Teaching Portfolio

John M. Cotter
Department of Political Science
University of Kentucky
jmcott0@uky.edu
www.uky.edu/AS/PoliSci/Cotter

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CONTENTS

• Statement of Teaching Philosophy 2

• Numerical Summary of Course Evaluations (4 point scale) 4

• Written Comments from Course Evaluations 5

• World Politics—Political Science 235 7
  (Course Web Page: http://jcotter.pageout.net)
  ° Syllabus 8
  ° Research Paper Assignment 12

• Introduction to European Politics: East and West—Political Science 210 15
  (Course Web Page: http://jcotter.pageout.net)
  ° Syllabus 16
  ° Book Review Assignment 20

• Appendix A—“Guide to Writing Essays on Timed Exams” 22

• Appendix B—“Why Study Ethnic Conflict?” Overhead 24

• Appendix C—“Electoral Rules/Voting Systems” Handout 25
Statement of Teaching Philosophy

John M. Cotter

Based on my education and experience teaching a variety of courses over the last four years, I have developed my own perspective on teaching that goes beyond simply transmitting information about politics and the discipline of Political Science to students, and then periodically testing for the retention of that information. What makes the study of politics interesting, both to me and to students, are the real life problems and controversial issues in the United States and world. So, while I consider it essential that courses familiarize students with the main terms, concepts, and theories of the discipline, I also strongly believe that students learn more and develop valuable skills when they actively engage in evaluating the many compelling debates and controversies in the field through class discussion, and through their own research and writing. Active involvement allows students to develop their own ideas on various issues, and then enhances their ability to communicate and justify their points of view. Thus, my courses are organized around three related goals. Students should gain substantive knowledge, enhance their critical analysis skills, and improve their writing ability.

Before students can start to evaluate some of the debates in Political Science, their ideas need to be based on some background knowledge of the subject under consideration. Assigned readings and lectures are my main methods of setting up the substantive knowledge to provide for informed discussion. My approach to lecturing is that a little enthusiasm goes a long way. I have found that demonstrating my own interest in the topics sparks interest from the students, which has been reflected in student comments in their evaluations of my classes. I also seek to demonstrate the relevance of the subjects covered. For instance, I start my section on ethnic conflict by answering the question—"Why should we study ethnic conflict?" By showing the far-reaching impact of internal conflict (See Appendix B), students become more interested in countries that, at first, may seem too distant. Finally, one of the best ways to maintain student interest is to avoid using jargon. When it is sometimes necessary to introduce Political Science terminology for the sake of discussion, I clearly define terms and review theories, followed by several examples to illustrate the point. So, in reviewing Graham Allison’s Bureaucratic Politics Model of foreign policy decision-making, I use the Cuban Missile Crisis as a case study to demonstrate how this abstract theory might work in the real world, and then ask the students if this perspective can help us understand the Gulf War, or other instances of American intervention abroad.

While energetic lecturing is one of my strengths, I lecture in a style that promotes class participation, discussion, and debate. Often I will ask students to summarize key points from readings and/or give examples of concepts being presented. One point that I emphasize to students throughout all my courses is that various arguments about political issues must be supported by evidence. Consequently, when introducing various perspectives or theories I will ask students to provide counter-arguments, conflicting examples, or contrast one perspective with another covered in the course. For example, after a brief lecture on the “Clash of Civilizations” article by Huntington, I asked the students give some examples of how Huntington supported his argument. Then, I asked them to compare/contrast Huntington’s “Clash” with other perspectives which we had previously covered. My intention was to review various critiques in the literature that have been leveled against Huntington. Based on the observations
and criticism from students, we were able to list many of the critiques that I wanted to cover—
the Realist’s emphasis on powerful states controlling civilizations, the Liberal’s argument about
reifying Realism by substituting civilizations for states, and the diversity and conflict within
civilizations, rather than between them. Last semester, after introducing students to the
numerous electoral rules in European democracies with a handout (Appendix C), I asked
students to comment on which rule they favored. Based on that discussion, I was able to
demonstrate the trade-off between efficiency and representativeness, and discuss assumptions
about voter sophistication in various voting systems.

