POLITICS BY DESIGN
Spring 2021

Instructor: Tim Fowler, PhD
Email: fowlet1@mcmaster.ca
Lecture: Asynchronous delivery, time set aside Mon & Wed 2:30p – 3:20p, see below

Office Hours: Zoom, by appointment, see below.

Contents

Course Description

This course is an introductory course in critical thinking and research methods. It is designed to provide a specific set of skills to students to help them succeed in political science. The course asks how students of political science find answers to the important and interesting questions about their discipline. What methods are available to political scientists? How do political scientists conduct research ethically? What constitutes valid evidence in political science? This course is designed to help answer these questions. As such, you will be introduced to qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis, including survey research, interviews, analysis of pre-existing statistics, field research, and content analysis (among others).

The course is broken, roughly, into three major segments. First, we will discuss how to structure an argument and build a research design to answer research questions. We will cover major data collection techniques for both qualitative and quantitative designs. We will also look at how to analyze data collected through research, and we will cover some qualitative and quantitative approaches. Please do not be intimidated with the mathematical content - no background, at all, in math is required to succeed in this course. That said, students will need a calculator - a scientific one is best - to do some of the work in this course.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Construct and evaluate logically consistent arguments
- Design a holistic and ethical research project
- Collect & analyze qualitative & quantitative data

Required Materials and Texts

- Revel for Basics of Social Research, Fourth Canadian Edition, online text.

Class Format

2NN3 will be delivered asynchronously online. Video lectures will be posted on the Saturday morning of the week of the course. Students should complete the assigned readings and watch the video lecture on their own time, at a time of their choosing. On Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2:30 to 3:20, there will be an open Zoom meeting where the instructor will answer questions on the material presented in the video lecture. No new material will be presented during these Zoom sessions: it is a chance for students to ask questions about material, have additional examples provided, etc.

Some, but not all, weeks will have a practice exercise (see schedule below). These exercises will help build on skills that are introduced during the lecture. We will take up, and discuss, the exercises in the open Zoom meeting of the day they are assigned –

you should have made an attempt to complete them before the Zoom meeting. No marks are assigned to these exercises, but I do suggest you try them. They are designed to prepare you for the quizzes, written work, and exam. No answer keys for these exercises will be posted online.

Some classes will have a quiz. Quizzes will be completed from 4:30 to 5:30 on the day they are scheduled. Not all classes will have a quiz, consult the schedule below.

Course Evaluation – Overview
1. Four Quizzes, 5% each, for 20%, dates below
2. Academic Skills Modules, 5%, May 14th
3. Literature Review, 15%, May 17th
4. Research Proposal, 25%, May 31st
5. Final Exam, 35%, June 16th

Course Evaluation – Details

Four Quizzes, 5% each (20%)
- May 10th: Arguments
- May 19th: Chicago Style Citations
- May 26th: Research Design & Ethics
- June 7th: Quantitative Analysis

Academic Skills Module (5%), Due by 4pm on Friday May 14th
The library has prepared a number of skill modules, designed to build academic skills that are very helpful in academic research and in general library use. These skills are foundational to research methods, and can be very helpful in future courses. You can find everything you need to complete this under the "Content" section on the Avenue page.

Literature Review (15%), Due May 17th
The Literature Review is designed to get you to think about the research proposal, in **4 to 5 pages.** In the first one or two pages, pick a topic from the list below, and formulate a specific research question. This question should be politically relevant, clear, and answerable by research. You should outline the topic and the question, and explain why they are important to the study of politics. You should also explain why answering your question would better improve our understanding of the social-political world; in short – why is your question worth studying. In the last few pages you should draw on **at least three academic, peer-reviewed sources** on your chosen topic. You should explain what is known about your topic, what remains unknown, what scholars agree and disagree on, what avenues there are for future research, and what data collection techniques might be viable for future research. **All citations must be in Chicago style**

referencing. Please note, you may (and probably should), use the three sources from the literature review as sources in your research proposal.

