through the SFA library such as the Academic Search database, you can check a box for 'peer reviewed' and search for articles that fall within the specific peer reviewed category.

Examples of Common Public Administration Journals: Public Administration Review, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Policy Sciences, Administrative Theory & Praxis, Public Personnel Management, Public Administration Quarterly, Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management

**Basic Sections of a Research Paper**

*Title Page:* This is the first page where you will have the name of the paper, your name, the class and semester listed.

*Abstract:* This is on the page after the title page. The abstract is an overall summary of the paper and is usually written after the paper is completed. When you read an academic journal article the abstract is that first part that tells you about the article and gives you hints to whether it is something you want to continue reading.

*Introduction:* The paper begins on a separate page after the abstract. Do not write the word introduction at the top of the page. Instead, have your title at the top of the first page, insert an additional space or two and then begin the introduction. Here you want to introduce your topic and provide a roadmap that outlines what it is your paper addresses. Let the reader know the specific question (basically your research question(s)) you are addressing. Even if it seems repetitive since you have the abstract, the abstract and the introduction should be able to stand on their own. The introduction is a way for the reader to know what to expect as they go through the paper. Academic papers should have no major surprises (you are not writing a novel). The other sections do not need to begin on their own pages.

\* Because this is a literature based research assignment I am not having you include a methods section where you would explain how you gathered your data (such as by surveys or running statistics). You may have to do this in other classes, but I am not having you do it here.

*Literature Review:* This section may contain sub-sections (and probably should contain them). This is where you will discuss, organize and connect the various resources you use. For example if your topic is about leadership you might have two or three academic articles on different leadership styles. You explain what those academic articles say and organize them in a way that connects in some manner.

*Discussion/Analysis:* Here you explain your answer to the research question(s) you posed earlier in the introduction. For example, if you wanted to address the question of what is the culture of SFASU, your literature review would have explained what scholars have said about organization culture (such as how to define it, what its elements are, etc). Then here you would discuss SFASU and explain what the elements of SFASU’s culture are (you already know the general elements based on the literature, here you add to the literature by saying what SFASU’s elements are). This is your original thought on the topic.

*Conclusion:* In the conclusion, summarize what the paper has said overall. Remind the reader what you said you would do in the introduction, mention the general theme of the literature review and then reiterate the results/analysis from your discussion section. Again, this probably seems redundant with the abstract and introduction, but assume that you have to constantly make the connections for the reader. When you read academic articles or textbooks they do the same thing. They explain what the chapter is about in the introduction, go through the material and then provide a summary at the end of the chapter. You should essentially be doing the same.

Example of a Basic Research/Writing Checklist

\_\_\_\_ Title page  
\_\_\_\_ Abstract  
\_\_\_\_ Title at top of first written page  
\_\_\_\_ 12 point font in Times New Roman  
\_\_\_\_ Page numbers  
\_\_\_\_ Introduction  
\_\_\_\_ Roadmap included in introduction  
\_\_\_\_ Research question presented  
\_\_\_\_ Section headings correspond to roadmap  
\_\_\_\_ Contractions spelled out  
\_\_\_\_ Numbers 10 and below are spelled out  
\_\_\_\_ Acronyms are in parentheses after the first full use of title/agency  
\_\_\_\_ Long quotes have been single spaced & indented  
\_\_\_\_ In-text citations have been checked  
\_\_\_\_ Research question addressed  
\_\_\_\_ Conclusion  
\_\_\_\_ Reference list has been checked