This approach that combines lecture and discussion necessarily takes more time than
simply listing the main points of a section and then moving on, but the interactive environment
maintains students’ interest. More importantly, my approach compels students to read and think
critically, instead of automatically accepting what they see in print. Together, we look at how
theories may apply to current events, contrast different points of view, and scan the evidence to
evaluate the arguments. Eventually, students come up with their own thoughts on issues
discussed, which they must justify in class, and eventually, put these critical thinking skills to use
in their written assignments.

The writing process is something I stress each semester. Students in introductory classes
come from a variety of majors, but regardless of their specialization I feel that one of the most
important contributions instructors can make is to improve students’ writing ability. As in my
classroom discussion, I assign papers that make students think critically about a topic they have
chosen. For example, in my World Politics class students are required to write a research paper
on a controversial issue in International Relations. When faced with a fairly long writing
assignment, many students find it hard to know where to even begin. Consequently (and to
avoid procrastination), the paper is divided into stages as outlined in the attached assignment
sheet—research question, source list, outline, and the final paper. This method allows students
to research the issue they have chosen, evaluate the arguments and evidence offered, and finally
pull together these various strands into an organized paper, where they must justify their
conclusions. In short, students are learning by doing small Political Science projects. I also do a
mini-workshop on how to approach essay questions on timed exams prior to the first exam in
each course (See Appendix A).

Overall, I would like my students to describe me as an enthusiastic, organized, and
knowledgeable instructor. But, in addition to providing structure and guidance to the course, by
the end of the semester, I hope I have given the students a greater understanding of politics and a
more sophisticated and critical approach to evaluating political issues and policy responses.
Finally, students should be better able to communicate their own ideas, both orally and in
writing, contributing to both their educational experience and professional development.
### Summary of Course Evaluation Results  (**4 point Scale**)  
**John M. Cotter**  
Department of Political Science  
University of Kentucky

#### World Politics  
- Spring 1997  
- Fall 1997  
- Fall 1998  
- Spring 1999  
- Spring 2000

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<td>Overall value of the course</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall quality of teaching</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlined course material and grading</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Textbook contributed to understanding</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>Suppl. reading &amp; assign. help understand</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Exams reflected what was taught</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Grading was fair and consistent</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Assignments were distributed evenly</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Graded assignments promptly</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
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<td>Graded assignments included comments</td>
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<td>Presented material effectively</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
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<td>Had good knowledge of subject matter</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Was available for consultation</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Satisfactorily answered questions</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>Stimulated interest of the subject</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Encouraged class participation</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learned to respect different viewpoints</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased ability to analyze &amp; evaluate</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>Course helped ability to solve problem</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gained understand of concepts &amp; prin.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course stimulated me to read further</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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| N                              | 10          | 11        | 39        | 12           | 16           |
Sample of Written Comments from Course Evaluations

From World Politics:

° Professor Cotter is one of the best instructors I have had. He is an asset to the University of Kentucky. Furthermore, he is willing to help students outside of class and takes a vested interest in students understanding of political science.

° I really enjoyed his teaching methods. He was interesting to listen to and I actually enjoyed coming to his night class. He is a wonderful professor and he really sparked my interest in international relations.

° I feel the instructor was definitely one of the best I have had during my past four years here. What I particularly liked was the fact that his test and assignments clearly reflected what was in class. I particularly feel like a new man because of this course. I may even join the UN Army, just so I can look so cool in the intimidating blue beret.

° The instructor was very positive and entertaining. He had a wide area of knowledge concerning the subject and didn’t draw any personal bias.

° I thoroughly enjoyed this class, and it stimulated my interest in the subject matter. The instructor was very enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

° Mr. Cotter injects a healthy amount of wit into the lectures. He seems devoted to his students and shows an intense passion and broad knowledge concerning world politics.

° Wonderful, learned a lot, prepared me for more on this subject.

° The instructor for this class is one of my favorites this semester. His lectures are in a very understandable form. He is enthusiastic about the subject and he is very willing to help outside of class. I liked the course very much and chose it even though it is not required for me to take. I’m glad I did! The number of 4’s on the other side may make it look like I didn’t take my time, but I really did feel that way about the questions.

