

JSYS General Guidelines for Article Submissions

The *JSYS* style sheet addresses detailed, technical requirements for submission. In addition, we urge potential authors to consider the following larger issues before they submit an article for consideration. This document address issues of larger organization. A separate document, “Some Elementary Guidelines for English Style,” addresses some specific issues of English grammar and style.

Although each topic and each article is unique, in general, a well-organized article will have the following sections:

- 1) An abstract (150 word maximum).
- 2) An opening Introduction (for the difference between Abstract and Introduction see below) – provides a brief road map through your article.
- 3) A brief review of existing scholarship that **directly** relates to your topic. Is there a “prevailing” viewpoint or consensus to this scholarship?
- 4) A brief summary of how your research relates to this consensus – some possibilities: it provides additional supporting evidence; it necessitates a rethinking of the consensus; it challenges the consensus;
- 5) The detailed presentation of your research.
- 6) Conclusion – do not simply repeat the Introduction. Conclude by restating #4 but with consideration of the additional evidence of #5.

As you can see, the organization and structure of a journal article differs fundamentally from that of a book and/or dissertation chapter or even from an article in an edited volume. The latter formats provide inherent structure that ideally both supports each individual chapter and to which each chapter contributes. A journal article, however, must be totally self-contained. To that end, authors should strive to make every word count and to be kind to their readers. Focus relentlessly on your main argument. Avoid superfluous information, marginalia, or tangents that detract from this focus or retard forward momentum. Several specific recommendations:

- 1) *JSYS* does not have a maximum word limit. However, in general, any submission that exceeds 12,000 words will require substantial, specific justification.
- 2) *JSYS* requires an abstract limited to 150 words An abstract is a summary of the article’s contents, and is the description we use when inviting external reviewers.
- 3) Like the abstract, your opening paragraph should contain a precis of the article (its premise and its conclusion). In addition, this first paragraph should also serve as an introduction and guide for those who might read the article. In general, the article should unfold from its opening paragraph. After reading the abstract and first paragraph, a reader should be able to determine 1) what the article is about, 2) what are its conclusions, 3) how these conclusions relate to existing scholarship.
- 4) Footnotes are primarily for documentation. If something is not important enough to go in the main text, omit it. Footnotes are not the place for extended literature surveys or for informational

bibliography that is likely well-known to *JSYS* readers. Please keep such informational footnotes to a minimum. Do not rehearse in the footnotes debates from secondary scholarship unless the issue is directly relevant to a vital argument in the article.

5) In general, avoid direct translations of Chinese primary texts, unless there is some larger point that only a translation can convey. Most primary texts in political and the social sciences can be paraphrased with no loss of scholarly content or quality, as long as they are cited properly. Articles on literature, especially poetry are different, and often require that the text in question be presented both in Chinese and in English translation. Such translations usually require that allusions be explained. Explicate allusions directly in the main text's analytical narrative (preferred) or in footnotes; but not in both places.

We urge authors to consult recent issues of *JSYS* for examples. Vol. 51 can be accessed "open source" on Project Muse.