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## I. General Instructions

Explain some important outcome in international politics or foreign policy—this could be either a momentary event or decision, or a broad pattern of behavior or outcomes—that has implications for the prospects for peace in first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, either globally, or in a specific region.

Needless to say, while future concerns may **motivate** your paper, the event(s) that you will explain in order to get at your concerns must have already occurred; we can speculate about the future, and at best predict it, but we cannot **explain** it.

Examples of possible projects could include:

1) Under what circumstances do governments intentionally promote nationalist feeling in their publics? Under what circumstances does this cause “blowback” that forces leaders to adopt more aggressive foreign policies than they might wish? Is China at risk today?

2) How much did the nature of the American political system or society contribute to the deepening of the Cold War? Is there reason to believe that the American political system “needs” an enemy? (An answer to this would affect our judgment as to whether it will soon find a new one, such as China.)

3) Why did Napoleonic France, Wilhelminian and Hitlerian Germany, and the Soviet Union come to be surrounded by rings of enemies? What are the implications for whether the United States’ extraordinary degree of international economic and military primacy is likely to provoke counter-balancing?

4) Why has the number of terrorist attacks against American and American-allied targets worldwide increased since we conquered Iraq?

5) What is the relative weight of structural, domestic political, and psychological or ideational factors in the causes of interstate wars? In a certain country’s foreign policy during a certain time period? In the causes of a certain event?

Possibilities are limited only by your interest.

Note that a question like: “Will democracy succeed in Russia?” would **not** satisfy the requirement, as this calls for speculation rather than explanation. We could, however, define projects that would help inform our judgment on this, for instance: Does a sharp decline in a state’s international standing (Germany after World War I, France in 1940, Russia after 1989, etc.) tend to undermine democracy in that country? Or what factors are associated with progress toward democracy across world history as a whole? In certain classes of countries?

You must state your project in the form of a **question**, both to explain to the reader what you are trying to accomplish and to keep clear in your own mind as you work which issues are and are not relevant.

Your paper should:

- Identify the major competing explanations for the event(s) you are interested in;
- Design tests that will help you assess the relative validity of the competing explanations;
- Collect and report whatever information is required by your test design;
- Report your judgments as to which explanation(s) perform best; and
- Discuss implications for other cases or problems of interest to you (including the 21st century problem that motivated your paper in the first place).

Although your paper need not be specifically aimed at testing a particular theory, competing explanations for any particular event(s) are almost always based on more general explanations about how things work—i.e., theories. Therefore you may find it necessary to identify the underlying general explanations that have been used, or could be used, to form specific explanations for your event(s).

Also, people often choose questions precisely because a well-known theory would have predicted a different outcome. For instance, a recent I.R. graduate wrote a senior honors thesis that attempted to explain why Belgium sought independence from the Netherlands in the 1830s, something that at least one major theory of nationalism would have predicted should not have happened.

Your ultimate explanation of the event(s) you study in your paper will, in turn, affect your beliefs about the validity of these more general explanations/theories, which will in turn affect your expectations about what will happen in the future under different conditions. It is in this way that theory testing is the necessary basis for all policy choice.

In terms of Van Evera's typology on pp. 89-95 of his *Guide to Methods*, your paper could be almost any mix of types 2, 3, 5, and/or 6. Nominally, Van Evera's purpose here is to suggest types of Ph.D. dissertations, but in practice the same categories apply to any social science research projects.

Projects of types 4 or 7 (policy prescription and prediction of the future) are not acceptable.

If anyone has an idea that you would like to pursue as a project of type 1 (theory-proposing), see me.

A note on standards of fairness: While you may have a favorite explanation even at the beginning of your project, it is essential that you treat alternative explanations **fully** seriously. Make sure to "argue against yourself" with **at least** as much vigor and care as you pursue arguments that you favor.

This is the only way that you can make arguments that will be persuasive to people who are not already in full agreement with you—whether in scholarship, in politics, in business, or any other setting.

## II. Specific Instructions for Each Stage

First Assignment (Proposal): Follow the instructions for parts 1 and 2 on pp. 115-116 of Van Evera.

