The difference between ignorant and educated people is that the latter know more facts. But that has nothing to do with whether they are stupid or intelligent. The difference between stupid and intelligent people – and this is true whether or not they are well-educated – is that intelligent people can handle subtlety. They are not baffled by ambiguous or even contradictory situations – in fact, they expect them and are apt to become suspicious when things seem overly straightforward. – Neal Stephenson (1995)

Michael Tkacik  
McKibben/Education 381  
Email: mtkacik@sfasu.edu

Office Hours: M-F (3:15 – 5:15)  
Phone: (936) 468-2813

Description

“Analysis of factors causing international terrorism; forms of terrorism; actors involved in terrorism; definitions; consequences; strategies of counter-terrorism.”

Text


Select Readings as listed below.

Additional Resources

Global Terrorism Database: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

Combatting Terrorism Center: https://www.ctc.usma.edu/
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes

This course is associated with the major, second major, and minor in the Political Science. The course is not part of the general education core curriculum. No specific general education objectives or outcomes are addressed in this course.

Program Learning Objectives

The following program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course:

The student will critically analyze and critique political institutions and/or complex contemporary political issues.

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- identify major international terrorist groups;
- explain how terrorism and globalization interact and reinforce each other;
- understand the pronounced motivations of Salafist groups;
- explain the ideology of at least one international terrorist group; and,
- propose policy solutions to minimize the number and/or impact of terrorist incidents.

Reading and Discussion

I expect you to have read, digested, and briefed the assigned material prior to class. I will call on students randomly each day to discuss one of the day’s readings. For each assigned reading, the student called upon will summarize the reading. This summary should minimally include a thesis, three primary supporting arguments, and a critique of the article. I may call on a second student to critique the first student’s brief, adding key points that have been missed or pointing out errors. These briefs will be part of your participation grade. If not called upon, you are still expected to demonstrate that you have read the material by participating on a weekly basis. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes based on the reading. Reading, discussion, library assignment, other specified assignments, and quizzes if necessary, will account for 20% of your total grade. You may backbench once per semester.

Note that there will rarely be power point slides or traditional lecture in this class. Rather I seek to evoke an informed discussion among class participants. If you do not do the reading, the discussion
will lapse along with your grade. It is anticipated that you will spend at least six hours per week doing the reading and preparing the briefs.

**Participation Grades**

You will receive a grade of 0-10 for each reading brief, library assignment, and any other assignment specified as worth 0-10. These points will all be converted into a raw participation grade with a maximum value of 100 as described below (your average grade for all participation assignments multiplied by 10).

The raw participation grade will be modified based upon your daily contributions. For any day on which you make a valuable contribution to class participation (but are not presenting a reading), you will receive 1 point *at my discretion*. Note that if I were to simply award a point for any day in which you talked, it would be relatively easy to “game” the system. Consequently, I will be somewhat stingy with these one point additions. You’ll have to earn your point with meaningful participation informed by the reading and analytical thinking (i.e., it is not enough simply to say something related to the topic at hand). These points will be combined, and then added to your raw participation grade at the end of the semester, resulting in your final participation grade. Although it is mathematically possible to score more than 100 points in your final participation grade, no student will be given more than 100 points – this is the maximum you can earn. This final participation grade will represent 20% of your class grade.

Critiques will count for 1 point in the same way as daily participation grade, if well done.

Example: You do two reading briefs (a 6 and an 8), are absent for one (a 0), do the library assignment (10), do one critique (you do it well and get 1 point), and are given a point on each of 7 other days. Your participation grade will be as follows:

\[
(6+8+0+10) = 24 \rightarrow (24/4) \rightarrow 6.0 \times 10 = 60 \text{ (raw participation grade)} \rightarrow (60 + 1 + 7) = 68 \text{ (final participation grade)}, \text{ which itself is 20\% of your final grade.}
\]

Quizzes: If quizzes are necessary, they would be factored into the equation as part of the raw participation grade before adjustments are made for daily participation. So, if two quizzes were necessary, each score would be factored in as a reading presentation. If you earned a 7 and a 9, the above equation would change as follows: 

\[
(6+8+0+10+7+9) = 40 \rightarrow (40/6) \rightarrow 6.66 \times 10 = 67 \text{ (raw participation grade)} \rightarrow (67 +1 + 7) = 75 \text{ (final participation grade). This does not make quizzes something to be desired. I have simply allowed a higher quiz score in the example.}
\]

