

# Political Science Research Guide

Department of Government, Law & Policy  
Arkansas State University

8/20/2024

## Getting Started with Political Science Research

Research is at the heart of political science. This guide will help you navigate the research process from topic selection to final paper submission.

## Finding Quality Sources

### Academic Databases

- **JSTOR** - Academic articles and books
- **Political Science Complete** - Discipline-specific database
- **LexisNexis Academic** - News and legal documents
- **CQ Researcher** - Policy analysis and reports

### Government Sources

- **Congressional Research Service** - [crsreports.congress.gov](https://crsreports.congress.gov)
- **Government Accountability Office** - [gao.gov](https://gao.gov)
- **Census Bureau** - [census.gov](https://census.gov)
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** - [bls.gov](https://bls.gov)

### Think Tanks & Research Organizations

- **Brookings Institution** - Centrist policy research
- **American Enterprise Institute** - Conservative perspectives
- **Center for American Progress** - Progressive viewpoints
- **Pew Research Center** - Public opinion polling

# Citation Guidelines

All papers must use **APSA (American Political Science Association)** citation style.

## Book Example

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

## Journal Article Example

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. "Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 1-18.

## Online Source Example

Pew Research Center. 2024. "Public Trust in Government Remains Low." Retrieved August 15, 2024 (<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/>).

# Writing Tips

## Structure Your Argument

1. **Introduction** - State your thesis clearly
2. **Literature Review** - What do we already know?
3. **Analysis** - Present your evidence
4. **Conclusion** - Summarize findings and implications

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Using Wikipedia as a source
- Failing to cite properly
- Making claims without evidence
- Ignoring counterarguments
- Poor grammar and spelling

## Getting Help

- **Writing Center:** Free tutoring and feedback
- **Library Research Desk:** Help finding sources
- **Professor Office Hours:** Discuss ideas and get feedback
- **Study Groups:** Collaborate with classmates

Remember: Start early, cite everything, and don't hesitate to ask for help!