1) What is your question? Be as clear and detailed as possible about exactly what aspect(s) of the event(s) you intend to explain. E.g., “Why hasn’t Russia returned the Southern Kuriles to Japan even though Gorbachev promised to do so and a great deal of Japanese investment and aid might be forthcoming if they did?” Then elaborate the subsidiary questions raised by your main question, e.g., “What are the sources of the Russian and the Japanese claims to these islands?” and perhaps “How badly does the Russian Far East need additional infusions of Japanese capital?”

There is a natural tendency to choose questions that, although interesting, are too large for a semester paper. Use the proposal to try to cut it down to manageable size. The best paper questions will engage big issues, but actually require solving only a very narrow matter of fact. Contact me if you need help focusing your question.

2) Why is your question important? What are the more general explanations/theories that are engaged by your question, and how would different answers to it strengthen or weaken our belief in one argument versus another?

Provide a 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph explaining how different answers to your question have different implications for the peace of the world or some part of it. Think BIG. A satisfying explanation for your event(s) will almost surely have implications far beyond that event, or those countries, or that time period.

MAXIMUM length: 2 pages (see below on formatting).

Second Assignment (Survey of Literature and Preliminary Bibliography): First, provide a full introduction in the six-part format (for us, four – see below) recommend by Van Evera on pp. 100-103:

- 1) Improve parts 1 and 2, already done once in your proposal.
  - 2) Part 3 should be minimal, since at this stage you will have at best a speculation.
  - 3) Part 4 should be minimal, since you are about to devote most of this assignment to these issues.
  - 4) Parts 5 and 6 – test design and “road map” – can be skipped.
- Spend as little space as possible on the introduction; it should not consume as much as two pages.

Second, write a literature review section for your paper. That is, provide a thorough answer to question #4 of the introduction:

What is the state of knowledge/state of debate on your question? How many distinct schools of thought are there? Who are the most important proponents of each? What is the argument of each about the causes of the outcome(s) you are interested in?

Do **not** simply list authors and summarize the views of each; rather, it is your job to impose order on the debate and describe it clearly; cite individual authors to illustrate how you have structured the debate.

You may find the existing literature confused – different definitions of concepts, perhaps some more useful than others; different labels of essentially the same arguments or concepts; etc. In this case, you must impose order on it and present a clear summary to yourself and to the reader. The most serious problem you may encounter (and a likely one) will be arguments that purport to explain specific cases, but describe their underlying causal thinking poorly or not at all; you may need to work backward from the case-specific claims to what you think the underlying theories must be: what one would have to believe about how the world works in order to believe these explanations of these cases.

If you are lucky, you may find one particular author who has already done a good job of explaining the debate; in that case, feel free to borrow as much as you find useful—giving credit where it is due, of course.

Your answers to these questions may not be as thorough as they will be later, but you are expected by this point to have mastered at least the outlines of existing debate, if not all the important details.

**Most important**, identify the alternative general causal arguments (theories) that lie behind the competing explanations of your outcome(s). You will need this last in order to figure out what would constitute valid tests of the arguments for the next assignment.

Third, provide a bibliography of 50 items that you think might prove useful for assignments three, four, and five, in appropriate citation format. You may wish to divide these into several categories. For items available both on the web and in print, cite the print version. Unless you have obtained my agreement that your project requires an exception, no more than 33% of the items may be short news items or web-based items.

Provide one-sentence annotations for each item; you need not have actually acquired each item by this point, but you should know enough to be able to say why it is of interest. For web-only sources, annotations concerning the qualifications or possible political interests of the authors or publishers **must** be provided. See Section III below for further instructions and advice.

You may not actually use all the items named in this assignment; as your expertise on your question advances, your ability to identify exactly what you need will improve.

MAXIMUM length: 10 pages, not counting the bibliography (no limit on that).

The key to success is: Read many books! Or at least, gather many books. Many of the sources you will need may be books, journals, or databases that Lehigh does not own. This means you may have to make extensive use of PALCI or ILL, and given the delays inherent in these, you must submit your requests early if they are to arrive in time to help you. Take account also of the fact that Linderman Library is closed, and requests will take time for delivery.

Therefore you should, **very** early in the semester—probably while preparing your proposal—conduct a search on your question in a major university catalogue (I recommend HOLLIS, the Harvard University catalogue); also search the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) for articles in journals that Lehigh may not own. See my ‘Chaining’ memo (on the web site) for advice on how to do this, and take account of Roseann Bowerman’s advice. Only after making your best effort to determine what may exist should you investigate which items Lehigh owns and which you will have to obtain by ILL or other means.

