

Guideline for Students on Policy Briefing Paper

Students will write a policy briefing on a current/ongoing transitional justice processes. For the purposes of writing this paper, it may be useful to imagine yourself in the role of an analyst for a non-governmental organization, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or the International Center for Transitional Justice. Generally in this role as a NGO analyst, you will evaluate existing policies (whether or not they have been effective) and in cases where the policy seems to fall short of its objectives, you will make recommendations on how to change the policy. If this is somewhat difficult to imagine, it may be helpful to watch some video clips on what these NGOs work on (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkl44sAEC6c>).

The learning objective of this paper is to allow students to:

- Summarize and evaluate one existing transitional justice policy for a state;
- Modify what needs to be modified in the policy (after the evaluation);
- And make the recommendations to reform the policy for policy makers.

To complete the paper in a successful way, several steps are recommended for students to take.

- First, students need to pick a state they would like to examine/research.
 - The state can even be one that has been covered in class.
- Second, students need to pick a transitional justice policy from the following:
 - Reparations
 - Reparations policy
 - Prosecutions
 - Preferably focus on the most studied cases
 - Truth-seeking
 - Truth-commissions
 - Memory-building
 - Preferably focus on the most studied cases

Researching a topic for a paper is always a challenging task. If you have trouble in understanding how to go about starting your research, you should consider signing up for a library-research help session (sign-up sheets available during office hours), which will be offered on September 23 (Friday) from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the Department of Political Science Undergraduate Computer Lab.

- Third, after some level of research, students should submit an outline for comments and feedback on their topic.
- Fourth, after students receive the feedback, they should reflect upon the comments and follow-up with questions if necessary.
- Fifth, students will write an abstract for their paper. The abstract, does not need to have every single finding that you have come across on your research. In 100 to 200 words,

students will summarize their own arguments for the paper. There is *no* need to include a reference or a citation for the abstract. Use your *own* words to summarize your paper.

***Writing a paper (even an abstract) is always a challenging task. If you have trouble going about the writing process, please consult Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> and the writing reference book for more guidance.**

- **Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. 2010. *A Writer’s Reference*. 6th Ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martins.***

- Sixth, students will be given feedback on their abstract, which then would further guide them in the process of writing their paper.

- Seventh, students on a *voluntary* bases may sign up for the optional peer-review session. Peer-review provides students with an alternative way of looking at their topic and helps clarify arguments.

- Eight, students will submit their papers. The final paper should include:
 - Overview of the political, social, and economic context of the state where transitional justice is occurring;
 - Description of the transitional justice process and the violations the policy seeks to address;
 - Analysis of the challenges that the policy has encountered;
 - Key recommendations (from your viewpoint) for particular actors to address the challenges.

Chronology of deadlines:

September 23, 3:30-5:00 p.m.	October 14, 5:00 p.m.	November 2, 5:00 p.m.	November 18, 2:30-5:00 p.m.	December 12, 3:00-5:00 p.m. or 11:59 p.m.
Optional	Mandatory	Mandatory	Optional	Mandatory
Research Help Day	Outline Due	Abstract Due	Peer-Review Writing Help	Final Paper Due
Location: Undergraduate Computer Lab (Political Science)	Location: Beering Hall 2245 or via e-mail	Location: Beering Hall 2245 or via e-mail	Location: Beering Hall 2245	Location: Beering Hall 2245 or via e-mail

Rubric for evaluation:

Presentation of the transitional justice policy	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describes the problem • Provides detailed overview of the political, social, and economic context of the state • Clearly defines what the transitional justice policy seeks to address (or provide a solution for) 	Meets all the criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; occasionally lacks clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear; underdeveloped
Evaluation of the policy	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describes the challenges the policy has encountered • Analyzes the effectiveness of the policy in its objectives that it has defined • Clearly assesses the status of the policy 	Meets all the criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; occasionally lacks clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear; underdeveloped
Description and Justification of the Proposed Recommendation	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describes proposed solution/modification • Explains the costs; convinces that the reader that the writer has done their homework • Solution is made to seem doable (not imaginary or unrealistic) • States clear, effective reasons in support of 	Meets all the criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; occasionally lacks clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear; underdeveloped

proposed recommendation • Supports reasons with effective evidence			
Overall clarity of Writing	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows reader-expectation theory (strong organization with topic sentences at the head of paragraphs) • Clear, concise, and adequately developed • Avoids errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling • Avoids errors in references and citations 	Meets all the criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; occasionally lacks clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear; underdeveloped

Total of 40 points