° Teacher had a thorough knowledge of the subject. Seemed to communicate the knowledge effectively. He was extremely organized, which was appreciated. I liked the map quizzes.

° Interesting course was a good deal of work that mostly contributed to the class. Definitely made me more interested in the subject. Instructor was very fair and reasonable.

From Introduction to European Politics—East and West:

° The format was great—we did the various countries, and then some conflict issues, and finally the EU, which ties the first two together. I really liked the Northern Ireland video—it made the ethnic conflict stuff really come alive. Finally, the overheads were good. Many instructors write stuff on a board and expect you to believe it—but you always backed up your lectures with solid evidence. The class, as a whole, made me a more critical thinker.

° In the beginning of the class I was concerned because I wasn’t really into European politics or foreign policy in general. While I must admit that most of the chapters on the institutions and systems of
each country were boring, this class really picked up when we started studying ethnic conflict, far-right parties and the EU. Surprisingly, I found these topics interesting and I thought that your presentation of the material was excellent.

° I had no idea what to expect coming into this course, but it is one of the better classes I’ve had here. The best part, for me, was how informative it was. I love learning about other counties, and you presented the info. very well, kept it from getting boring, and not only that, but I always looked forward to coming to class and learning something new. Thanks.

° Great class. Very informative. Real world applications/examples appreciated.

° I thought the class was very good. This class was fun for a political science class. I looked forward to coming. Compared to other PS classes.

° I did appreciate the sometimes humorous approach to teaching. It makes it easier on us when you show that you enjoy what you are doing.

° I have really enjoyed this course, much to my own surprise. The material we covered after the 2nd exam was particularly interesting.

° I enjoyed the course. You made a somewhat dense subject seem interesting. The outline before the paper was a pain, but it helped me enormously when writing the paper—good idea!

° He has a real passion for policy and an excellent rapport w/ students.

° The overheads worked very well along with the statistical info to back up the material that was being presented.

° The course has been fun. It has been refreshing to see a teacher with energy instead of a tenured professor sitting on their thumbs!

From American Government:

° Good instructor. He was helpful and made everyone feel welcome to participate. He was also very knowledgeable.

° Easy to talk to, he had a good understanding of the material. Offered his help if needed at office (outside of class). Good person and good teacher.

° This course was extremely helpful to understanding of the lecture material. John is a good instructor and often cleared up issues that I might have missed in class. I have no complaints of the section.

° Sections are helpful, more personable, and effective.
World Politics—Political Science 235

Course Description—

World Politics serves as a broad introduction to the field of International Relations, and intends to prepare students for upper-level courses in International Politics. I divided the course (approximately) in half, dealing with topics in both International Security and International Political Economy. We cover the major theoretical perspectives in IR theory—(Neo)Realism and (Neo)Liberalism—as well touch on some alternative perspectives such as Feminism and Postmodernism. We cover major issues in the field of IR, including the causes of war, foreign policy decision-making, trade, and North-South relations; as well as current problems in world politics, including ethnic conflict, nuclear proliferation, and international environmental issues. 
See attached syllabus.

Writing Assignment—

In addition to exams and quizzes, students are required to write a research paper dealing with a controversial issue in International Politics. I allow the students to choose their topic so they may select something that will sustain their interest, typically it is one of the issues in the Taking Sides reader that is used throughout the semester. After researching various perspectives on their issues (in addition to what is in Taking Sides), students must evaluate the arguments and evidence, and then make an evaluation of which perspective seems most logical and useful for answering the original research question. I urge students to think creatively and to take a stand on the issue by arguing their own perspective that may not be discussed in the literature they have researched, or perhaps to try to integrate complimentary arguments. The assignment is divided into stages—research question, source list, outline, and final paper—to guide students in writing quality papers over the course of the semester, and to avoid low grades due to procrastination. This setup of completing the assignment in stages has been popular among the students, because I can alert students when they are off track prior to the final paper. The assignment sheet suggests how to go about doing the research and outlines my expectations in terms of the content and organization of the final paper. See attached assignment sheet following the syllabus.
Political Science 235-002
World Politics
Fall 2001
(MWF 12:00-12:50; CB 201)

