


THE SCHOLARLY ESSAY

Political Science 101

Roger Graves

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ROGER GRAVES



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February 13, 2009


- wac
- c4w
- writing initiatives
- webmail
- efs

I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of five books and 29 articles, including Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian

Recent presentations
This page contains links to pdfs of slides displayed at presentations I've given.

Books
This page displays the covers and descriptions of books I've authored, co-authored, or co-edited



Blog: Thinking About Writing
A new blog on writing-related issues

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Writing Across the Curriculum website at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the 'Writing Initiatives' logo, and the 'Writing Across the Curriculum' logo. A green navigation bar contains links for Home, Presentations, Other Programs, Resources by Subject, Contact Us, WAC Videos, WAC Statistics, WAC Data, and Newsletter. The main content area includes a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Home', a notice about WAC Faculty workshops in Winter 2010, a call to action for improving student writing, and lists of services for individual instructors and departments. A sidebar on the left lists links for Presentations to Classes, C4W, Writing@UofA, WRS Courses, Roger Graves, Blog, and Academic Honesty. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Upcoming Presentations and Workshops: WAC Events Calendar' with a calendar interface for October 2010 and options to print, view by week, month, or agenda.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta

Writing Across the Curriculum

Home Presentations Other Programs Resources by Subject Contact Us WAC Videos WAC Statistics WAC Data Newsletter

Home > Home

WAC Faculty workshops in Winter 2010 start January 19.
Click [here](#) to subscribe to the WAC newsletter.

Would you like to improve the writing of your students? Improve their learning of your lecture material?
Are you looking for new ways to engage your students in your course materials?
If this interests you, contact [Roger Graves](#): or 492.2169

What can we do for individual instructors:

- meet to talk about ways to incorporate informal (short, impromptu) writing assignments into any class, small or large
- review via email any assignment you give students that has a writing component to help make it clearer for students and to help develop grading rubrics to improve the speed and accuracy of grading
- visit your class to help students get started on your writing assignments

What can we do for departments:

- hold workshops on creating good writing assignments
- host discussions of how to improve the writing of students in your programs
- conduct reviews of writing assignments in your departments courses to identify exactly what your students are being asked to write—and to ensure that they have access to resources on how to write (online and on-campus)

Upcoming Presentations and Workshops:
WAC Events Calendar

Today ◀ ▶ October 2010 Print Week Month Agenda

Presentations to Classes

C4W

Writing@UofA

WRS Courses

Roger Graves

Blog

Academic Honesty

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>

CENTRE FOR WRITERS



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Centre for Writers at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta", and the "Centre for Writers" logo. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Appointments, Contact Us, Location, Coaches, Resources, FAQ, and WAC. The main content area has a breadcrumb "Home > Home" and a "Welcome to the Centre for Writers" section. This section offers free one-on-one writing coaching and support to students, instructors, and staff. It lists services such as thesis formation, organization, idea development, grammar, and documentation style. A red link "Request a class room visit by a tutor." is present. A notice states that tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14, 2009. The right sidebar contains a date "9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM", an "Express News" section, a "Twitter Updates" section with a link to follow on Twitter, and a "GramWOW" section with a video player showing a person holding a sign.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta
Centre for Writers

Home Appointments Contact Us Location Coaches Resources FAQ WAC

Home > Home

Welcome to the Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization and idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

[Request a class room visit by a tutor.](#)

Welcome back for the Fall 2009 term! Tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14. The online appointment-booking schedule will be available to clients as soon as possible prior to this date. We look forward to working with you!

9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM

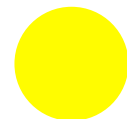
Express News

Twitter Updates
The Centre for Writers will open for the fall term on Monday, September 14! 5 days ago
[follow me on Twitter](#)

GramWOW



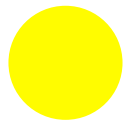
<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>



NOTE THE VERBS: WHAT MAKES IT SCHOLARLY?

- Examine
- Analyze
- Critically analyze
- Historically analyze
- Assess
- Interpret
- Debate
- Consider
- Illustrate
- Evaluate
- Identify
- Engage
- Explore

What do these terms mean to you?

