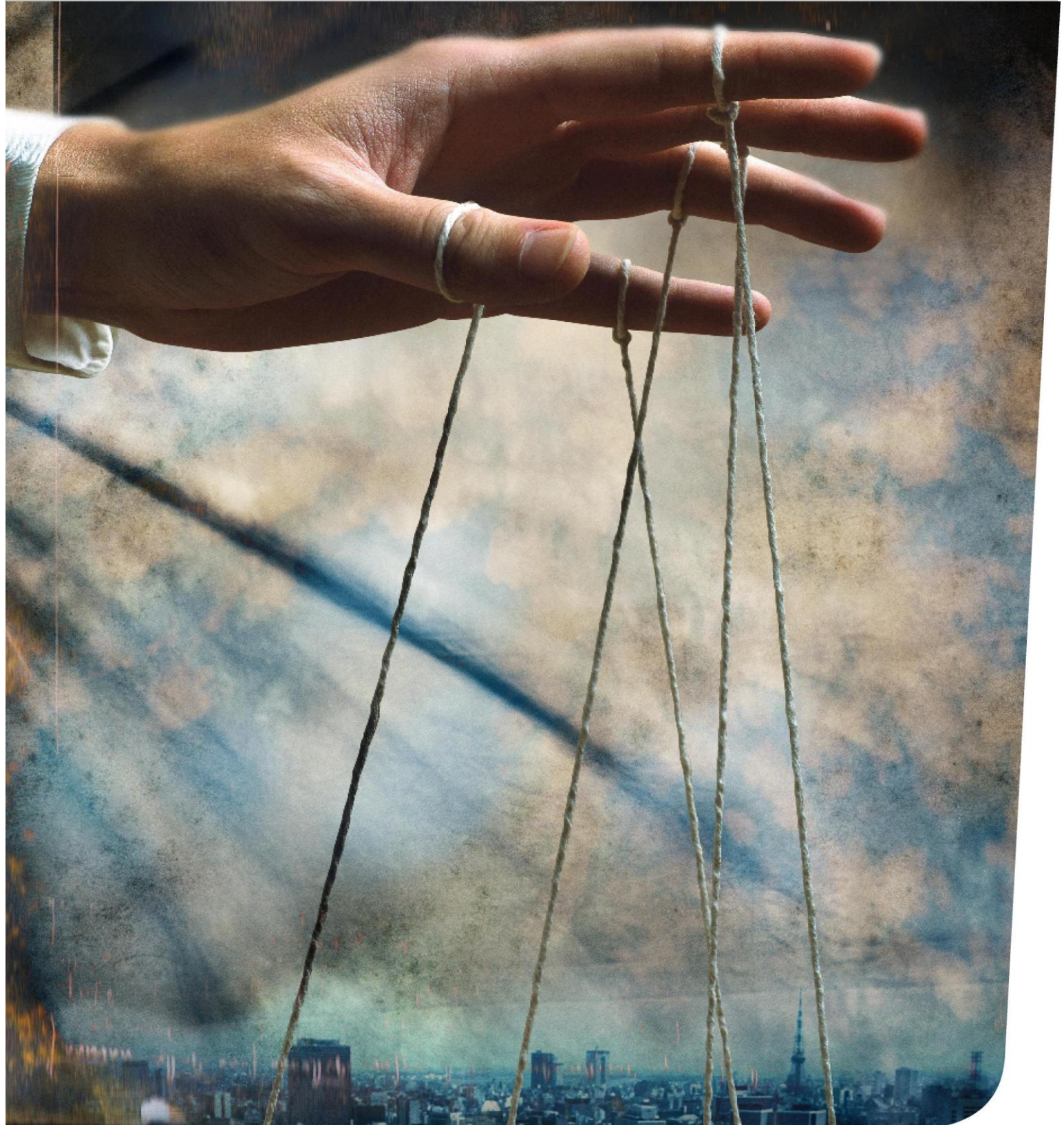


Department of Political Science and Public Policy

Essay Writing and Referencing



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Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Political Science and Public Policy and to the challenges, discoveries and opportunities that await you. The Department offers papers in all areas of Political Science – Comparative Politics (the study of politics within countries), International Relations (the study of politics between countries), and Political Theory (theories about politics), as well as Public Policy. Whether you focus on one or more of these areas or follow a broader programme reflecting your own interests, your study of Political Science will deepen your understanding of the political world we live in. As well as gaining a body of knowledge about the institutions, processes and theories of politics, you will acquire invaluable skills in research, analysis and presentation. You will gain the ability to assimilate and assess a wide range of evidence, to make use of many different methodological and theoretical approaches, and to critique their use. These skills, gained through the assignments that you undertake, will be of great use in your career.

