**Introduction and Literature Review Template**

**Introduction to your project:**

* Start with a “hook”
	+ Try to capture the attention of the reader and draw them in to your project
	+ Something to help generate interest in your topic
* A problem statement explaining:
	+ The “puzzle” and your research question(s)
	+ General context for your project
	+ Brief statement on existing literature
	+ Identify the “gap” in the literature and why there is a gap (no data until now, new methodology, new cases etc. )
* How your research fills that gap
* Your thesis statement/ overall argument
* A brief statement on the methodology used
* Any key findings/implications
* For grants/proposals:
	+ Why is it important to conduct this research? Why is it important to conduct in now?
	+ What are the potential implications: What do you expect to learn from this research? How will it help inform political science or policy makers?
	+ Why are you uniquely able to carry out this research? (advanced methods/stats training, new data access, language skills, connections to the country/organization etc.)
	+ Put the mission of the grant-issuing institution front and center, ensure your research aligns explicitly with their goals

**Literature review:**

* First paragraph: overview of literature
	+ Summarize the overall field and the major trends and themes (these will become your sub-headings)
	+ Discuss how it all fits together, what major divides exist, what different fields are saying about it, how use of different methods affects outcomes, etc.
	+ Cite all the relevant literature within the main themes: e.g. Most scholars have found/said X about this topic (study 1, study 2, study 3 etc), yet with the new data/method now used, a growing minority of scholars are beginning to say Y about this topic (study 4, study 5 etc.)
* Theme 1: (start furthest/most different from your theme/approach)
	+ Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
	+ Sub-theme 1.1:
		- Study 1: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 2: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 3: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 1.2:
		- Study 4: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 5: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 1.3:
		- Study 6: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 7: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
	+ Transition sentence
* Theme 2: (main counterpart to theme 1, next furthest from your them/approach)
	+ Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
	+ Sub-theme 2.1:
		- Study 8: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 9: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 10: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 2.2:
		- Study 11: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 12: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 2.3:
		- Study 13: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 14: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
	+ Transition sentence
* Theme 3: (closest to your theme/approach, what your project builds most directly out of)
	+ Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
	+ Sub-theme 3.1:
		- Study 15: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 16: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 3.2:
		- Study 17: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 18: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Sub-theme 3.3:
		- Study 19: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
		- Study 20: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
	+ Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
	+ Transition sentence
* Number of themes, sub-themes, and studies will, of course, vary based on your topic.
* Conclusion paragraph:
	+ Summarize major themes again, except with added nuance of your arguments for the previous important contributions and shortcomings.
	+ Identify “gap” in greater detail than intro and include a longer explanation of why such a gap persists despite all the previous literature just discussed.
	+ How your project fills this gap, in greater detail than intro.
	+ Transition to your explanatory argument