
PUAF 650: MORAL DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY
(Normative Analysis)
Spring 2006: Section 0101

Specific Guidelines for Op-Ed Piece

1. In this short “opinion” essay (op ed. piece) (3-4 double spaced pages), you will clarify and defend your answer to the following questions: “Was the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002 justified?” If you argue that the war was not justified, what is the least drastic change in the circumstances in Iraq that would justify an invasion? If you argue that the war was justified, what is the least drastic change that would reverse your conclusion?
2. **Op-Ed Paper due Sunday, February 19 at 9:00 a.m. Please email your paper by (preferably) Word attachment to dcrocker@umd.edu.**
3. Some eye-catching device would be good in the op ed piece. At the outset, get as clear as you can on exactly what issue you are addressing, what problem you are trying to solve, what question you seek to answer, or what thesis you will be defending (in contrast to issues you are not treating, and so forth). Clarify or define key terms and technical terms.
4. Do I want *your* opinions? Yes and No. Yes, the paper should feature your own analyses and evaluations of the views of others as well as your own judgments and views. But I want more than your *mere* opinions, for I want you to clarify and argue for them.
5. In the course of your paper, anticipate and try your best to answer at least one objection to your views or counter-argument to your argument. This requirement is crucial and is often the difference of a letter grade. (For example, you might do the following in the midst of or at the end of your paper: “How might X respond to my criticism? She might argue A or B? Now let us see whether either A or B is a good argument. Are its premises true? Does the conclusion follow logically from the premises?”)
6. It is permissible but not required to refer (positively, negatively, neutrally) to at least one of the authors we have read in the class.
7. If and when you depend on or borrow from the arguments or views of someone else, indicate so in the text. Depending on your topic, you may *not* need to read any material beyond the texts assigned in class, although such material may be helpful as you go more deeply into a subject than we have been able to do in class. However, consider this project more of a “thought” paper than a “research” paper. If you use a secondary source, even an “expert” one, don’t assume that it is correct. Don’t commit the fallacy of “appeal to authority.” Even experts can be wrong and/or have bad arguments. Think for yourself. Plagiarism, like other forms of cheating, will result in an F in the class.
8. The paper should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a 12 point font.
9. Your grade will be lowered at least ½ letter grade if your spelling (including typos), grammar, sentence structure, and so forth, is judged to be sub-standard. Non-native speakers should have a native speaker check your paper before you hand it in. The writing lab is also a good resource.
10. Late papers will not be accepted (with the exception of a death in the family).