Instructor: John M. Cotter
Office: 1627 Patterson Office Tower
Office Hours: MWF 1:00-3:00 and by appointment
Phone: 257-7051
E-mail: jmcott0@uky.edu
Course Web Page: http://jcotter.pageout.net

Course Description:

This course serves as a broad introduction to the field of International Relations in the discipline of Political Science. The goal is to help students develop an understanding and mastery of the conceptual tools used by political scientists to analyze and make sense of the dynamics, complexities, and outcomes of international politics.

To develop a better understanding of International Relations, this course uses three different approaches. First, we will study the major concepts, ideas, and theories used to explain what happens in world politics. Second, these theories of International Relations will be clarified using historical examples, which illustrate how these ideas are applied to real-world events. Third, we will look at several current issues in international politics, examining how these theories may help us understand or solve the problems of today.

Compared with other areas of Political Science, there is little agreement on the best way to study and understand world politics. As the different, and sometimes contradictory, approaches to studying world politics are introduced, students are encouraged to think critically about these competing explanatory frameworks. During the lectures, discussions, and readings, you should be asking yourself such questions as, which theories make the most sense? Which fit the historical evidence the best? Do certain theories fit reality better under certain circumstances? Can we combine elements of one perspective with another? Experience with thinking critically about the material will be useful to students when the time arrives to write the research paper.

The material presented in this course will be new to most students. Students are encouraged to ask questions during the lecture to clarify concepts that are unclear. Students are also encouraged to stop by my office or make an appointment with me while studying for tests, writing the paper, or just to discuss some of the course material.

Due to the amount of material we must cover in one semester, lectures will not simply go over what is in the assigned reading. The readings will serve as a lead into lectures and discussions in class. Consequently, students are strongly encouraged to come to class on a regular basis and read the assigned material before class. You will benefit more from the lectures by being prepared, and using the opportunity to ask questions about the material presented. I strongly encourage you to take notes on the important points of the texts as you read them. This will not only prepare you for class, but will also be a valuable study tool as you prepare for the exams.

Required Texts:

For Purchase
On Reserve


Full Text on Infotrac


Grade Distribution and Course Requirements:

<table>
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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Notification</td>
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<td>List of Sources</td>
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<td>Paper Outline</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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Exams. There will three tests: two “midterms” and a final exam. The final will be cumulative. Exams will be a combination of objective (multiple choice, ids, matching, etc.) and essay questions covering both lectures and assigned reading.

Research Paper. Students will be required to write a research paper analyzing one of the controversies in the Taking Sides text or another controversy in world politics that interests you. In the paper, students will have to examine the arguments made by the two or more sides of the issue, research other interpretations of the controversy, and make an overall evaluation on which side has the best argument making use of the analytical tools we develop throughout the semester. The paper does not require an enormous amount of outside research; instead, your own critical analysis and interpretation is the focus of this assignment. Additional details and potential strategies for this assignment will be discussed and summarized in a future handout in class. If a student wishes to analyze a controversy not covered in Taking Sides, the topic must be approved by the instructor.

Map Quizzes. In order to understand world politics, you must have some knowledge of what the world looks like. Consequently, there will be four map quizzes in the semester, which cover the region we are discussing at that particular time. Map quizzes will be announced at least one week in advance. Current maps, for studying, are included in the introductory pages of the Goldstein text.

Reading Quizzes and Participation. There will be several announced quizzes throughout the semester that will test students’ knowledge of the week’s assigned reading. This is necessary to make sure students are familiar with the general topics that will be discussed during lectures and to promote quality in-class participation. Consistent class participation will be important in assigning final grades to students that are on the “borderline” between two letter grades. There will be many opportunities for class participation and discussion, especially through answering questions posed to the class during the lectures. These questions will ask students to summarize an argument or concept from the text, give a real-world example of a phenomena being discussed, relate concepts introduced at different points in the course, or address shortcomings in the theories or perspectives discussed. Students may also bring up recent developments in world affairs and relate them to a topic discussed during the course. But in order to analyze these new developments you must be informed on recent events in international politics, by reading
newspapers and weekly magazines available in the library, or through links to these news sources contained in the Department of Political Science web page: http://www.uky.edu/AS/PoliSci. These same links may be useful to you in writing your research paper.