Grades

Grading standards are as follows:

A+	85-100
A	80-84
A-	75-79
B+	70-74
B	65-69
B-	60-64
C+	55-59
C	50-54
D	40-49
E	0-39

A grades (75% and over) Excellent work. There is a clear focus on what the assignment or piece of assessment should achieve, and it is structured accordingly. The work is well written (or delivered) and free of all but very trivial errors. There is clear evidence of a thoughtful and original approach. The student has developed opinions on the issues being considered, and can explain and support these opinions persuasively with evidence. The relevant literature, class materials, or primary sources have been considered and integrated into the work, with appropriate referencing.

B grades (60 to 74%) From a little below average (B-), average (B), to somewhat above average (B+). Reasonably organised and written or presented. The student has an understanding of the topic and has read enough

to be familiar with the key material. There is some evidence that the student has understood ideas and concepts, can handle evidence, and can explain and present these adequately. But there are weaknesses either in organisation, use of evidence, or reference to the literature. Usually this means that the student could have done better with more time and effort.

C grades (50 to 59%) Just adequate to adequate. The basic requirements of the assignment or piece of assessment have been carried out, but there are quite substantial gaps and weaknesses. The student has a very general understanding of the topic and has written or presented the assignment so that it can be understood. Some use of relevant material is made. Reading has been adequate but may not have been sufficient to do justice to the topic.

D grades (40 to 49%) The student has not done what was required for the assignment. The topic is not well understood, little reading has been done and often the assignment is poorly written or presented.

E (under 40%) Unacceptable work. Usually little or no understanding of the topic is demonstrated, and ideas are unstructured and badly expressed.

Student Support

Student Learning Support

Student Learning Support are available to assist students with learning, communication and other study-related problems. They can provide help with essay writing, study skills, and examination/test performance, free of charge. Any student enrolled at the University of Waikato is able to contact Student Learning Support for assistance. To make an appointment, or to find out more about their services, please call them on 07 838 4657 or contact them via email at slsadmin@waikato.ac.nz.

Maori Students

Te Aka Matua Support Unit within FASS is available for taura studying any of the Faculty's courses. The kaiāwhina, or mentors, can help with essay writing, referencing, going over concepts discussed in class and much more. Te Aka Matua can be reached via email on kaiawhina@waikato.ac.nz, by telephone on 07 838 4466 ext 6539, or drop in to room JK2.02, in either groups or singularly. More information about the support group can be found at <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/teakamatua/>.

International Students

The International Advisor for the department is Professor Dov Bing. He can be contacted via email at dovbing@waikato.ac.nz or by telephone on 07 838 4533. He can assist you with any queries you might have.

The Faculty also has an International Student Support Coordinator whom you may contact, Jianli (Jenny) Xu. She can be contacted via email at jennyxu@waikato.ac.nz or by telephone on 07 838 4364. The Faculty also provides a number of tutors to work with International students taking papers across the Faculty. These tutors are employed to guide students in their study skills, and written assignments. Please refer to the Department's notice boards in J block for more details. More information can be found at: www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/student/international/tutors.shtml.

Policies and Procedures

Plagiarism

‘Plagiarism means presenting as one’s own work the work of another, and includes the copying or paraphrasing of another person’s work in an assessment item without acknowledging it as the other person’s work through full and accurate referencing; it applies to research and to assessment (as defined in the *Assessment Regulations 2005*) presented through a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance or other medium.’

(Extract from the Student Research Regulations 2000)

Plagiarism is a very serious offence and teaching staff are required to send all cases to the Disciplinary Committee.

Please record your references carefully and accurately.

Special Consideration

Students are able to apply for special consideration if, due to circumstances beyond their control (such as illness, injury, bereavement or trauma), they are prevented from submitting a piece of internal assessment or undertaking an examination, or if the student’s performance and ability to prepare for an examination is seriously impaired.

If a student would like to be considered for special consideration on an internal piece of assessment, the student should apply to the examiner/lecturer for the paper in which the assessment is prescribed.