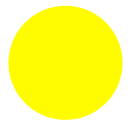


TRANSFORM QUESTIONS INTO VERBS

Q3. What is the basis for these claims and what is your position?

Does this mean

- “examine” the basis for these claims?
- “assess” the basis for these claims?
- “evaluate” the basis for these claims?
- “identify” the basis for these claims?

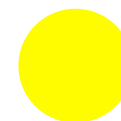


QUESTION 4

- Choosing two or three examples, **explore** the benefits and drawbacks of a strong national identity.

What does **explore** mean here?

How does the question tell you to organize your essay?



QUESTION 2

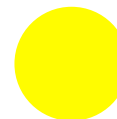
What are the benefits and drawbacks of mandatory voting?

Again, what verb should you employ here:

- “examine”?
- “assess”?
- “evaluate”?
- “identify”?
- “compare”

How does this question tell you to organize your essay?

Although M. V is usually great because leads to greater representation of the population, in the case of . . .



QUESTION 7

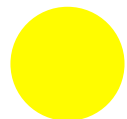
- What are anarchists and what were they doing at the G-20 summit in Toronto this past summer?

Again, what verb should you employ here:

No government; lack of societal constraints;
absolute freedom;

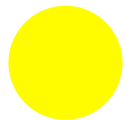
Protesting globalization; opportunity to get points
across protesting big govt; collaboration of govts
—opposed to;

It was a good thing that anarchists protested
globalization in TO because big govt results in
less personal freedom, to record ideas that the
mainstream media suppresses; expose abuse of
power



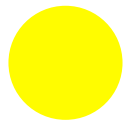
INVENTION: GENERATE IDEAS

- Brainstorm, Q:
idea maps,
questions



THE ESSAY

- Write an interesting and well-argued paper, based on scholarly sources.
- Use the work in the annotated bibliography as your sources

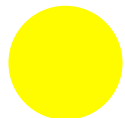


THE AUDIENCE?

- You aren't told who the audience is, so you must assume the audience is the professor.

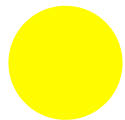
What do we know about her?

- Values research and evidence from credible sources: what does she think is credible? What is not credible for her?
- What evidence counts in political science? (rubric says “making direct reference to readings and lecture material”—are you supposed to quote from sources or not?)
- “clear, focused & well-developed argument”: what does that look like?
- How do you demonstrate “thorough knowledge of subject matter”?
- Requires Chicago reference style (historians use this)—where will you find out about that?



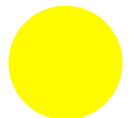
METHODS THAT WORK TO IMPROVE WRITING QUALITY

1. **Direct instruction (.80 effect size)**
2. **Peer assistance (.75)**
3. **Setting product goals (.70)**
4. Word processing software (.55)
5. Sentence combining (.50)
6. **Process approach (.32; .80 done well)**
7. Prewriting (.32)
8. Inquiry (.32)
9. Models (.25)



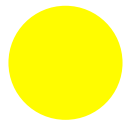
WHAT QUESTION WILL YOU STUDY?

- Identify a question
- Translate that question into a thesis by stating what your attitude is to that topic
- Despite the recent globalization of the world—and the interconnectedness of trade, finance, migration, and culture—the idea of sovereign nation-states perseveres and will remain strong as the world comes to terms with the scarcity of oil and the restrictions on trade and the movement of people that will result. (J. Rubin, *Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*)



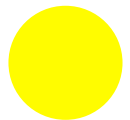
TURN A TOPIC INTO A THESIS

- Anarchists, Toronto 2010
- **Anarchism** is a political philosophy which considers the state undesirable, unnecessary and harmful, and instead promotes a stateless society, or anarchy.^{[1][2]} It seeks to diminish or even abolish authority in the conduct of human relations.^[3] Anarchists may widely disagree on what additional criteria are required in anarchism. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* says, "there is no single defining position that all anarchists hold, and those considered anarchists at best share a certain family resemblance."^[4]
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism>, November 4, 2010

