Final Exam Essay – Social Security

Due Dates:

2305.025 (MW 9:30 a.m.) – Tuesday, December 10
2305.081 (TR 8:00 a.m.) – Monday, December 9
2305.100 (TR 11:00 a.m.) – Monday, December 9

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment includes the following:

• To describe how the Social Security retirement fund system works and craft a reform to ensure its ongoing fiscal soundness.
• To demonstrate the ability to assemble a well-organized paper that is clear and mechanically sound.
• To develop communication skills that will help you write persuasively in the future.

Your Social Security/Communication Skills portion of the Final Exam will require you to submit a typed essay describing your proposal to improve an existing public policy.

Below is the public policy:

Old Age Survivor and Disability Insurance (OASDI) or as it is more commonly called, Social Security, faces an uncertain economic future given its trends in revenue and spending. Your task is to describe the reason why this concern is very prevalent and offer a solution. Your goal is to propose changes to Social Security that are both mathematically sound and popular enough politically to be adopted.

There is outside help available for this assignment:
Library staff have created a guide to assist you in this process. You can access the guide specific to my GOVT 2305 assignments here: GOVT 2305 LibGuide
If you wish to find guides for other courses, click here: Directory of Course LibGuides

Overall question to consider: Besides raising the retirement age as scheduled by current law, what would you recommend be done to Social Security to ensure that the program is able to pay recipients the full scheduled benefits the program has promised?

Scoring elements of Northeast Lakeview’s Communication Skills Rubric are listed in italics before the elements that comprise them below. Your score will be determined by how well you satisfy these elements. The Communication Skills Rubric is attached to give you clear descriptions of what quality of submission will earn ratings of poor, fair, good and excellent.
Step One: Structure your organization and delivery: Write in a manner that is appropriate for an academic paper in the subject of political science and follow a widely-accepted format for citing sources properly. Below are two helpful guides:

APA Formatting and Style Guide  
MLA Formatting and Style Guide

A well-organized persuasive essay must include each of the following elements:

1. A description of the issue to be discussed and its importance
2. Your position/solution on the issue, clearly stated
3. Evidence supporting your position
4. Responses to criticism of your position
5. A conclusion

Step Two: Be mindful of your mechanics: Ensure that your essay is free of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar and syntax errors. Do not let inelegance cloud your message. Use this guide to inform you on common style issues; it is crowded but searchable. The usage guide and the writing guides linked above have many examples on commonly used terms and proper citation methods.

Step Three: Gather and attribute your supporting material: Although you are expressing your opinion, to be taken seriously you must support your proposal with no fewer than three (3) relevant expert sources that are of the highest quality and credibility. You must cite each source both in the body of the essay and on a Works Cited page. Use sources with perspectives that are consistent with one another; your points must be clear and without contradiction. The table below will help explain evidence quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
<td>Sources that are consistent with your argument and thus support your conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair evidence</td>
<td>Information that merely describes your subject matter rather than supports your assertion; your course textbook is most likely in this category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak evidence</td>
<td>Work that is inconsistent with your argument or contradictory to it; superficial material such as dictionary definitions or encyclopedia descriptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step Four: Ensure the strength and consistency of your central message: Analyze the nature of the Social Security solvency issue correctly and specifically. Describe your proposal clearly and explain how it is an appropriate solution to the problem you have described. Be sure to address any criticisms of your proposal that the reader may have and wrap up your essay with a conclusion.
Regarding format, your work is to be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font with 1” margins, left aligned and indent the first line of each paragraph one-half inch. Include your Banner ID number and name in the upper-left corner of the first page, and indicate the degree (not your major) you are seeking in the upper-right (this will be AA, AS, or AAT). If you do not know what degree you are pursuing, I can look that up in ACES for you. I expect that you can complete this assignment in 3-5 pages of typed work.

You will be submitting a digital copy of your paper online via an assignment link in Canvas, to be checked by turnitin.com; papers with high likelihood of plagiarism may receive a grade of zero. Download an originality report when you submit to ensure your paper is unlike others’ work.