In preparation for this assignment, you should consult the lecture and reading on literature reviews. Remember that this is *not* an annotated bibliography, but a cohesive statement on the state of the literature surrounding your chosen topic.

Please note that these topics are intentionally broad. It is up to you to do some research for your literature review and narrow the field down to a specific question of your design. The topics you may choose from are:

1. Religion and politics in democracies
2. Political party – trade union relations in advanced capitalist democracies
3. Governmental responses to crisis (note, you may wish to use the Covid-19 crisis here, but you do not have to)
4. Youth voter turnout in a democracy of your choice
5. The concept of Ministerial Responsibility in Westminster (or just Canadian) parliamentary systems
6. The politics of climate change in Canada
7. Politics and Sitcoms
8. Economic development and democratization
9. The United Nations' Security Council

Research Proposal (25%), Due May 31st

The research proposal is the defacto term paper in 2NN3. This project asks you to come up with an interesting research question in political science and design a project to answer your question. You <u>must</u> use one of the topics listed above – it makes the most sense to write your Research Proposal on the same topic as your Literature Review, but you are free to change it. Please note, *you are not actually doing the research for this question, you are designing a project*. Your research proposal should clearly outline your topic, research question, and hypothesis, provide a brief literature review of **five peer-reviewed academic sources** (see above), outline your variables, explain how you will measure your variables, discuss the ethical implications of your project, and outline the methods you will use. You should clarify if your project is exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive. You will need to provide examples of your methodology: for example, if you say you will be gathering data using a survey, your project should include a sample survey form. If you say you will be performing interviews, you should provide sample interview questions and a list of key interviewees, etc. Describe what sampling method you will use, if you'll be needing to sample, and why you picked that method. You must use Chicago style citations for this assignment. The research proposal should be **8 – 10 pages in length, excluding your title page and works cited page. Your examples of methodology should be *no more* than a page and a half.**

Your research proposal will be marked on the feasibility of your topic, the clarity of your explanations for all the questions above, the detail of your methodology, and the 'fit' between your question and your methodology.

Some sample proposals will be uploaded to the course website as examples of how this assignment should be completed.

Final Exam (35%), Online June 16th
The exam will cover material presented in both the lecture and the course readings. Please note that the readings are designed as a starting point for the week's material, and that lecture will invariably cover topics not in the readings. Thus, it is critical that students watch the lectures if they hope to pass the final exam.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings
Introduction to Research Methods (May 3rd)
Zoom meeting: Questions on introductory lecture
Lecture Reading: Chapter 1, Doing Social Research

Arguments (May 5th)
Zoom meeting: Questions about arguments
Lecture Reading: Chapter 2, Theory and Social Research

Exercise: Argument Analysis

Research Design I (May 10th)
Zoom meeting: Questions about research design, discussion of literature review assignment
Lecture Readings: Chapter 4, Reviewing the Scholarly Literature and Planning a Study

Exercise: Chicago Style Citations

Quiz: Argument Analysis
Research Design II (May 12th)
Zoom meeting: Questions about research design
Lecture Readings: Chapter 5, Designing A Study

Exercise: Research Design

Ethics (May 17th)

Zoom meeting: Questions about ethics
Lecture Readings: Chapter 3, Ethics in Social Research

Exercise: Ethics

Sampling (May 19th)

Zoom meeting: Questions about sampling
Lecture Readings: Chapter 7, Qualitative and Quantitative Sampling

Quiz: Chicago Style Citations

Victoria Day – No Class (May 24th)

Field Research (May 26th)

Zoom meeting: Questions about field research
Lecture Readings: Chapter 13, Field Research

Quiz: Research Design & Research Ethics

Surveys & Experiments (May 31st)

Zoom meeting: Questions about surveys & experiments
Lecture Readings: Chapter 8, Survey Research and Chapter 9: Experimental Research

Analyzing Quantitative Data (June 2nd)

Zoom meeting: Questions about quantitative analysis
Lecture Readings: Chapter 11, Analysis of Quantitative Data

Exercise: Quantitative Data

Archives (June 7th)

Zoom meeting: Questions about archives
Lecture Readings: Chapter 14, Nonreactive Qualitative Research

Exercise: Research Design, Redux I

Quiz: Quantitative Data

Interviews & Focus Groups (June 9th)

Zoom meeting: Questions about interviews and focus groups
Lecture Readings: Chapter 12, Qualitative Interviewing

Tutorial Activity: Research Design, Redux II

Wrap Up & Exam Prep (June 14th)

Note: No lecture will be posted this week. This zoom session will be an open question and answer session answer your questions leading into the exam.