For more information please refer to:

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/enrolment/exams3.shtml> or

<http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/assessment.html#p4>

Class Representation

Class Representatives are elected to liaise between the students in the paper and the academic staff who are teaching the paper.

For more information please contact Student Support Advisors on 07 838 4466 ext 6264 or refer to:

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/enrolment/studrep.shtml>

Complaints Procedures

Students are encouraged where appropriate to raise any matters of concern directly with the lecturer. Students who wish to make a formal complaint should use the prescribed form, available at <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/files/docs/complaintform.doc>, and should send it to the Dean or Director who is responsible for the matter which has given rise to the complaint. Complaints should be made within three months of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint.

For more information please refer to:

<http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/policies/studentcomplaints.html>

Policies and Regulations

Your attention is drawn to the following policies and regulations which are contained in the University Calendar:

Assessment Regulations 2005

Student Discipline Regulations 2006

Computer Systems Regulations 2005

Policy on the Use of Maori for Assessment

Human Research Ethics Regulations 2005

Student Research Regulations 2000

Advice on Essay Writing

The following is a general guide to essay writing and referencing. You may find it helpful to use this advice as a checklist before, during, and after you write an essay.

Your lecturer may provide you with specific guidelines for essay writing or assignments – in which case you **must** follow those instructions.

Reading

To write a good essay most students will normally need to read a variety of works. Relying solely on lectures, or lecture notes, is likely to result in an essay that is, at best, barely adequate and may fail.

It is a good idea to think hard about the question, and to work out a provisional position, *before* undertaking reading. Having thought about the issues raised by the question your reading is more likely to be ‘engaged’ – and you will be in a better position to decide what is relevant and what is not, and to make notes accordingly. Be prepared to revise your position in the light of your reading.

Beware of attempting to read too much, or of putting off beginning to draft your essay too long. You cannot read everything and you are not expected to. You should therefore select what you read with some care.

The reading list for the course will provide you with a list of works worth reading. There are, of course, many other works worth reading, many in the Library. Many students find the web a convenient source. You should note that, unlike reputable academic journals and books from publishers of repute, material may be posted on the web without having been subject to any process of quality control. However, traditional and reputable journals are increasingly becoming available on the web, thereby combining convenience with quality assurance.

Some tips on reading:

- Ask yourself why you are reading this book/article? Is it relevant to your topic?
- Scan the contents page (or the abstract of an article) to get an idea of what the focus of the material is.
- Read the introduction and conclusion first carefully. Usually the introductory and concluding chapters of a book summarize the main ideas covered in the book.
- Skim read the chapters/rest of the article – noting subheads that may indicate key themes.
- Aim to read actively – note key points down as you read. Note any questions you may have on the material.
- Try to think critically of the arguments in the material. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Does the author provide persuasive evidence to back the arguments? Do you agree or disagree with the author and why?

Good Structure

Your essay should have a clear structure. Many students find this the most difficult aspect of writing a good essay. An essay that rambles on, making one point after another in no apparent order and with no clear pattern, is an essay lacking structure. Readers of such essays will usually have no sense of where they are being led, or why, or of how far they have got. Just as lectures that make points in this way are hard to follow, so are essays.

An essay with a structure will have parts to it (and probably sub-parts); and the various parts will have been arranged in an appropriate order. Your essays will rarely develop structures on their own: structures have to be imposed. And you cannot impose what you do not have. So – unless you have very good reason to believe you are a naturally gifted writer – you need to work out what the structure of your essay is going to be, and then consciously mould the material into that shape.

The starting point for working out a structure for your essay should be the *question*. If, for example, the question asks you (explicitly or implicitly) to do *three* things, then it is almost certain that to give your essay a good structure you will need to have *three* distinct sections. (If you can break the question down further into sub-parts, these will provide you with further divisions.)

Besides division, structuring involves *ordering*. Think about the order in which you are placing your points. Students often put down points either in the order they happen to have thought of them or in the order in which they appeared in a lecture or book. These are *not* good reasons for ordering. You should impose a rational and coherent order on the material. Thus you should

outline a view *before* you criticize it; you should usually make the more important points *before* the minor ones; and you should avoid discussing the same question twice at different points in your essay – unless, of course, you have thought about it and deliberately decided to do it that way for some good reason.