Continue these practices as your project evolves. Order from ILL lavishly and often. 50-80 requests – no, I’m not kidding – would be fully appropriate, since you won’t know yet which will prove useful. Be a pack rat – fill your room with stuff; sort out later what you really need. The alternative is finding out, way too late, that you lack something that you now realize you desperately need.

Third Assignment (Test Design): First, improve your introduction again, although you may still omit Part 6, the “road map.”

Second, improve your literature review, filling in any holes in your earlier draft. Shift emphasis as needed so that your literature will do its job of identifying general arguments or theories underlying the competing explanations, which in turn will help you identify particular matters of fact about which the competing explanations would make different predictions. **Identifying these divergent expectations about real-world facts that you can measure is *the* critical step in any successful scientific project.**

Third, provide a test design for answering your question. Decide which 2 or 3 alternative explanations for your event(s) are worth considering (if you identified 4 or more explanations, include a footnote in either the literature or test design sections explaining why you will not engage with the additional ones—perhaps on grounds of inherent implausibility, or lack of broad application to other cases of interest, or impracticability of testing in your case(s)).

Explain your test design for evaluating these 2 or 3 competing explanations. Note that the important questions that this section must answer are “What matters of fact do you need to settle, and how will settling them help solve your original question?” **not:** “What sources will you consult?” Ordinarily you should devote all your space to explaining which matters of evidence matter, why, and how. You should devote **no** space to discussing sources. You should discuss sourcing issues **only** if obtaining certain information presents special problems; in that case describe what you plan to do about the problem.

Often this section will contain a discussion of which case(s) you plan to study, and why, or a discussion of how you plan to break down what may at first appear as a single case into a larger number of separate observable outcomes (as Pape does in his chapter on why Japan surrendered).

MAXIMUM length: 15 pages. You will need to edit the introduction and literature review to compact them judiciously, as you will likely need half the space for the test design.

Fourth Assignment (Complete Paper): First, revise your introduction; note that you will now have findings to present in Part 3. If the findings are as yet tentative, or ambiguous, or conflicting, explain. Simple, definite conclusions should be reported only if that is what you actually have. What counts is the quality of the research, not the simplicity of the findings.

Remember to include a road map (Part 6).

Second, improve (and shorten) the literature review and test design sections of your paper. That is, provide thorough answers to question #4 and #5 of the introduction. Use of tables or diagrams may help you conserve space.

Third, carry out the tests you have promised. Collect the relevant data, report it, and summarize its meaning for resolving your question. This will probably be the longest section of your paper. It will almost always be best to organize subsections by the factual questions that you identified in the testing methods section, or—sometimes—by cases. A simple chronological narrative is almost never the best choice, because it may cause you to include irrelevant information, and may also obscure which information is most important, and why.

Use tables to summarize your data, making it easy for the reader (and you) to understand the relationships between variables and the similarities (and contrasts) between cases.

Determine whether your test design must be modified in any way. Are there additional cases you should examine, or additional questions that you should ask of your current cases?

Where facts are controversial, explain how you determined which source(s) to treat as most reliable, and whether you were able to resolve the controversy to your satisfaction. Never rely on a single source on any controversial matter.

Where data has proved difficult to obtain – perhaps because records are unavailable, or never existed – determine whether there is any available substitute that will serve (almost) equally well. If certain ambiguities ultimately cannot be resolved, explain to what degree your conclusions might have to be limited.

Finally, provide a short concluding section. Summarize **very** briefly your conclusions about your original question. You may wish to and explain why your conclusions should be considered robust (or not so robust)—and, possibly, how broadly you think they may apply to additional problems. Do **not** rehash your argument or provide new data.

Then explain the implications of your findings for the current or future policy problem that motivated your paper in the first place—as well as implications for other problems, if you desire. These tasks should take up most of the space in the concluding section.

If you have suggestions for further research, or additional comments about anything you learned in this process, did not learn, or would like to figure out how to learn, include them.

This organization, or something reasonably like it, is **required**. While not all of the best papers (in academe or in business) use this organization, it does make it especially easy for the author to keep track of what tasks need doing, and which issues are relevant and which are not. See also the advice in Van Evera, pp. 99-111.

