

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

I. *General Instructions*

As announced on the first day of class and in the syllabus, one course requirement is completion of a modest research report. In so far as class time and overall enrollment permit, each student's research report will first be presented in class during the last weeks of the semester in a oral presentation of about 15 minutes. Your student colleagues will be asked to evaluate your presentation on an anonymous form, and I will take account of these evaluations in grading your project. Your presentation will then be written up in a paper of about 8-10 pages due at the end of the final exam period. The presentation/paper will receive a single grade accounting for 25% of the course grade.

II. *Topics and Template*

Topics for student research reports include case studies of: (i) military engagements; (ii) instances of strategic intelligence, surprise, or deception, (iii) international (or other) crises, or (iv) other uses of coercive tactics, as well as (v) other instances of conflict and cooperation. Because it is covered in course readings and is the subject of the Take-Home Midterm Assignment, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis is not available for student reports.

Whatever the topic, your presentation and paper should not be merely a narrative of events but an analysis that is informed by the kinds of game-theoretical and strategic concepts introduced in POLI 388 class lectures, discussions, and readings, and it should use the following general template.

- (1) Identify the *players* or *actors* who are making strategic choices. (It is standard in most international relations theory to deem nations to be unitary actors making strategic choices.)
- (2) Identify the *payoffs* (*goals, interests, preferences*, etc.) of the players.
- (3) Characterize the nature of the *strategic interaction* between the players (This might best be done by devising, justifying, and analyzing a specific *payoff matrix*; constructing such a matrix is encouraged but not required.)
- (4) Identify to what extent the players are making choice *sequentially* and *openly* or are making choice *simultaneously* and/or *secretly*.
- (5) Identify opportunities for *communication* and strategic *intelligence* and/or *deception* between the players.
- (6) Identify the incentives and opportunities the players may have to make *credible commitments, threats, or promises*.
- (7) Consider to what extent this strategic interaction is a *one-shot* game or is part of more extended interaction in the manner of a *iterated* or *repeated* game.

Many suggested topics are listed below, but other topics are potentially appropriate and many of those listed here might profitably be narrowed in their focus, so different students might report on different aspects of the same general topic.

A case study of deception, pre-emption, surprise attack, or decisive military engagement, such as:

(World War II)

The German “strike in the West” [vs. low countries, France, and the British Expeditionary Force], May 1940
Battle of Britain [Britain vs. Germany air battle], July-September 1940
Operation Barbarosa [German invasion of Soviet Union], June 1941
The Pearl Harbor attack, December 1941
Battle of Midway [U.S. vs. Japan aircraft carrier battle], June 1942
Battle of the Atlantic [German U-Boats vs Allied merchant marine and escorts]
Battle of Kursk [Germany vs. Soviet Union, June 1943, greatest tank battle in history]
Operation Overlord [Allied Invasion of France -- D-Day], June 1944
Battle of the Bulge [Allies vs. Germany, December 1944-January 1945]
Battle of Iwo Jima [U.S vs. Japan, February-March 1945]
Battle of Okinawa [U.S. vs. Japan, April-June 1945]
Atomic bombing of Japan [U.S. vs. Japan, July-August 1945]
Operation Downfall [Prospective U.S. invasion of Japan]

(Korean War)

North Korean invasion of South Korea, June 1950
Inchon Landing, September 1950
Chinese intervention, November-December 1950
Negotiating the Korean Armistice [March 1951-March 1953]

(Other)

Six Day War [Israel vs. Egypt (and Jordan and Syria)], June 1967
Yom Kippur War [Israel vs. Egypt (and Syria)], October 1973
Falklands War [Britain vs. Argentina], April-May 1982
Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988
Soviets vs. U.S. (by proxy) in Afghanistan, 1979-1989
Operation Desert Storm (“international coalition” vs. Iraq, January-March 1991)
Operation Iraqi Freedom (“coalition of willing” vs. Iraq, March-April 2003)

A case study of a specific international crisis (other than Cuban Missile Crisis), such as:

Munich crisis [Germany vs. Britain (and France)], 1938
U.S.-Japan crisis, 1940-41
Founding of the state of Israel, 1948
Berlin Blockade [Western Allies vs. Soviets], 1948-49

Suez crisis [Britain/France vs. Egypt], 1956
Quemoy-Matsu crisis [U.S. vs. “Red China”], 1958
Berlin crisis [U.S./NATO vs. Soviets], 1958-61
India-Pakistan crises, 1990 and/or 2001
Former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo) crises, 1992-2000

A case study of strategic interaction and/or coercive tactics in more enduring conflicts, such as:

Events leading to World War II in Europe
Japanese surrender, July-August 1945
Establishment and maintenance of Communist “satellite” regimes in Eastern Europe, 1946 onwards
Battle of Algiers and Algerian War [France vs. Algerian nationalists], 1954-1962
U.S. in Vietnam
Solidarity-Communist conflicts in Poland, 1980-1981 and/or 1989
Collapse of Eastern European Communist regimes, 1989
Israeli-Palestinian conflict, various phases
Sino-Soviet relations, 1962-1980s
India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir province
Politics of OPEC cartel
“Troubles” in Northern Ireland, 1969-present
Iran-U.S. hostage crisis, 1979-1981
Some other significant and well documented “hostage-taking” crisis (not necessarily international)
ABM (Anti-ballistic missile) defense systems
Containing or pre-empting “rogue states”
Aspects of the “War on Terror”
The “surge” in Iraq (2006 onwards)
The more recent “surge” in Afghanistan (2009 onwards)
North Korea/South Korea/U.S. crisis, current
China vs. Taiwan, current
Iran vs. most of the world (regarding nuclear development), current
Kyoto/Copenhagen Agreements (on global warming)
International conflict and cooperation regarding other economic and/or environmental issues

Whatever your topic, it must be approved by me in advance (both for appropriateness and to avoid or minimize duplication among student choices). Topics may be claimed on a first-come, first-served basis at any time by contacting the instructor. All students should submit a proposed topic (preferably with back-up choice) to the instructor by Wednesday, March 31.

III. *Research Procedures*

In part, this is a “scavenger hunt” type of exercise — it is up to you to figure how to trace down the information you need to fill in the template and do the analysis outlined above for the topic you have chosen. But here are some suggestions to get you started.

1. As a first step, do (in advance, as necessary) any course readings that may be related to your topic, and use the citations and references in these readings to lead you to other sources. (Schelling’s book on *Arms and Influence* is likely to be helpful.)
2. As a second step, browse the links on the POLI 388 course webpage. By far the most valuable link is *International Relations Documents* [Prof. Vincent Ferraro, Mt Holyoke College (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/feros-pg.htm>), at which you can find hundreds of full-text documents pertaining to many of the topics listed above (and many others). (Student suggestions for additional links are welcome.) Also the course website provides direct links to many of the research resources discussed below.
3. As a third step, type some key words suggested by your research topic into an internet search engine (*Google* is recommended) and see what turns up. There is now a great deal of useful and interesting content on the web (intermingled with even more junk), and it is readily accessible in a way that print material in research libraries never can be. Furthermore, some information posted on the web may be available nowhere else. But remember that anyone can “publish” anything on the web easily and cheaply (often virtually for free) and can do this without any “fact checking” (as used by print publications), “peer review” (as used by academic and scientific journals), or any other screening or editorial process. Such unvetted material cannot be assumed to be accurate and reliable and should therefore be viewed with a measure of skepticism.
4. Next go to the UMBC Library’s homepage and browse the research options available. Most such resources be searched electronically, as may many other indices and databases that previously were available only in printed volumes in the Reference Room. *Academic Search* and *LexisNexis* have powerful search features but generally cover only quite recent sources. The contents of recent issues of many journals may be browsed electronically and, if the Library subscribes to a journal, you may be able to read (or print) its full-text articles on-line. Some journals are available in electronic form back to their first issues (and up to a “moving wall” of several years ago) through *JSTOR*. (Note that many of these resources are proprietary products for which UMBC has site licences, and therefore they can be used only from UMBC computers.)
5. To search for older articles, you can use indices in the reference room (that used to be provided in bound hard copies and now may be on CD-ROM), such as:

Readers Guide to Periodical Literature (includes news magazines [*Time*, *Newsweek*, etc.] and journals of opinion [*National Review*, *New Republic*, etc.])