Final Exam (June 16th)

The final exam will be held from 2:30 to 5:30, using the quiz tool on Avenue, on June 16th

Course Policies

Contact Protocol
Besides the Tuesday information session and the tutorials, both the instructor and the teaching assistants have set time aside for virtual office hours. The teaching assistants will make their office hours known in tutorial. If you wish to consult with me, please send me an email and we will set up a one-on-one Zoom meeting. Please note that all course communication must run through your McMaster email to the McMaster email of the teaching team: we will not be answering course related questions sent via Zoom private messages, for example. When consulting members of the teaching team, please keep the following simple rules for email etiquette in mind:

-At a minimum, include an appropriate salutation in your email.

-Students will be asked to revise, edit and re-send emails that do not meet minimum standards of grammatically correct English. In short, this is a formal communication to a member of the teaching team, not a text message.

-Please allow for a minimum of 48 hours turnaround on emails.

Submission of Assignments
Assignments will be submitted via Turnitin submissions on Avenue. A penalty of 5% per day or part thereof, will be applied to late papers. No paper will be accepted 7 days after the due date.

Technical Requirements for Written Assignments
Papers for undergraduate writing ***do not*** include abstracts - these are reserved for published, peer-reviewed works. Do not include an abstract, unless explicitly instructed

to do so, with your written work. The following technical requirements exist for all written components of this course: 12 point font, one inch margins, and double spaced text. All written assignments *must* use Chicago style referencing. Students who do not conform to these instructions risk a penalty to the grade of their written work.

Students should also consult the appended "term paper guidelines" for some simple rules, that will be enforced come marking time, on how to write a proper term paper.

Policy on Remarking & No Extra Credit

You will find that I have very limited enthusiasm (read: none) for grade negotiation. Remarking only happens in the case of some kind of "technical" error during grading - the person marking your paper forgot to read a page of the paper, or some other similar outlier. I am always willing to talk with you about your grades or tips for doing well on any assignment in the course. However, assigning grades is not a process of bargaining and negotiating. The grade I report to the registrar is the grade you earn based on the items listed in the course syllabus.

After feedback has been provided on an assignment, students should wait 24 hours before contacting the marker with follow-up questions. However, they should wait no longer than seven days, so that any questions can be resolved quickly and without unnecessary problems.

There will be no opportunity to make up extra credit in this course, there will be no alternative assignments offered for this course (except, of course, in the case of those assignments arranged through the SAS centre), nor will there be 'make-up' assignments for missed seminars, missed papers, etc. Please keep in mind that "I need a higher grade to keep my scholarship," "I need a higher grade to maintain my eligibility," "I need a higher grade to graduate," or "I need a higher grade to get into my major" are not valid reasons for extra credit or make up assignments. Requests of this nature will simply be ignored. Please keep this in mind during the course. You will have ample opportunities to receive a very high grade in this course, assuming you avail yourself of all the resources present: attend lecture, do your readings, visit the office hours of the teaching team or send emails to us when you need help.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+

MARK	GRADE
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Papers will be penalized 5% per day that they are late. No paper will be accepted seven days past the due date.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Students are expected to virtually attend class and to complete all class readings. University policies around absences due to illness will be respected. Students should speak with an advisor in their faculty office (e.g. the Faculty of Social Sciences office for students enrolled in Political Science) if they are dealing with complicated health, mental health or life situations that might affect their ability to meet the normal course deadlines.

If you require academic accommodation on religious grounds, you should make a formal, written request to your instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term.

