

Tutoring Guide for Papers in Comparative Politics

The Assignment in General:

The purpose of a comparative politics paper is to analyze the relationships between political theories and particular historical or political phenomena. Such analysis includes the formulation and testing of certain hypotheses using either inductive or deductive logic.

The Paper's Structure and Development:

- **Introduction should do the following:**
 - » Clearly state the problem to be addressed.
 - » Pose the research question and explain how the paper will answer it.
 - » Discuss why this question is interesting theoretically and important practically.
 - » Declare what two (or more) authors' approaches the paper will compare.
 - » Clearly state the paper's thesis.
- **Body of the paper can use a variety of organizational approaches, including the following:**
 - » Hypothetical-deductive Method: Explain the theory(ies) first, including why it/they were chosen, deduce a series of hypotheses from the theory(ies), describe each case, then test each hypothesis with each case. Repeat for each case the paper addresses.
 - » Induction-to-theory Method: First, explain the observation of a case, then derive hypotheses from the cases, and choose which theory(ies) best explain the case or invent a new theory to explain it.
 - » Comparative case Method: Propose a theory, then test it against several cases or compare/contrast cases, then theorize why those comparisons/contrasts are interesting.
 - » Single Case Method: Analyze a case, then explain how a cause produced a given effect; refute rival hypotheses/theories.
 - » Time Lapse Studies: Compare two or more periods of time within a case's history or examine one time period, tracing the cause to the effect from the start to the end of time period.
- **Conclusion** should summarize the paper's findings, including cause-effect relationships discovered and the relationship these findings have to the previous literature. Be sure to note which theory(ies) best explain the cases. Conclusion should also state the theoretical, chronological, and geographical scope and relevance of your findings. Finally, the conclusion should enumerate all possible theoretical and policy-relevant implications.