Social Science Index (more strictly scholarly journals)
Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) Annual Bulletin
International Political Science Abstracts
ABC Political Science Index

6. Hard copies of journals are in the Serials Department on the second floor of the library tower. Current and recent issues are unbound on shelves in the reading room. Back issues are bound by volume and placed in the stacks. (Unfortunately, the most recent back issues may be at the bindery and not immediately available.) Not all journals that are covered by these indices and other resources (or on the list below) are in the UMBC library, of course.

News magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, etc.), journals of opinion (*New Republic*, *National Review*, *The Nation*, etc.), and other semi-popular magazines (*Harpers*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Economist*, etc.) may have topical articles of relevance. For more in-depth analyses, check such semi-academic journals as *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The National Interest*.

A great many academic journal focus on research areas relevant to POLI 388. (*Caution 1:* many of these journals are not owned by the UMBC Library but may be available at UMCP or elsewhere.

Asian Security (Professor Devin Hagerty is an editor)
Comparative Strategy
Conflict Management and Peace Science
Contemporary Security Policy
Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Journal of International Studies
Defense Analysis
Global Governance
International Interactions
International Organization
International Peacekeeping
International Politics
International Security
International Studies Quarterly
Intelligence and National Security
Journal of Conflict Resolution
Journal of Peace Research
Journal of Strategic Studies
Millennium: Journal of International Studies
National Security Studies Quarterly
Nonproliferation Review
Orbis
Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace Studies
Security Studies
Terrorism and Political Violence

General political science journals may also include relevant articles. The more accessible and potentially relevant of these are the *Journal of Theoretical Politics* (Professor Nicholas Miller is a former editor), *Political Science Quarterly*, *Political Studies*, *Polity*, and *World Politics*. Other leading general political science journal are the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Research Quarterly* (formerly *Western Political Quarterly*), and the *British Journal of Political Science*. (You should be warned that many articles in contemporary political science journals are quite heavily mathematical and/or statistical.)

7. For historical or factual details, authoritative newspapers such as *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post* may be useful sources. Both are indexed. The *New York Times Index* is so detailed, providing abstracts of major articles, that in some cases you may be able to get the information you need from the index itself. Many Times articles are available for free, and others for a modest fee, at <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>.
8. Do not be reluctant to seek help from the UMBC reference librarians. They are both very knowledgeable and (in my experience) very willing to help.

IV. *Research Products*

Class presentations will be scheduled during the final weeks of the semester, with about four presentations scheduled for each class period. The final paper should be typed or word processed in appropriate format. (Word processing is strongly recommended to facilitate revision of drafts.) The expected length is about 8-10 (typed double-spaced) pages (about 2000-25000 words) of text plus any appended material (charts, maps, tables, etc.). You will be asked to submit the final paper in both hard-copy and electronic forms (the latter as a Word or WordPerfect email attachment). Consult with me if the latter requirement presents a real difficulty, e.g., you use a typewriter, not word processing.

Schedule for completion of project (subject to adjustment):

March 3	These Guidelines distributed to students
March 31	Turn in a note indicate your preferred topic, with back-up choices in the event several students have the same first choice
April 7	Approval of topics by instructor; distribution of topic list to class
April 14	Submit preliminary outline and bibliography to instructor
April 21* to May 12	Class presentations
May 21	Submit final paper

* later if this period includes make-up classes from snow closures.

V. *Presentations*

The last three weeks (approximately) of class will be devoted to student presentations. Depending on where class enrollment ends up, presentations may be optional. Making a presentation has these advantages:

- (1) the development of good oral presentation skills is very valuable for many career objectives:
- (2) a presentation will give you an extra incentive to have your work largely completed prior to the very end of the semester (when you may face many other competing deadlines),
- (3) you will get some feedback from me and, I hope, from your fellow students prior to completing the final version of the report, and
- (4) if presentations are optional, I may increase the weight of the research report in determining your grade, but I will do this *only if* doing so is to your advantage (i.e., only if your grade on the report and presentation is higher than your average grade on the Midterm Test, Midterm Essay assignment, and Final Exam.

