1. Frontal pages
   a. Accurate title. This can be a major title, then a subtitle separated by a colon: as above.
   b. Abstract
   c. Acknowledgements
   d. Table of Contents
   e. List of Abbreviations
   f. Illustrations

2. Chapter One: Brief introduction to the topic
   a. The what, where, when, and who of your chosen topic
   b. Why this topic is chosen
   c. Why this study is significant
   d. Brief overview of the following chapters

3. Chapter Two: Questions, theories, concepts, modes, methods, and literature review
   a. Explicit statement of the research question(s), followed by subsidiary questions as appropriate.
   b. Choice of your aim or approach: analysis, diagnosis, prescription, or prognosis.
   c. Choice of mode(s) of analysis: Descriptive, Inductive, Empirical, Deductive, Comparative, Chronological, Hierarchical, Evaluative, Causal, Theoretical, or Critical-Constructivist*
   d. Introduction of the overarching theories or hypotheses or analytical framework to be employed or principal theme to be developed
   e. Identification and specification of the key concepts or variables and how they are related, e.g. by causal hypotheses or derived from overarching theories or taxonomies.
   f. Literature review of prior academic and official work on the topic, the theories, and the research methods
   g. Specification of research design and analysis methods; how concepts or variables are to be measured or otherwise assessed by the author; the research plan; time table of the phases of research and writing

4. Chapter Three and following chapters: Application of the above to the substantive topic in logically structured and sequenced chapters (this is the body of the work)

5. Summary (can appear at end of each chapter as well as at the end of the work)
   a. how satisfactorily the research questions were answered,
   b. how credibly the hypotheses were proved or disproved,
   c. how well the findings fitted the theoretical or analytical framework
   d. how appropriate the chosen theory or analytical framework was to the topic

6. Conclusion
   a. what implications the findings have for scholarly knowledge, public understanding, or policy improvement
   b. how the findings shed light on comparable phenomena outside the topic
   c. author’s critical reflections and acknowledgement of limitations of the study
   d. suggestions for further research

7. Bibliography

8. Appendices
For further guidance on how to write a thesis or dissertation:

Guides developed by leading universities may be accessed by Google-ing:

*How to Write a Political Science Thesis*

or

*Research Methods in International Relations* (or similar phrases).

In our Library see also for politics and international relations essays:


A Voyager search will identify more guides, such as *Doing dissertations in politics: a student guide* by David M. Silbergh, available on line.

For social sciences essays:


*Principal modes of analysis (may be cast as hypotheses to be validated or refuted)*:

- Descriptive, inductive or empirical (A exists and displays certain characteristics)
- Deductive (A is a logical derivative of theory B)
- Comparative (A is comparable to B along selected dimensions of space or time)
- Chronological (A occurred prior to B)
- Hierarchical (A is subordinate to, or a sub-element of, B)
- Causal (A causes B; A intervenes to change B into C)
- Evaluative (A is ‘better’ than B as assessed by explicit criteria)
- Theoretical (A validates a chosen theory, concept, taxonomy, or hypothesis)
- Critical or Constructivist (A and B are not ‘given’ but ‘constructed’)

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*Reviews:

  - Does an excellent job of guiding students through the process of writing political science papers.

  - Offers a comprehensive guide to research methods and statistical analysis in the field of international relations.

  - A practical guide for understanding and writing literature reviews in the social sciences.

  - Provides tips and strategies for writing effective essays in the social sciences.