The Final Paper Proposal

Sakeef M. Karim[*]
Amherst College

1   Basic Expectations for the Term Paper

As detailed in the course syllabus, your final paper *must* be related to, or shed light on, the *politics of exclusion* as conceptualized in this class. Your topic does not need to be tethered to the present day or wedded to any specific intersection of time and space—i.e., as long as you are explicit about your analytic choices, you are free to broaden your temporal horizon. Moreover, you are free to revisit or build on any of the case studies covered in class (e.g., Trumpism, the far right in Europe, the electoral conquests of the BJP in India, and so on and so forth). If you choose to go this route, you *must* engage with supplementary studies or research programs that go beyond our core reading list.

2   Structure of the *Final Paper Proposal*

2.1   Section I: The Topic

In your first section, outline *what your final paper will grapple with* — i.e., the empirical case(s) or puzzle(s) at the heart of your analysis. Broadly speaking, how is your topic relevant to SOCI 229? In your view, why is your topic interesting or worth analytically reckoning with? Provide some basic justifications and then move forward—read: *do not meander* or wax poetic. Two or three concise paragraphs should be sufficient.

2.2   Section II: Plan of Analysis

In your second section, explain how you will deploy the theoretical constructs covered in Part I of this course—from *populism* to *symbolic boundaries*—to demystify or explain your topic of interest. Be as explicit and detailed as you can. You will not be evaluated on the strength of your argument per se, but rather on your willingness to synthesize different theoretical concepts in service of an analytically-sound (and internally consistent) story. If this sounds confusing to you, send me an e-mail or schedule an appointment.

2.3   Overall Formatting Conventions

The final paper proposal should be 3-5 pages in length, inclusive of references. The text must be double-spaced and formatted in a 12-point Garamond or Times New Roman font. Margins should be set to 1 inch

---

[*]skarim@amherst.edu — www.sakeefkarim.com

on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right). You are free to use either an APA or ASA citation style to manage references and bibliographies. If you haven't done so already, you may want to invest in Zotero moving forward.