**Group Intelligence Briefs**

All students will be randomly assigned to a group after the course drop date. Each group will produce a Group Intelligence Brief. The Group Intelligence Brief consists of two components: a
5-7 page report and a formal power point presentation (with Q&A session). The assignment is to research a current terrorist/guerrilla organization and report on things such as ideology, goals, tactics, the group’s tendencies and behavior, recent events/history, and especially policy prescriptions for combating the group (e.g., counterterrorism/counterinsurgency tactics), etc. Imagine this to be a brief for a decision maker who can influence United States’ policy toward the terrorist organization. Your group must type up the report and give a power point presentation (10 minutes/10 slides maximum – not including title slide) on the main points/policy prescriptions in the report. Each group must report on a different terrorist/insurgent organization – no duplicates. The terrorist organization selected by each group will be on a first come, first served basis. You must email me the organization that your group will study. Do not tell me verbally.

The grading scale for the Group Intelligence Brief will be as follows:

The 5-7 page report (double-spaced) will be worth 50 points, based on content, grammar, organization, clarity, and so forth. This report should provide greater depth than the briefing, yet still place a premium on brevity.

The group presentation will be worth 50 points, as follows:

Time: 0-10 points. You will lose 4 points for every minute you exceed the limit.
Content: 0-25 points.
Presentation: 0-5 points. This includes eye contact, dress, professionalism, etc.
Organization: 0-5 points. Is your presentation organized in a logical fashion? Does the audience anticipate points before they occur, etc.?
Q&A: 0-5 points. The audience will have a five-minute Q&A period. These points will depend upon how well you answer their questions.

The overall grade for the Group Intelligence Brief will therefore be worth 100 points, which itself will be 5% of your total grade.

Paper Presentation/Conference

A power point presentation of no more than 10 slides (not including title slide), lasting no more than 10 minutes, will be presented to the class on SATURDAY, 13 April 2019 in McKibben 351 (10:00 am – 5:00 pm) in a conference format. This conference will be open to other faculty, students, and the public. Please dress appropriately. You are required to attend the entirety of this conference as part of the class. If you do not attend the conference in its entirety, you will receive a 0. Please make arrangements now to take off work and otherwise ensure attendance.

The presentation will explain your paper, your research, and your findings to an audience in 10 minutes. If you do it correctly, you will find much of your organizational work completed before you even begin writing. We will discuss this more in class.
The grading scale for the power point presentation will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>You will lose 4 points for every minute you exceed the limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>0-50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>This includes eye contact, dress, professionalism, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>Is your presentation organized in a logical fashion? Does the reader anticipate points before they occur, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A:</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>The audience will have a five-minute Q&amp;A period. Your grade will depend upon how well you answer their questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall grade for this presentation will be worth 100 points, which itself will be 5% of your total grade.

Research Papers

You are required to write a 10-15 page research paper for this class. The paper must include at least seven scholarly (refereed) sources. We will discuss this paper in detail during class. Please review the attached “Term Paper” guidelines for more detail. These guidelines are incorporated by this reference.

The paper will be **due 30 April 2019** at the beginning of class. When you hand in your final paper, **please also e-mail me an electronic version in Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Also, please submit a copy to “Turnitin” at [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) prior to class on 30 April 2019.** You should submit the paper to Michael Tkacik (International Terrorism). The student password (enrollment key) is: terror. The unique class ID is: 20052064. The research paper will be worth 25% of your grade. I will return your graded paper when you finish your final exam.

The paper will be graded on content, grammar, organization, clarity, and the attached Term Paper guidelines.

**A proposal for your topic is due to me on 12 March 2019 at the beginning of class.** This proposal should include a short statement (no more than a paragraph or two) explaining the issue to be researched as well as a list of sources you expect to use.

Library Assignment

You will meet in Steen Library during class hours on 14 February 2019 (LINC Classroom, through the LINC Lab, first floor). The reference librarian for Political Science, Ms. Kayce Halstead, will lead a research session. Attendance is mandatory. Missing this session will be the equivalent of a “not prepared” on your daily assignments. Thereafter, you will use the skills you learned to locate
five scholarly (i.e., refereed) articles relating to a single topic in International Terrorism. The choice of topics is yours. I require only that each article relate to the same topic. You are to turn in the print out of each journal article entry (not the entire article), including an abstract, the full citation, and the location of the article. You do not have to write the abstract – it should be in the article entry you have found. If you cannot find an abstract, find another article. The articles are due one week after the library session. This assignment will be graded as a reading brief.

