

SAMPLE COMMENT BANK

Effective Writing Pedagogies in Public Affairs Seminar

Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute

Op-Ed Assignment

FRAMING AND ORGANIZATION

- ___ Work on developing a more compelling and unique hook to capture the reader's attention.
- ___ The hook seems to give an inaccurate idea of what the piece will be about; work on making it more relevant to your specific topic.
- ___ The order of your points leads to some confusion for the reader. Work on reorganizing your points to meet reader needs—what do we need to know first, second, third?
- ___ Work on clearer transitions to clarify the connections from point to point.
- ___ Work on creating a stronger sense of closure at the end of the piece.

CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE

- ___ I wasn't quite clear on what your central claim was.
- ___ Work on making your claim more specific.
- ___ Of the several claims you make, I was unclear on which was the *central* claim.
- ___ I was unclear on the relationship between the two or three main claims presented.
- ___ Work on reaching the central claim more quickly.
- ___ There seems to be a contradiction in the claims you're making—work on reconciling this.
- ___ Work on bringing more nuance to your claim.
- ___ Work on demonstrating the stakes of the issue more clearly.
- ___ There's too much summarizing here. Work on emphasizing your specific claim more prominently.
- ___ More evidence is needed to support your claim.
- ___ Additional evidence beyond personal experience will strengthen your claim.
- ___ Additional evidence beyond quantitative data will strengthen your claim.
- ___ Additional kinds/more variety of evidence will strengthen your claim.
- ___ Some of your evidence seems to work against your central claim.

SENTENCE-LEVEL WRITING AND FORMATTING

- ___ There's some distracting repetition (I've marked a few examples on your paper); work on making sure each point delivers new information or meaning.
- ___ You're using some words that don't seem to fit the intended meaning of your sentence (I've marked a few on your paper).
- ___ Some sentences are overly complicated, long, or otherwise a little difficult to read (I've marked a few examples on your paper); work on simplifying and condensing.
- ___ There are some confusing or convoluted sentences where I didn't fully understand your meaning (I've marked a few on your paper).
- ___ Your style is at times too informal or colloquial for this context (I've marked a few examples on your paper).
- ___ There are some typos and missing punctuation marks that could be easily fixed with a careful proofread.
- ___ The piece is too long for an op-ed; work on eliminating what's unnecessary.