MAXIMUM length: 20 pages (again, see below on formatting). I recommend (roughly) 2 pages for the introduction, 8-10 for literature review and methods (you will need to squeeze these sections again), and 8-10 for evidence, findings, and conclusions. **Ruthlessly** suppress irrelevancies. Do **not** attempt to complete this assignment in one draft; you will never make it fit.

Fifth Assignment (Revised Paper): Improve all aspects of your paper as much as you can.

### III. More Instructions and Advice

Instructor Feedback/Meetings with Instructor: Each of you will receive written feedback on your first (proposal) and second (literature review) assignments, and will meet with me to discuss your third (test design) and fourth (first complete paper) assignments.

You should also seek me out whenever you feel the need to. Especially, many of you may find it helpful to have additional follow-up meetings on any or all of the steps in this process.

Sources: Many students who have grown up since the advent of the Internet have excellent web research skills, but correspondingly reduced library research skills. This is a serious problem for the quality of work of all kinds because traditional mainstream sources (mainstream media, academic books and journals, etc.) have vetting processes that help them weed out at least some low-quality information, but the web, by nature, cannot not have such filters. Wikipedia, for example, cannot be considered authoritative.

This does not mean that you should avoid web-based databases such as Lexis-Nexis as research tools; today no one could function without them. There is nothing wrong with using the web to locate sources – **provided** that you can identify the author or publishing organization. (Material from personal web pages of experts or scholars who also publish in mainstream outlets, or from expert or

advocacy organizations that have good reputations for fairness and accuracy, is also acceptable.)

See also Gibaldi, pp. 41-45, on evaluating sources.

#### Formatting:

Except when specified otherwise, all assignments should be submitted on paper (**not** via e-mail), double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, 12-point type, and page numbers. Footnotes should be in 11-point type, single spaced. Bibliographies (if you use a documentation format that requires them) should be in 12-point type, 1½ spaced.

Assignments may **not** exceed the maximum page lengths. There are no minimums, but in practice few are likely to be satisfied with your products much below the maximums.

All text (including footnotes and bibliographies) counts against page limits, but charts, tables, drawings, photographs, maps, or other non-textual ways of presenting information **do not**—these are, in effect, free.

#### Citation:

In general, you must document your sources for:

1. Facts that you would expect to be obscure to an intelligent, educated but non-expert reader (say, one of your classmates after completing this course);
2. Factual interpretations that are considered controversial. In such cases, you must decide whether it is appropriate to cite alternative views and to explain the controversy, including why you favor a particular interpretation or why you consider the question undecidable. This explanation might appear in the main text or in a footnote;
3. Ideas, insights, or interpretations that you gained from authors you read or from anyone else, with two exceptions—you need not cite remarks made in meetings of the course, or by me or by a Lehigh reference librarian in any setting. You should cite insights gained from a classmate in any other setting, such as when studying together, or from anyone else. No embarrassment should attach to this – rather, giving credit where it is due is professional on your part and (appropriately) generous to your colleague; and
4. Any direct quote or paraphrase, regardless of whether the content falls into any of the first three categories.

Citation Standards and Writing Style: Follow the advice offered in Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 2003). For citations, you may use either “scientific format,” (covered in Gibaldi, chapters 5-6, or simply follow *American Political Science Review* style), or “standard format” (covered in Gibaldi appendix B, or simply follow *International Security* style). I personally prefer standard format, but you may use either so long as you do so consistently and accurately. If you do use standard format, use footnotes, not endnotes.

Note that scientific format or any other form of “in-line” citation requires a “list of works cited” at the end of the paper—which **does** count against page

limits—but standard format does not. (Note that a “list of works cited” means exactly what it says; it is not the same as a “bibliography,” which would include everything you consulted whether cited or not).

For assignment #2, follow either of the bibliographic formats described in Gibaldi, or *APSR* style, or *IS* bibliographic style (found at the back of issue #4 of each volume).

On how to cite web-based sources: If the document is also published in print form—e.g., a newspaper or journal article—cite that. For web-only publications, Gibaldi covers most of what you need, but if you need additional help, try “MLA Style for Electronic Formats,” found on Lehigh’s website under /libraries/electronic resources/footnotes. Note that MLA style requires more than just the URL. In effect web sites are treated in most ways as ordinary documents, with the URL serving, more or less, as the publication information.

Scheduling and related issues: See the course syllabus.