Grading Scale. Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A    89.5-100%
B    79.5-89.4%
C    69.5-79.4%
D    59.5-69.4%
E    59.4% and below

Class Policies:

Plagiarism and Cheating. Plagiarism and cheating are serious violations and will be dealt with as such and according to University guidelines. For specific policies, see the University of Kentucky Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.htm, or, hardcopy available from the Dean of Students, 513 Patterson Office Tower.

Make-up Exams and Late Papers. Make-up exams will only be given if the student provides a University approved excuse for having missed an exam. The research paper, and all other related assignments, must be turned in on the due date. One letter grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late.

Class and Reading Schedule:

8/22 - First Day of Class—Course Introduction
What is “International Relations”? What is the difference between a nation, a state, and a nation-state?
Goldstein Ch. 1; Stiles Case 1

Week 1 – 8/24, 8/27, 8/29, 8/31 – Realism and Neorealism: Power Politics and Security
What are the main aspects of Realist theory of International Relations? What is power? Balance of Power? What is the evidence?
Goldstein Ch. 2; Stiles Cases 3

9/3 - No Class - Labor Day

Week 2 – 9/5, 9/7 – Critiques of Realism and Alternative Perspectives
Goldstein Ch. 3; Rourke Issues 3 & 16

Week 3 – 9/10, 9/12, 9/14 – Foreign Policy Decision Making
What is the “democratic peace”? How do bureaucracies influence foreign policy decisions? Who are the major players in US foreign policy making? How does this critique the Realist perspective?
Goldstein Ch. 4; Stiles Cases 2 & 4; Rourke Issue 4

Week 4 – 9/17, 9/19, 9/21 – The Causes of War
What are the major causes of war? What is the security dilemma? Why do groups turn to terrorism?
Goldstein Ch. 5; Stiles Cases 8 & 9; Rourke Issue 12; Levy article on reserve; Huntington article on Infotrac

Week 5 –
9/24, 9/26 - The Causes of War cont.
9/28 – EXAM I

Week 6 – 10/1, 10/3 – Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict
What is nationalism? What are the causes of ethnic wars? Why are they so hard to settle?
Stiles Cases 15 & 17; Brown article on reserve; MacFarlane etal. (pp. 1-19) book on reserve
10/5 - No Class - Fall Break
Week 7 –
10/8 – Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict cont.
10/10, 10/12 – begin Nuclear Strategy and the Use of Force
**10/12 - TOPIC NOTIFICATION IS DUE**

Week 8 – 10/15, 10/17, 10/19 – Nuclear Strategy and the Use of Force
How did nuclear strategy change over time? Do we need nuclear weapons anymore? When should states use force?
*Goldstein Ch. 6; Stiles Cases 7 & 19; Rourke Issue 8*

Week 9 – 10/22, 10/24, 10/26 – International Organizations and Law
What are the origins of international organizations and law? What should the role of the UN be in the post-Cold War era?
*Goldstein Ch. 7; Stiles Cases 10 & 11; Rourke Issues 2, 13 & 15
**10/26 - SOURCE LIST IS DUE**

Week 10 –
10/29, 10/31 – Models of the IPE
**11/2 – EXAM II**

Week 11 – 11/5, 11/7, 11/9 – The North-South Gap and Dependency
What are the origins of the North-South Gap and what have been the consequences?
*Goldstein Ch. 12; Rourke Issues 1 & 9
**11/9 - OUTLINE IS DUE**

Week 12 – 11/12, 11/14, 11/16 – International Development
What are the barriers to Third World development? How have some Asian countries succeeded? What role can the North play?
*Goldstein Ch. 13; Stiles Case 21; Rourke Issue 10*

Week 13 – 11/19, 11/21 – International Integration
*Goldstein Ch. 10; Stiles Case 22
11/23 – No class – Thanksgiving Holiday*

Week 14 – 11/26, 11/28, 11/30 – Environmental and Population Concerns
Is there a global environmental crisis? How should states respond? What has caused mass population migrations? How does this relate to a state-centric international system?
*Goldstein Ch. 11; Stiles Case 20; Rourke Issues 17 & 18
**11/28 - FINAL PAPER IS DUE**

Week 15 –
12/3, 12/5 – Environmental and Population Concerns cont.
12/7- Is the US in “Decline”?