Examinations

There will be two exams in class. Both will be primarily essay exams and reading briefs, though I may add some short identification questions regarding student presentations and/or group presentations to the final. The midterm will count for 20% of your grade while the final will count for 25% of your grade. Please arrive at the exam with one or more large size bluebooks. Please place your name, your student ID number, the course title, and the date on the BACK of the bluebook[s].

Grading System

The grading system will be as follows:

Midterm: 20% of grade (14 March 2019).
Final: 25% of grade (16 May 2019) (10:30 am – 12:30 pm).
Research Paper: 25% of grade (due on 30 April 2019 at beginning of class).
Paper Presentation: 5% of grade (SATURDAY, 13 April 2019) (McKibben 351)
Group Presentation: 5% of grade (in class, dates listed below)

Participation - reading briefs, critiques, general participation, library assignment, other specified assignments (also quizzes if necessary): 20% of grade.

If quizzes are necessary, each quiz will count for 10 points and be factored into your participation grade.

Late Work

Late work will be penalized 10 points for every day it is late. An assignment is late once I have concluded collecting that assignment during class. Late work will not be considered handed in until it is in my hand. You are responsible for getting it into my hand. This means that if I am not on campus, you have a problem. Save yourself some trouble and avoid late work.
I do not give early exams under any circumstances. Make-up exams will not be given without a written excuse acceptable under University rules. Make-up exams may be different in kind and more difficult than the original exam. ALL MAKE UP EXAMS WILL BE DURING DEAD WEEK at a mutually agreed upon time. *If we cannot agree on a time, the professor will assign a time.*

**Graduate and Honors Credit**

Anyone taking this class for graduate or Honors credit will be required to do additional or more detailed assignments. Please see me by the end of the first week of classes to negotiate and sign a contract to this end.

**Movie Night**

I may arrange at least one movie viewing for the class. The movie[s] will not be required. The date is to be determined.

**Attendance Policy**

Though I do not explicitly require attendance, I call on students at random. If you are not present, you will be given an “unprepared” (a “0”) for participation.

**Academic Dishonesty (4.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

You may review the policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct-10.4.pdf.

Timeliness

Please show up on time for class. I will shut and lock the door once class begins. You will not be permitted to enter once the door is shut.
Communication

Each student must use their SFA Jacks email account. This is official SFA policy. You are deemed to have received any message sent to your sfasu.edu account. If you use another account, have your SFA email forwarded to that account. Make sure your SFA Jacks email does not go to a quarantine folder and/or is not interpreted as spam. All official communication in this class will occur through your sfasu.edu account.

Keep Copies of Your Work

Students are required to keep an extra copy of each assignment until the instructor has returned the graded copy of that assignment. Students are also required to keep graded, returned copies of all exams, quizzes, and writing assignments until two weeks after the final exam or until you appeal a grade, whichever comes later.

Changes to Syllabus/Class

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MODIFY ANY PORTION OF THE CLASS AND/OR SYLLABUS. SHOULD THE NEED ARISE, I WILL NOTIFY YOU BY EMAIL AT YOUR SFA JACKS ACCOUNT.

Other Points

Unless otherwise explicitly noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified.

No extra credit will be given in this class.

Good note taking remains important, even today. Please do not use recording devices of any kind during my lectures. My lectures are my legally protected work product.

Drop date: 27 March 2019.

Group Intelligence Brief member assignments 28 March 2019.

Assignments

BACKGROUND

Week 1: Terrorism Defined (minimum six hours outside class)


Week 2: Why Terrorism? (minimum six hours outside class)


Adam Lankford, “A Psychological Re-Examination of Mental Health Problems among the 9/11 Terrorists,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41/11 (2018), 875-898,

THE THREAT

Week 3 & 4: Religion, Islam, and Islamists (minimum 12 hours outside class)

Mangus Ranstorp, “Terrorism in the Name of Religion,” *Journal of International Affairs* (Summer 1996), 240-255 (Howard)


Michael Scott Doran, Somebody Else’s Civil War, *Foreign Affairs*, 81/1 (January/February 2002), 22-42


James L. Gelvin, “Nationalism, Anarchism, Reform: Political Islam from Inside Out,” *Middle East Policy*, XVII/3 (Fall 2010), 118-133