Courses with an On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures- guidelines/

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Intellectual Property Notice
All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other course materials created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Conduct Expectations
As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy
Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification
The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances
The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Written Work

<u>Rules for essay structure and writing</u>

1. You need to have a title page and a works cited page. These pages are separate. They do not count towards the page minimum of your paper.

2. Number your pages with numerals centred at the top of the page.

3. Follow these steps. Establish your topic. Research the major debates and think through the strongest arguments and counter-arguments. Establish your thesis statement. Develop a skeletal structure of the essay based on the arguments and your counter-arguments. Write the essay. Then write your introduction. Edit. Edit again. Edit again.

4. When choosing an essay topic, take time to think about what will interest you, what will help you confront the pressing issues in your life, and what will give you a chance to be creative. An essay written like it's a chore will likely be a chore to read.

5. You should, at almost all costs, avoid the personal pronoun - "I." It makes your writing seem sloppy and un-academic. Instead of writing "I will argue," use "this essay will demonstrate," or something similar. If you are using "I," it really makes your essay seem weak.

6. Similarly, to be blunt, I care not for your opinion. If you are writing "in my opinion" frequently, or at all, you probably will not do well. I care about what you can show to me with the support of academic evidence from academic sources. Leave your opinion out, and include only what you can support with citations from academic sources.

7. Craft a clear thesis statement. The following example is so broad it is basically meaningless: "This essay will explore Karl Marx's theory of alienation in terms of its political, economic, and cultural implications." Why would anyone invest the time to figure out what the heck the author will argue in this essay? Conversely, this is a clear thesis statement: "This essay argues that Marx's theory of alienation is as important in his later work as his early work, contrary to the assertions of Louis Althusser." A clear thesis statement not only sets the boundaries of your research question, it should also entice readers. <u>If the reader does not know what the thesis of your paper is by the end of the first page, you are unlikely to pass</u>

8. The most important part of any writing is critical analysis. Don't only summarize - also explain and analyze. You should typically summarize and explain only as much as is necessary to get to the good part of your writing: your critical analysis. Don't tack critical analysis on to the end of the essay. It is integral to the entire essay. It begins with your thesis statement.

9. Don't write long, incoherent sentences. Keep them short and succinct, with one main point.

10. Make sure that every sentence includes a subject (noun or pronoun) and a verb.

11. Remove unnecessary words and use concise sentences. Say the most with the least. Remember, you are expected to write at the level of this course - not above it, not below it. If you are using "big" words for the sake of making your essay look more academic or smarter, you run the *very good* chance you're using words wrong, and this has the opposite effect - it makes you look not at all smart.

12. Your writing should be organized in paragraphs. Each paragraph should have one central theme, idea, or argument you're trying to convince the reader of. Long, sprawling paragraphs that span multiple pages are improper. Break them down into clear and concise paragraphs.

13. Your audience is an intelligent layperson. Don't speak down to them, but don't assume their familiarity with the topic. Provide the necessary context. If you begin explaining what a character did before you explain who the character is, you haven't provided enough context.

14. Academic writing shouldn't have an informal, or colloquial, tone: "So, it seems to me that Robert Nozick has a pretty limited idea of free choice and democracy, right?" Nevertheless, don't hide behind academic-speak either: "It is evident that, when considered in their totality, Nozick's disquisitions on the freedom of choice, and concomitantly, on the democracy bequeathed by liberal institutions, are quite, albeit not wholly, limited." Remember, your audience is the intelligent layperson with a nose for academic bullshit. Write clearly and directly: "Nozick's ideas of free choice and democracy are quite limited."

15. Unless you are writing directly about something that occurred in the past (e.g. "Simone de Beauvoir died in 1986."), don't write in the past tense. Rather, write in the present tense. Consider this sentence: "De Beauvoir asserted that ethics is ambiguous." This makes her ideas sound dead and gone. Consider this: "De Beauvoir asserts that ethics is ambiguous." With this, her ideas are living and vibrant. Ethics might be ambiguous, but your writing should not be.