If you wish, you can use the same PowerPoint facilities that I use in class each day. Alternatively, I can make Departmental resources available to you if you want to make xerox handouts, transparencies, etc., for your presentation. Please see me a few days in advance of your presentation to make the necessary arrangements.

VI. *Final Paper*

Your final paper should be well organized and clearly written, using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. (Remember that the spell-checker of a word processing program does not catch all spelling errors, let alone other errors.) In my experience, a well organized and clearly written paper emerges only after multiple revisions.

1. ***Typing and Formatting.*** Your final paper should be typed or, preferably, word-processed in double-spaced format. Footnotes (if used) may be placed at the bottom of the page (recommended only if you are using a wordprocessor that adjusts spacing automatically) or gathered at the end of the paper. If you type your paper, minor typographical errors may be corrected in ink.
2. ***Citations and References.*** Your paper should include proper citation for important facts (that are not common knowledge), opinions, arguments, as well as direct quotations. Most commonly, you will summarize the facts, opinion, or argument in your own words and then provide a citation. Sometimes you may choose to quote your source directly: brief quotations (up to several lines) are placed in quotation marks and embedded in the text of your paper; longer quotations are set off by indentation (as illustrated below). In either event, what you present as direct quotation must be *exact* (word for word) quotation. And, whether you summarize or directly quote the words of another author, you must not misrepresent that author's evident meaning (by "quoting out of context").

There are many different styles for providing citations. The traditional footnote style (which has many variations) is less commonly used in political science writing now than it used to be. Many political science books and most political science journals now use the more convenient "scientific" style, by which an abbreviated citation (author's last name and date of publication)

is provided parenthetically within the text, for example:

According to Taagepera and Shugart (1989), even proportional representation systems show small degrees of disproportionality

Various studies have shown that district magnitude is the decisive factor influencing the seat-votes relationship (Rae, 1967; Taagepera and Shugart, 1989; Lijphart, 1993).

A list of references, including all items cited and following any standard style, is then placed at the end of the paper. I do not care what citation and reference style you use, but I do insist that proper citations be provided.

3. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is taking written work of others and passing it off as your own. In academic life, plagiarism is an extremely serious offense. A Ph.D. candidate found to have committed plagiarism would be expelled from graduate school; a professor found to have committed plagiarism would be fired. Consider how you would feel if you had “sweated blood” to produce the best paper you could, and you then discovered that another student had copied or paraphrased large portions of your paper and turned it in as his or her own work. It should be added that plagiarism of this sort is much easier to recognize and often considerably easier to track down than some students (evidently) suppose. Submission of a plagiarized paper in this (or any other upper-level) course may result in a grade of F for the course, regardless of exam or other grades, and the matter will be referred to the Academic Conduct Committee.

In an undergraduate course, I do not deem errors, evidently made in good faith, in handling sources to constitute plagiarism. (But I will note and correct such errors.) But deliberately copying or paraphrasing extended portions of someone else's writing (whether from a printed source, a web site, or a “term-paper mill”) and pretending that it is your own writing is inexcusable conduct at any level (even if citations are provided) and it will be punished. (A “paper” that consists largely of direct quotation, presented as such and properly cited, does not constitute plagiarism but at the same time does not constitute an acceptable student paper.)

For further guidance on plagiarism, see the course website.

4. **Final Submission.** The written report is due by **5:00PM on Friday, May 21**. It should be submitted as a word processing document (Word or WordPerfect) attached to an email sent to nmiller@umbc.edu. Especially if it includes tables, charts, etc., that are difficult to include in the electronic copy, you may want also to deliver a hard copy to my office or mail box, but please submit an electronic copy of the text as well. Please consult with me if electronic submission presents you with major difficulties.