It is generally a good idea (and always safer) to make the structure of your discussion explicit by giving your reader ‘signposts’. These are expressions like ‘I will discuss three arguments for democracy. The first is . . .’ and ‘Turning now to the second argument . . .’ You can also use headings to mark divisions and sections.

Your essay should begin with an introduction and end with a conclusion. The introduction should generally be used for explaining what you are going to do; the conclusion is for summing up, and for making explicit what you think you have shown. (Beware of claiming to have shown more than you have.) Both your introduction and conclusion should normally be brief (half a page for each is usually plenty). Avoid making entirely new points in the conclusion, or repeating at great length what you have already said. Instead try to draw together the various points you have made.

Basic structure of an essay:

- *Thesis statement* : Begin your paper with an introduction that contains a bold, provocative statement or claim that you are making about the issue you are analysing. Everything else in your paper should in some way support this overarching claim or thesis statement.
- *Body of the essay* : Identify the main arguments you are going to make to support your thesis statement. Each of these should be presented and developed in a separate paragraph. These paragraphs should be

arranged in a logical order and there should be transitions or links between the paragraphs.

- *Conclusion* : Your paper should have a conclusion that re-states your arguments briefly and also re-states your thesis statement.
- You must include a bibliography at the end of the essay giving full citations for all your sources.

Answering the Question and Relevance

You must answer the question. This may sound elementary and it is. But it is often forgotten. Failing to answer the question is the most common reason for getting a low grade. Answering the question means avoiding writing things that are irrelevant – wandering off the topic. It also means addressing the entire question, not just part of it. To answer the question you must first read the question carefully and think what it means.

Clear and Succinct Expression

You must express your points clearly. Some students appear to believe that they will impress if they use lots of long words and an elaborate and convoluted style. This is a mistake. You should strive to express your ideas as clearly and simply as possible. This is especially true when writing about abstract and complex ideas. With little effort, writing about complex ideas can be made utterly unintelligible. This is not the aim.

To express your points clearly you should write in grammatical sentences, choose the right word to do the job (the one that means *exactly* what you mean), use paragraphs to mark the significant divisions in your discussion, and avoid long sentences unless confident you can competently handle them.

While you should write at sufficient length to make your meaning clear, you should also seek to express your points succinctly. You have only a limited number of words at your disposal: repetition and wordiness add nothing to your answer and waste your opportunity to make additional points.

Presentation

You should present your essay without unnecessary blemishes. This means you should type your essay, format the essay with reasonable margins and with double spacing, avoid fancy and distracting fonts, minimize spelling and punctuation mistakes, use apostrophes correctly (if you do not know how they are used, take the trouble to find out), and proof-read your work thoroughly. You are strongly encouraged to consult the following two books:

William Strunk, Jr., *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1979).

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998).

Proper handling of Quotation and Paraphrasing

In the course of your essay you may need or wish to include passages taken from works you have read. This is called 'quotation'. You may also need or wish to make a point or argument you have got from your reading, but in your own words. Expressing in your own words points or arguments you have taken from others is paraphrasing.

To be avoided is something between quotation and paraphrasing: taking a passage and altering a few words here and there. If you are quoting, you must quote *exactly*. The words in quotation marks must be the *exact* words used in the original, right down to the punctuation. If you are paraphrasing you must put the point in your own way: the words used must be your own. Always decide whether you are quoting or paraphrasing, and act accordingly.

If you use another's work – whether by way of quotation or paraphrase – you *must* acknowledge that you have done so. If you quote, place the quoted material in quotation marks and provide a reference (either in parentheses or as a footnote). If you paraphrase, do not use quotation marks, but acknowledge your source with a reference.

Failure to acknowledge properly the use of others' work is always a very serious academic failing, and it may make your work so academically worthless as to result in a grade of zero. Plagiarism – that is, presenting as one's own work the work of another – is prohibited under the Assessment Regulations, and constitutes misconduct under the Discipline Regulations. It is likely to have very serious consequences, and you should take scrupulous care to ensure that whatever you use of others is properly acknowledged.

Your essay should be primarily your own words: thus excessive amounts of quotation should be avoided. It is usually appropriate to limit quotation to not more than 10% of your text. To some extent what is appropriate depends on the type of question asked and the type of essay you are writing. If you have been asked to discuss a particular text, then more extensive use of quotation may be appropriate. It is, however, extremely rare for long quotations to be appropriate. Long quotations usually demonstrate only a capacity to copy and type. The space they occupy can generally be better used for displaying more significant abilities.