Submit your work no later than 11:59 p.m. on your section’s due date:

- 2305.025 (MW 9:30 a.m.) – Tuesday, December 10
- 2305.081 (TR 8:00 a.m.) – Monday, December 9
- 2305.100 (TR 11:00 a.m.) – Monday, December 9

The following two pages contain two important scoring rubrics. The first is a specific guide to assembling a Communication Skills essay for a Government (GOVT) course. This will give you a detailed set of standards on how I will score your essay. Numerically I will assign you points (from 0 to 4) for each of the four elements to determine your essay score, where 16 is the highest total rubric points available and 100 is the maximum for the essay as a whole:

\[
\text{Essay score} = 60 + 2.5 \times \text{Organization and Delivery} + 2.5 \times \text{Mechanics} + 2.5 \times \text{Supporting Material} + 2.5 \times \text{Central Message}
\]

Expressed more simply:

\[
\text{Essay score} = 60 + 2.5 \times \text{Total Rubric Points (0-16)}
\]

The page following the rubric described above is The NLC Communication Skills Rubric. This is how Northeast Lakeview College defines the various elements of Communication Skills core competency, and it is applicable to assignments from any subject taught at NLC.
## Communication Skills Assessment Scoring Guide - GOVT

Follow this scoring guide created by government faculty at NLC to help you assemble a quality paper.

*Each cell describes the score you earn for each element based on your paper’s quality; a score of zero is possible.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization and delivery</strong></td>
<td>Your paper has the five essential elements of persuasion: statement of the issue, your position on it, supporting evidence for your position, addressing criticisms of your position, and a conclusion. Each element accomplishes its purpose successfully and distinctly.</td>
<td>Your essay has the five elements, but one or two of them do not contribute successfully to the paper’s central message or are noticeably weak.</td>
<td>One or more of the five elements is missing or contradictory to your central message</td>
<td>You may have some of the essential elements, but they are disorganized to the point where a reader cannot tell the difference among them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>You have very few if any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax, and you follow the formatting requirements of the essay as instructed.</td>
<td>There are occasional mechanical errors (e.g. capitalization and some punctuation), but these mechanical issues do not obscure your message.</td>
<td>There are few mechanical errors, but they are substantial enough to require your instructor to reread the passage to discern meaning.</td>
<td>Your paper has many mechanical errors, and it makes it difficult for a reader to understand your central message.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting material</strong></td>
<td>You choose no fewer than the required number of expert sources, you integrate them into the essay properly, and cite them properly in the body of text and on a works cited page.</td>
<td>You have the correct number of relevant sources, and cite them properly, but you merely summarize them rather than integrate them to support your central message.</td>
<td>Your paper relies primarily on one or two sources and thus the sources support the message inadequately. Citation is likely done imprecisely and/or improperly.</td>
<td>Your paper has too few sources and it is unclear how what sources you do have support your central message. Citation most likely does not meet standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Central message</strong></td>
<td>Your essay states the issue properly, advocates your position clearly and supports it with no fewer than the required number of expert sources.</td>
<td>You demonstrate that you understand the issue, but your position is either incomplete or inconsistent with your support.</td>
<td>You show that you have a basic understanding of the issue, but your position does not address the issue directly and thus your support is not relevant.</td>
<td>You demonstrate that you do not understand the central issue and take an unclear or irrelevant position.</td>
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**Communication Skills Assessment Rubric**

Communication skills include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

_Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet poor (cell one) level performance._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent 4</th>
<th>Good 3</th>
<th>Fair 2</th>
<th>Poor 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization and delivery</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or communication task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or communication task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.</td>
<td>Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or communication task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.</td>
<td>Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Uses language skilfully to communicate meaning to audience with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.</td>
<td>Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to audience. The language in the portfolio has few errors.</td>
<td>Uses language that generally conveys meaning to audience with clarity, although writing may include some errors.</td>
<td>Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting material</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline.</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central message</strong></td>
<td>Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).</td>
<td>Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.</td>
<td>Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.</td>
<td>Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.</td>
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</tbody>
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