

GV101 Introduction to Political Science Essay-Writing Workshop

30 January, 2020

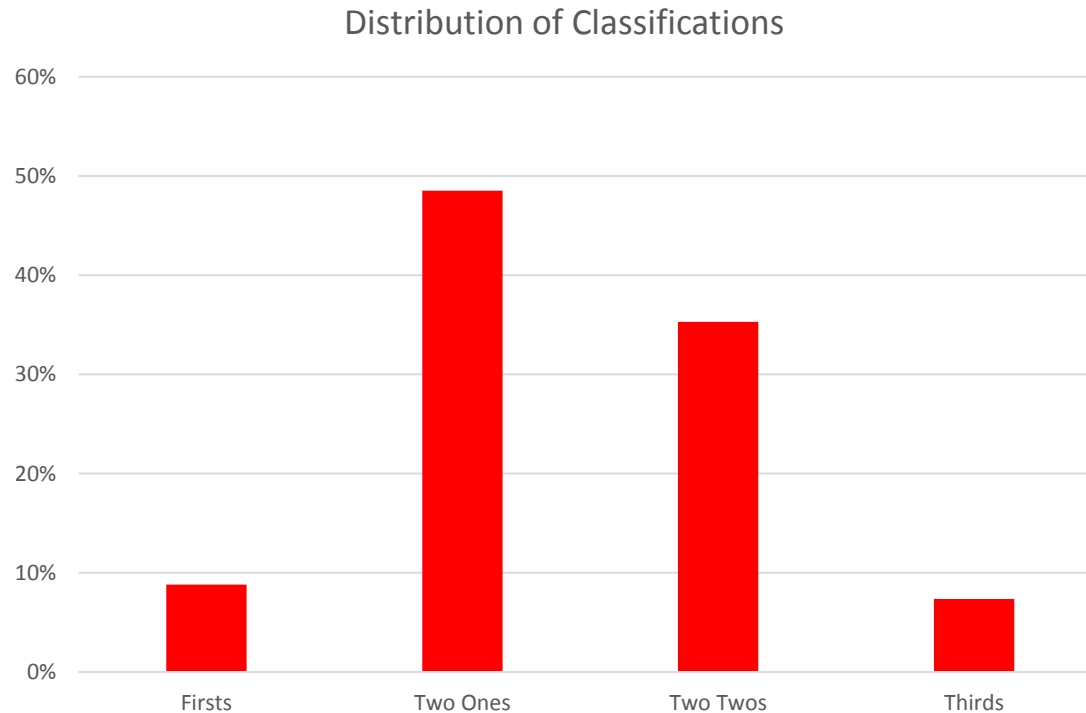
Joe Greenwood-Hau

j.greenwood3@lse.ac.uk
[@NiceOneCombo](#)

Order of play

- Distribution of classifications and marks (1 minute)
- Main points of feedback from the formative essay (7 minutes)
- Advice for the summative essay (7 minutes)
- Questions and answers arising from feedback and advice (5 minutes)
- Review example essays (20 minutes)
- Feedback on example essays and discussion (15 minutes)

Distribution of classifications and marks



Distribution of Marks		
Max:		76
Min:		40
Mean:		60.5
Median:		62.0
SD:		8.0

Main points of feedback from the formative essay

- Make sure you cite key texts, and think about readings from other weeks
- Present counter-arguments as strongly as possible
 - Making an argument does not involve weakening the alternative
- Justify the choice of arguments to be focused on
- Provide definitions (and briefly justify them) where necessary
- Structure and introduction: being formulaic without appearing so
- Signpost and provide bridges to the question throughout
- Conclusion: a succinct and assertive re-statement of the main points
- Referencing: consistently, for each new idea or piece of evidence
- Bibliography: provide one and make sure it includes everything referenced

Advice for the summative essay

- Different people work differently, but...
- My focus will be on the quality of argument:
 - Think of this like a discussion in which I can ask questions
- Decide the main argument(s) you're going to make before you start writing:
 - How many arguments are there?
 - How do they relate to each other?
 - Can any argument be subsumed within another?
 - What are the strongest arguments and how can you justify focusing on those (and side-lining others)?
 - How many points will be made in relation to each argument?
 - What are the strongest points, how do they relate to each other, and can any be subsumed or eliminated?
- Map your reading onto your arguments:
 - How does each reading relate to one of your arguments or a point supporting an argument?
 - You can co-opt elements of an author's argument rather than using it all (just don't misrepresent them).
 - Take satisfaction from scoring through the parts of your reading that are no use (i.e. prioritising).

Review example essays

- Split into groups
- I will give each group an example essay
- Read the essay and discuss its strengths and weaknesses
- Be prepared to feed back the main strengths and weaknesses

Feedback on example essays and discussion

- I will distribute the feedback associated with your essays
- Take a couple of minutes to read it:
 - Are you surprised by the feedback and mark? Why?
- General discussion and questions arising from the example essays