**Weeks 5-6: Enablers (minimum 12 hours outside class)**


Stefan Malthaner & Peter Waldmann, The Radical Milieu: Conceptualizing the Supportive Social Environment of Terrorist Groups, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37/12 (December 2014), 979-998


Weeks 7: Weapons of Mass Destruction (minimum six hours outside class)


Chris Quillen, “The Islamic State’s Evolving Chemical Arsenal,” Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 39/11 (April 2016), 1019-1030,

Week 8-9: Evolution of Terrorism (minimum 12 hours outside class)


Ali Soufan, “Hamza bin Ladin: From Steadfast Son to al-Qa’ida’s Leader in Waiting,” *CTC Sentinel*, 10/8 (September 2017),

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1151679

Lukas Tichy and Jan Eichler, “Terrorist Attacks on the Energy Sector: The Case of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41/6 (2018), 450-473,
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1323469


http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1139373

Daniel Milton, “Pulling Back the Curtain: An Inside Look at the
Islamic State’s Media Organization,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* (August 2018), 1-20,  

Temitope Oriola, “Unwilling Cocoons: Boko Haram’s War Against Women,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40/2, 99-121

Goktug Sonmez, “Violent Extremism among Central Asians: The Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, and New York City Attacks,” CTC Sentinel, 10/11 (December 2017), 14-18,  

Evan Kohlmann and Laith Alkhouri, Profiles of Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq, *CTC Sentinel* (September 2014),  

Arie Perliger and Daniel Milton, “From Cradle to Grave: The Lifecycle of Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria,” *Combating Terrorism Center* (November 2016), 1-51,  

Brian Dodwell, et al., “Then and Now: Comparing the Flow of Foreign Fighters to AQI and the Islamic State,” *Combating Terrorism Center* (December 2016), 1-31,  


Jason Burke, “The Age of Selfie Jihad: How Evolving Media Technology is Changing Terrorism,” *CTC Sentinel* (November/December 2016), 16-22,

Daniel Milton, “Communications Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State’s Media Efforts,” *Combating Terrorism Center* (10 October 2016), 1-63,
https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/communication-breakdown-unraveling-the-islamic-states-media-efforts

Haroro Ingram, “An Analysis of Islamic State’s Dabiq Magazine,” *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 51/3 (September 2016), 458-477,
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10361146.2016.1174188

Seth Loertscher and Daniel Milton, “Held Hostage: Analyses of Kidnapping Across Time and Among Jihadist Organizations,” *Combating Terrorism Center* (December 2015),


Robert Liscouski and William McGann, “The Evolving Challenges for Explosive Detection in the Aviation Sector and Beyond,” *CTC Sentinel* (19 May 2016),


RESPONSES

Week 10: Democracy? (minimum six hours outside class)

F. Gregory Gause, Can Democracy Stop Terrorism? Foreign Affairs, 84/5 (September/October 2005), 62-76.


Weeks 11 and 12: Counterterrorism Tactics (minimum 12 hours outside class)


Jessica Stern, Mind over Martyr, Foreign Affairs, 89/1 (January/February 2010), 95-108.


Peter Neumann, Negotiating with Terrorists, Foreign Affairs, 86/1 (January/February 2007), 128-138.


Paul Pillar, “Beyond Al Qaeda,” *Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2004) 522-531 (Howard)


David Miliband, “Terrorist Attacks are Strategic: The Response Should Be, Too,” *Foreign Affairs* (December 2015).


Andrew Liepman and Philip Mudd, “Lessons from the Fifteen-


Weeks 13-14: End Game (minimum six hours outside class)


Brian Michael Jenkins, “Fifteen Years on, Where are we in the


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**Week 15:**

GROUP PRESENTATIONS (15 minutes per presentation – 10 minute presentation; 5 minute Q&A) (minimum six hours outside class)

Groups 1-4  7 May

Groups 5-8  9 May

**FINAL EXAM:**  16 May 2019 (10:30-12:30 pm)
TERM PAPER

My experience at SFA is that students are often not prepared to write a quality term paper. Consequently, I have put together a short check list of things you should be sure to include in your paper. This is not an exclusive grading matrix (it does not include content, for example), but each of these elements will affect your paper grade. Please see me if you are unsure about what else goes into a university-level term paper.

1. Use print no larger than 12 point font.

2. Double space between lines – except in indented quotes where you should single-space. A quote should be indented if it includes more than 50 words.

