

## **GUIDELINES FOR MODERATION ESSAY POLITICAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

Dear Student: In preparing your response to the moderation reading(s), please adhere to the following format. Write clearly and in complete sentences and limit your response to a minimum of 5 double-spaced pages and a maximum of 7 double-spaced pages. Please hand in your response to the reading(s), together with the two short personal essays, to the members of the moderation board at least one week before the date of the moderation. If you have any questions, please consult with the head of the moderation board.

**PART ONE: The Analytical Framework.** This section provides a summary statement on the story and purpose of the article. It should include a summary of the question(s) and/or central thesis of the article, the literature(s) and/or controversies the author is addressing or challenging, and the central conclusions reached. If the essay has policy implications, either domestic or international, they should be noted here as well.

**PART TWO: Description of the Methodology.** This section offers a characterization of the "strategy" of the article; in other words, how the author goes about proving his or her case. There is no general way to write this section, since political analysis varies greatly in approaches and methodology, but your response should address some of the following questions. What kind of hypotheses are formulated by the author to sustain the argument? What is the evidence brought into the analysis by the author to prove his/her case? You may also comment on the methods by which the author reached his/her conclusions: historical analysis, statistical or survey data, case study analysis, or multi-national comparisons.

**PART THREE: Personal Evaluation.** This section offers you the opportunity to freely discuss the subject of the reading and offer your own assessment of the analysis. How successful is the author in executing the research agenda? Was the argument persuasive? If not, why? Can you conceive of alternative arguments to those set forth by the author? What does the article contribute (or fail to contribute) to your understanding of any of the issues that attract you to the study of politics?

Note: In some instances supplementary readings might be assigned as part of the moderation (for example, a critique by another scholar of the assigned reading). In such cases, please be sure to incorporate insights from these readings into your response, with the proper footnotes and quotations as required.