16. You should almost never use block quotes from a source. It makes it look like you have nothing original to say for yourself, so you are just copy-and-pasting the words of another author, and filling up space to reach a page limit. If you *must* use block quotes (and you shouldn't), the proper style is to indent them, justify the edges, and single-space them.

Citation and Citation Style
17. When citing work, irrespective of the citation style,[1] the footnote and endnote numbers or symbols should follow the comma or period.[2] Or, if a direct quotation, as Gray notes, "The numbers or symbols go after the quotation marks."[3] With regard to in-text citations, as Gray (2017) notes, "With a direct quote, put the year of publication

beside the author's surname and then put the page number after the quotation" (1). When you are citing an idea without directly quoting the author, as Gray (2017, 1) notes, put the year of publication and page number immediately after the author's name. If you are citing an idea, but not directly quoting and not mentioning the author in the sentence, put the name, year, and page at the end of the sentence (Gray 2017, 1).

18. Bibliographic information belongs in the bibliography, not in the text of the paper! Including it in the paper looks sloppy, and I think you're filling space because you have nothing to write. Never do this!: "in a paper, written by two political scientists, Doug Hagar and Tim Fowler, at Carleton University, entitled, 'Liking' Your Union: Unions and New Social Media During Election Campaigns," published in Labor Studies Journal, they argue........." Instead only ever use the last names of the authors, "Fowler and Hagar (2013) argue that unions have not harnessed the potential of new social media."

19. The three major citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago), all have easily found style sheets online. Pick one citation style, cite with it consistently, and follow a style guide online. Do not make up your own citation style. Citation errors can cause lost marks.

Specific Punctuation, Spelling, Style, and Grammar Errors to Avoid
20. Use proper Canadian English spelling. Most word processors will default to American English - change to, and use, Canadian or British English.

21. "Ideology" is not a synonym for "idea." It is not the fancy, academic way of saying "idea." An "ideology" is a system of idea and ideals, and is usually formed around a political, economic, social, or cultural theory. "I think I shall make a sandwich" is an idea. Liberalism is an ideology.

22. "Whom" is not a synonym for "who." It is not the fancy, academic way of saying "who." "Who" refers to the subject of a sentence, "whom" refers to the object of a verb or preposition. Generally, if you can replace the word with "he'" or "'she," use who. If you can replace it with "him" or "her," use whom.

23. Affect and Effect are two different words. In everyday speech, *affect* is a verb. It means to influence something, such as in the headline from the Springfield News, "Duff Shortage Affects Moe's Customers." The beer shortage had an impact on some of Moe's customers: they were without beer. *Effect* is mostly commonly used as a noun meaning the result or impact of something, an outcome. Most of the time, you'll want *affect as a verb* meaning to influence something and *effect for the something that was influenced*.

24. "Novel" is not a synonym for "book." A novel is a work of fiction.

25. It is stylistically incorrect to use the phrase "on the other hand" without first using "on the one hand."

26. There are fourteen separate punctuation marks in standard English grammar. You should learn the difference between them, and how to properly use them. The semicolon is particularly abused in undergraduate writing - the <u>only proper use</u> of a semicolon is to connect two independent clauses - two things that could be a sentence on their own.

27. Don't use apostrophe s ('s) to form the plural of a noun or proper name. Plural nouns are formed by adding s to the noun with no punctuation. 's means a possessive relationship as in phrases like "Canada's future" or "women's rights".

28. Don't confuse "may have" with "might have". Use "may have" only if you aren't certain of the facts. Use "might have" for scenarios that you know did not happen. <u>Correct usage:</u> "Germany might have won the war if it had possessed nuclear weapons." <u>Incorrect usage:</u> "Germany may have won the war if it had possessed nuclear weapons."

29. Don't write "lead" when you mean "led". Lead is a metal. Led is the past tense of "to lead".

30. Don't use "amount" to designate a quantity that can be counted. Use "number."<u>Correct usage:</u> "The number of students has increased." <u>Incorrect usage:</u> "The amount of students has increased."