3. Number the pages. Do not number the title page.

4. Use margins of 1” on the sides, top, and bottom of the paper. I will measure and take off points on this issue.

5. Your paper should make an argument. Do not simply explain something to me. That was high school. As you prepare for the work world you need to be able to research and evaluate information on some topic. You must then clearly write a convincing argument about the topic.

6. Use a minimum of seven refereed “journal” sources (you should use more). You may not use text books or encyclopedias as one of these seven (though clearly you may use such sources in addition to the seven). Please note the difference between a refereed source and a non-refereed source. If you are unclear, talk to me.

7. Be careful with Internet sources. While the Internet provides a great deal of information, much of this information is unreliable. In some sense, the Internet actually requires more from the student. You should look carefully at any Internet source and make a determination about its credibility. While the United Nations (www.un.org) is relatively credible, another site may not be. Anticipate doubts your reader might have and argue the source’s credibility in an endnote. Indeed, you should even try to note the biases of “reliable” sources. For example, we should acknowledge that given the United Nation’s Charter and history, the organization probably sees sovereignty as creating more problems than it solves in international politics. We therefore might expect to find a general bias in favor of weakening state sovereignty. You should be aware of this bias and make your reader aware. You might even seek out sources on the other side of the sovereignty issue.

8. When you cite to the Internet, be certain I can retrieve the source. If I type in an Internet source and cannot locate it, I will consider the source nonexistent.

9. List the sources at the back of your paper in bibliographic form (include a full citation:...
author’s name, title of book or article, title of chapter if using an edited volume, title of journal if using an article, year and date of publication, publisher, and pages of publication).

10. Direct quotes in your paper should use quotation marks and be followed by an endnote (not a footnote). Direct quotes should also indicate the precise page number on which the quote is located. Endnotes should use the Chicago Manual of Style. Examples may be found here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

11. You may use shortened citations after the first use of a source, but do not use “Ibid.” “Id.” or other such form.

12. On your cover sheet, include only:
   a. paper title;
   b. date submitted;
   c. course name, and,
   d. Stephen F. Austin State University.

13. Plagiarism: Anytime you use the ideas, words, or expression of others, you must acknowledge the author. This is why we use sources and citations. When you do not cite to the author but use his or her idea, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism is academic dishonesty of the gravest form. It is the equivalent of fraud or stealing. You can be expelled from school for plagiarism. At this point in your academic career, it is better to use too many citations than too few. You should review the University Policy on Academic Integrity 4.1 for further information. You may access this policy at: www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf. Please see me with any questions.

14. The very last page in the paper should have your name, student identification number, and paper title on it. Your name should not be included anywhere else in the paper (including the first page). This approach allows me to more easily grade blindly.

15. Note the difference between a citation and the bibliography. The bibliography is a list at the end of your paper that tells the reader all of the sources you used. A citation tells the reader specifically (source and page number) where an idea or quote was found. Papers should include both citations and a bibliography. A bibliography alone will not suffice.

16. Page requirements and/or limitations DO NOT include your title page, your bibliography, your endnotes, or any additional addenda such as the “name page” I ask for. If you are asked to write a 10 page paper, this means 10 pages in the body of the paper. Other material does not count toward your page requirements.

17. If you do not cite properly, I reserve the right to fail you on those grounds alone.
18. I expect a statement of what your paper is going to demonstrate somewhere in the first two paragraphs. Tell me up front what your paper is about. What will you investigate and how will you do it? Do not make your reader guess. **This is one of the single greatest weaknesses in papers at SFA.** I will look for a sentence that begins, “This paper will…”

19. Organization is very important and tends to be under-emphasized by students. If it is easy for the reader to follow the argument, the paper typically gets a better grade. Take the time to outline and organize before you write. Consider rewriting things and moving paragraphs around so as to improve organization. Section headings sometimes help your reader to understand how your paper is organized, but they are not necessary. Do what makes sense.

20. Make an argument. Convince your reader of something. The strongest arguments often get the best grades. Similarly, in the real world, those who can convince others in written form tend to get big raises and live in nice houses. I know this duplicates number 5 above. It is important.

21. Proof your paper a number of times after writing it. Ideally, you should proof it once for each area you want to review. A short but incomplete list would include punctuation, organization, sentence structure, paragraph structure, transitions, and so forth.

22. Take pride in what you produce.

23. After you write your paper (or as you write it), go through this list and check off each and every item to make sure you have not forgotten anything.