**FINAL EXAM – Wednesday, December 12, 2001 @ 10:30am**
Assignment: Students must analyze one of the controversies in the *Taking Sides* book. After researching other viewpoints on the same issue, you must make a critical evaluation as to which side (if any) has the best argument based on the internal logic of each viewpoint, and the available evidence used by each side of the debate.

You may choose any notable controversy in International Relations as the topic for your paper, however, topics other than the ones in the *Taking Sides* text must be approved by the instructor. Choosing a topic from *Taking Sides* will allow you to “hit the ground running” (you start with two viewpoints), but there are plenty of issues/controversies that would make good paper topics. Feel free to talk to me about alternative topics that may be of particular interest to you.

The overall grade for the paper will be based on: 1) the extent to which you have researched other viewpoints of the issue, 2) the thoroughness of the critical analysis of the issue, and 3) the overall coherence, clarity, and organization of the paper.

Getting Started and Research: The first thing you need to do is choose which issue you would like to analyze from the book and read both sides thoroughly. After getting a firm grasp of the basic arguments, the best strategy from here is to probably go to the original version of each side represented in *Taking Sides*. The articles in the book tend to be taken from articles first published elsewhere, and reprinted omitting the footnotes. For instance, the article “The Benevolent Empire” by Robert Kragen from Issue 4 in the book was first published in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1998).

Locate the original version in the library, which will probably be longer, more detailed, and have all the original formatting, most importantly the footnotes. Scholarly writing should give the reader a review of other writing on the same topic, with complete references in footnotes or the bibliography. From here you are probably on your way to finding other viewpoints on the same issue. You will also need to search for more recent articles, or if the original version had only a few footnotes for you to consult, try the Infotrac database by typing in your topic in several different ways so you can get several references on the topic. Once you have a few more articles in hand, look at the footnotes in those, any work which is cited in multiple articles is likely to be important to your topic, and you should get it and read it. Rourke also typically lists some further reading in the “Postscript” section of each issue.

The emphasis here is on articles published in scholarly political science journals such as *World Politics*, *International Security*, *International Organization*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Survival*, *Review of International Studies*, or *International Studies Quarterly* just to name a few. Articles from other quality periodicals such as *World Policy Journal*, *The Economist*, *Christian Science Monitor*, or *The Atlantic Monthly* will be pretty good as well. Articles from newspapers such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* may be good for factual material but are not sufficient to do well on this paper, because they are more fact, than fact and analysis.

The Political Science Department web page has links to many of the periodicals listed above, some of which you may search for articles by topic. The Department's web address is http://www.uky.edu/AS/PoliSci. [Note: a cautionary message on utilizing the Internet follows later.]

Once you have a sufficient amount of references on your topic, you need to read them paying special attention to the rationale and evidence given for each side of the debate. Look for the different ways people argue the same point. For example, some say NATO should not expand to Eastern Europe because it will make the Russians insecure and start an arms race, while others say NATO does not need to expand because it is not credible to say we will fight for these countries in case of war in the region. Look for alternative proposals on the same question, other than the “yes” and "no" arguments in *Taking Sides*. For example, while some argue NATO should or should not expand, some have argued that expansion should be slower, and only extended to certain countries. Others say the Russians should be offered NATO membership.
**Writing the Paper:** The final paper should be in extended essay format, that is, it should have an introduction, a body of the paper, and then a concluding section. Headings and sub-headings are always nice, and I urge you to use them. The introduction is probably the most important section. In it, you should address what question or issue the paper is about (ex. Should NATO expand to Eastern Europe?), why this question is important, and briefly outline what is to come in the rest of the paper.

