

PSCI 116

Political Change in the Third World

Sumitra Badrinathan

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- Goal of social science writing: persuasion, convincing others that you have an interesting, logical point of view
- Convince the reader of your point of view **even if the question does not explicitly ask for an argument**
- State your argument directly and in one / two sentences (active voice, clear and concise)
- This sentence is the thesis statement, and it serves as a summary of the argument you'll make in the rest of your paper

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- 2 is a road map for the paper; it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper
- 3 important: comes at the start
- 4 directly answers the question asked of you
- 5 makes a claim that others might dispute
- 6 in sum: usually a single sentence near the beginning of your paper (most often, at the end of the first paragraph) that presents your argument. The rest of the paper gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the argument

Thesis statement

When do you need one?

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- if an assignment asks to analyze, to interpret, to compare and contrast, to demonstrate cause and effect, or to take a stand on an issue

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How do you form a thesis?

- not easy!
- usually the last thing you do, after reviewing evidence

How do you know if the thesis is strong? Ask yourself:

- ① Do I answer the question?
- ② Is my thesis statement specific enough?
- ③ Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?
- ④ Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose? the claim needs to be falsifiable or contestable
- ⑤ Is this an opinion? it shouldn't be!
- ⑥ Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test? does it provide some indication of persuasion?

Examples!

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*The ability to purchase television advertising is essential for any candidate's bid for election to congress **because** television reaches millions of people and thus has the ability to dramatically increase name recognition*

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The organizational structure of the United Nations, namely consensus voting in the Security Council, makes it incapable of preventing war between major powers

Evidence comes next

- Do not stop with having a point. You have to back up your point with evidence.
- In this course, evidence is either 1) citing existing theories / authors who support your point, 2) using historical examples
- link the evidence back to the theses at the start of each new section / paragraph

The ability to purchase television advertising is essential for any candidate's bid for election to congress **because** television reaches millions of people and thus has the ability to dramatically increase name recognition

- establishes why money is important rather than just saying it is
- think about what kinds of evidence would support this claim

Thesis statements

To recap

- they are not statements of fact
- reasonable people should be able to disagree with you
- to be explicit, could precede statement with "I argue that..."
- don't shy away from using the first person
- can re-work a thesis statement indefinitely and can almost always find something at fault with it. The point is that you must be sure that your thesis statement indicates to your reader that you have an argument to make

Midterm question

The following tweet sparked angry protests in Algiers, Bogota, Djakarta, Mumbai, Nairobi and other cities in the so-called ?Third World? (TW): OMG colonialism ended like ages ago? if so many TW countries are still struggling, it's because of their own corrupt leaders, silly ethnic conflicts, illiterate peasants and inefficient economies –LOL!

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- 1979-88: Iran-Iraq war: US supports Iraq
- 1988-Present: US wants to end the Iranian nuclear program; Sanctions