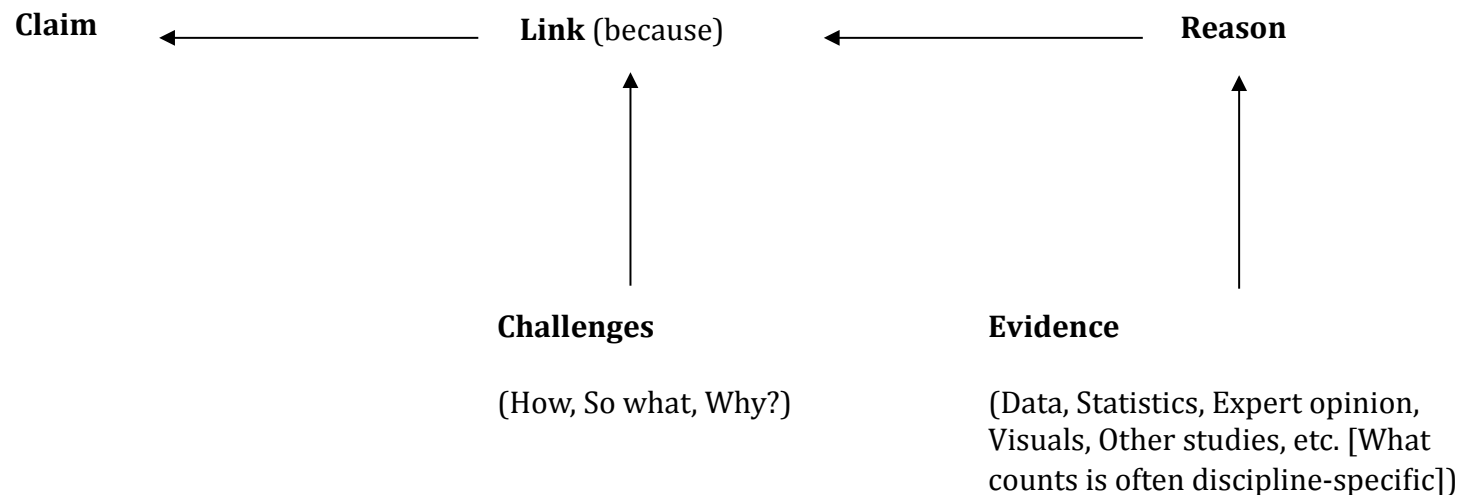


YOUR ARGUMENT

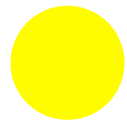
- Main claim
Anarchists gathered in Toronto in 2010 at the G-20 meetings because the convergence of representatives from those countries provided an focused opportunity to protest government control of society generally, and class-based privileges afforded to the governing classes specifically.
- Subsidiary claims



INFORMAL ARGUMENT AND ACADEMIC WRITING

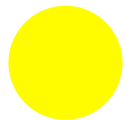


Ex.. While a lack of voting suggests problems within a democratic society, it should not be confused with a lack of political participation because political participation is a broad category that includes, among other things, voting.



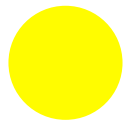
CLAIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Claim + stated reason rest upon an unstated reason
- Both the stated and unstated reasons rely on shared assumptions of value between the writer and the reader
- Evidence demonstrates the validity of the stated or unstated reasons
- When values are shared, less evidence is needed to convince the reader



A CLAIM IN 3 PARTS

- Using examples drawn from Canada, Spain, and India, I argue that national identity is a flawed concept that nevertheless works because it allows groups of people to organize themselves and negotiate their differences relatively peacefully.
- Example/evidence: Canada
- Example/evidence: Spain
- Example/evidence: India
- Conclusion



GETTING ORGANIZED

- **Thesis= main claim, argument**
national identity is a flawed concept that nevertheless works because it allows groups of people to organize themselves and negotiate their differences relatively peacefully
- **Body: subsidiary claims**
- The work done to build a sense of nationalism in Canada succeeded in creating a strong, internationally respected community even though it also resulted in a resurgence in nationalism within the French-Canadian community.