Some tips on improving your paper:

In reading over the draft of your paper, see if you have addressed the following questions:

- Does the paper have a thesis statement? Is the thesis statement a significant, bold declaration or a bland, trivial, or obvious claim? Is the paper really organized around the thesis statement, or do large parts of the paper seem to have no relevance to the thesis statement?
- Is the paper well argued? Are the assumptions clearly stated and examined? Are conclusions supported by good reasons and sufficient evidence?
- Does the paper draw upon and use ideas, concepts, and theories from relevant readings to assess the subject matter and to provide deeper insight for the reader? Does the paper go beyond merely providing a description or a summary of what others have said?
- Is the paper based on a reasonable amount of research?
- Are sources appropriately cited? Are sources cited whenever they should be? Is the citation format system consistent? Are the references complete and in the recommended standard format?

- Is the paper well organized? Are the subtopics arranged in a logical way? Are there appropriate connections and linkages among subtopics? Are major subtopics identified with subheadings?
- Is the paper well written? Is the paper readable, with few if any errors of grammar, punctuation, usage, spelling, and style? Is the paper written so that it is interesting to the reader, assuming that the audience is college students who haven't taken this class?
- Does your paper use proper English? Keep your paper formal - a chatty, folksy style is inappropriate to this kind of writing.

Reference Styles

References may be in any style but must be sufficient to enable your reader to readily find the passage. Author, title, and page number(s) is the minimum for print media. References must be listed in alphabetical order. Electronic sources must also be acknowledged. Use a consistent style throughout your essay. You will be penalized for inadequate referencing.

Common reference styles that may be used are:

The Harvard System

Traditional System

Chicago Manual of Style

APA Style

If you are unfamiliar with any of these styles you may like to use the following simplified style derived from the Harvard System (a full style manual is available in the Library).

In-text Referencing

When you cite an author in the essay, you need to provide in brackets the surname, year and page number. From this the reader can then find the details of the book referenced in the bibliography. For example:

“Ecological rationality is a concept important to most environmental and natural resources policy ...” (Bartlett 1986:66).

For the same author with two publications in the same year use ‘a’ and ‘b’ to distinguish between the works:

Bartlett (1986a)

Bartlett (1986b)

For the Reference list or Bibliography at the end of the essay

Full bibliographical information should be given at the end of your essay.

Book:

Authors, date of publication, title of book, place of publication, publisher.

McKeogh, C T., 2002, *Innocent Civilians: The Morality of Killing in War*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Book chapter:

Authors, date of publication, title of book, place of publication, publisher.

McKeogh, C T., 2002, *Innocent Civilians: The Morality of Killing in War*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, (Chapter 2).

Edited Book:

Authors (ed), date of publication, title of book, place of publication, publisher.

Bhavnani, K-K, Foran, J. & Kurian, P.A. (ed), 2003, *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture and Development*, London, Zed Books.

Book chapter from edited book

Author, date of publication, title of chapter, names of editor/s, title of book, place of publication, publisher.

Rolls, M. 2002, 'Indonesia's East Timor experience', in Ganguly, R., & Macduff, I. (ed), *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia*, New Delhi, Sage.

Journal Articles:

Author, date of publication, title of article, title of journal, volume number, issue number in brackets, and page numbers of the article.

Kurian, P & Munshi, D. 2003, 'Terms of empowerment: gender, ecology and ICTs for development', *Feminist Media Studies*, 3(3):352-355.

Newspapers:

Author, title of article, name of newspaper, date, page number.

Smith, R. 'Now is not the time for apathy', *New Zealand Herald*, 4
February 2003, A15

Electronic Sources:

All references to material cited from the world wide web must include the date on which you accessed the information.

Author, title of article, title of journal (newspaper), date, web address,
accessed on

References from television sources should cited as:

Name of person being quoted/cited, name of programme, name of channel,
date.

Further Advice

If you require further advice please discuss your essay with the lecturer of your paper or tutors.

For more information, please contact:

Department of Political Science and Public Policy

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

The University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone (07) 838 4702

Freephone 0800 WAIKATO (0800 924 528)

Fax (07) 838 4203

Email politics@waikato.ac.nz

www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/politics/