

Writing a Great Research Article

Graduate Course

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Course description. If you want to survive in political science, you need to learn how to write great articles that can be published in the discipline's very best journals. In the past 10 years the (quality-weighted) number of publications needed to be considered a strong candidate for promotion or hire has increased steeply, and the requirements will probably be even higher in the future.

At the same time, there are relatively few explicit resources for those who want to become better article-writers. Instead, it is learned haphazardly through self-study and discussions with colleagues and advisors. The goal of this course is to think more explicitly and systematically about how to write a great article.

The course is built on two premises. First, you need to think hard and systematically about how to do excellent research in order to write great articles. Second, this self-reflective process needs to be stimulated by building an understanding of how other very successful people do research. In the nomenclature of economics: you need to understand the production function of great researchers to optimize your own.

It is important to note that this is not a course on academic writing. It is about how to do great, publishable research. A part of this means being (pretty good) at writing, but it is not the only, or the most important, part. What is the most important part? Sign up to the course, to find out.

Who can sign up? All graduate students at the department who are working on an *empirical, quantitative project*. Unfortunately, writing articles within the realm of political theory or using qualitative methods is sufficiently different from writing quantitative empirical articles that uniform high-quality advice cannot be given. So, instead of doing a more pluralistic, but in the end less useful, course, I have decided to target the empirical-quantitative group.

Signing up. Write me an email at mvl@ps.au.k if you are interested in signing up for the course. Write a few sentences about your project. To make the course manageable I will only accept eight students. Preference will be given to student's who have a paper ready for the fall semester and who have some time left before they have to hand in their dissertation (more than 8 months).

Course content. There will be eight three hour sessions. Each session will

have three components.

1. A discussion with a researcher who has written several great articles on their research and writing process. The roster of participants is not complete, but it will (probably) include Asmus Olsen (University of Copenhagen), Gabriel Lenz (UC Berkeley), Ben Ansell (Oxford University) and Martin Bisgaard (from our very own department).
2. A discussion of a particular problem related to writing a great article. Topics will include:
 - Introductions; Research Design; Presenting Your Results; Writing style; Journals; The Review Process; Code and Reproducibility.
3. Working with part of your own and the other participants' papers. The goal will be to make them great.

There will be some preparation for each session. Mainly reading over one or two great papers from the researcher we are talking to, parts of the other participants' papers, and also some short texts on the process of producing an article. If you sign up, then you should attend all classes. The course will not give you any ECTS-points, but it might help you write a great article.

Time & Place. Classes will be held at the department. We will hold the first session in mid-August and then meet every other week in the rest of the semester. We will be constrained by the availability of the external speakers and by me being on leave in parts of the semester. Classes featuring speakers from outside Aarhus will be partially via Zoom.