The body of the paper will likely have two components. The first part will summarize the major arguments on the issue found in your research. You must organize all the different perspectives found on that issue concentrating on the reasons and evidence offered for the various positions. The second part will critically analyze the various positions which you have outlined, addressing which ones are better than others in answering your overall question, and why. Do not just tell me "I feel" I like this one or that one, instead, look at the arguments and the evidence offered. Ask yourself these questions: Does the author's argument make sense to you? Do the examples one uses really work to make his/her point? Does an author seem to be making unsafe assumptions, such as explicitly or implicitly saying conflict is inevitable, or that cooperation is a virtual certainty on the issue? Are there any examples that the authors have missed?

The conclusion should sum up what you have found so far, and finally you should make a decision as to why one position is better than the others. Perhaps there is another position which you have thought of that is un-addressed by researchers writing on the issue. Why is your final position better than others?

**Other Comments and Guidelines:**

- **ALL requirements for this assignment MUST be typed**—handwritten material will not be accepted. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and in a normal size font and margins.

- Use the spell-check in the word-processing program. This however will not catch all the mistakes, so **PROOFREAD** thoroughly.

- There is no maximum or minimum length of the paper, however, approximately 10 pages will likely be sufficient to fulfill all the requirements of the paper. This paper is not intended to test how good a library researcher you are. Instead, the focus is on your interpretation of the debate on the issue you have selected, and how well you can organize this interpretation. Consequently, 10 to 15 references is a good range to shoot for.

- I prefer that you use the "in-text" social science notation method when you cite one of the authors. For example:

  This author said this for this reason (Author's Last Name, Page Number) or (Drebin, p. 21).

- Each author cited should appear in an alphabetized bibliography at the end of the paper. I prefer this method:

  for books:

  for journal articles:

  for newspaper articles:

  [You do not have to follow this format specifically, but you must be consistent and have all the information in the method used above.]

- **Beware of using information from the Internet.** There is a lot of information available on the Internet, but it is also easy to stumble into sites that are the unverified ramblings of various people/groups. As a rule of thumb, it is best to use information from organizations that you recognize. The articles that you should be concerned with are reputable and reviewed articles from journals, news organizations, and well-known international organizations. If you read an article on the Internet, you must attempt to provide the full bibliographic citation of where the article
appears in print form, if it exists in cyberspace only, then provide the web address. If you have questions about sources, then see me.

• Mind the timetable for this assignment. You will not be able to complete this paper, and do a good job, in one or two days. The other requirements of the paper are as follows:

1) October 12: Topic Notification. You must give to me a sheet paper, which tells me the question your paper will address, as seen in Taking Sides. Each issue is organized around a specific question, for instance, Issue 4 – Should the United States Seek Global Hegemony? This must be typed or it will not be accepted.

2) October 26: Source List. You must present me with an alphabetized list of citations (which you have located up to this point in time) that you will use in your paper. These must be full citations as outlined above. This will allow me to evaluate how thorough your research is and possibly make some suggestions on major works that you will need to look up to address all possible viewpoints.

3) November 9: Paper Outline. You must present me with a two or three page outline of your paper showing all three sections seen above, and briefly mentioning the major arguments of each section. This will give me an idea of potential organizational problems with your paper. Clarity in the outline will result in a better-organized paper that will also be easier to write.

4) November 28: Research Paper is due. Follow the above guidelines more or less and everything will be OK. It is ultimately your responsibility that you fulfill all the requirements of the assignment. I cannot diagnose every potential problem that may arise with the final draft from the Source List and Paper Outline. There is no substitute for thorough reading, thoughtful analysis, and superior organization.

There is a one-letter grade penalty for each day an assignment is late.

** Do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you are having any problems at all, or if you have any additional questions as you are working on the paper. If you are having trouble finding articles on your topic, see me and I can give you some suggestions.
Introduction to European Politics—East and West—
Political Science 210

Course Description—

The University of Kentucky does not offer an Introduction to Comparative Politics course, instead there is this course on Europe and another on Third World Politics. Consequently, I spent the first part of this course introducing the field of Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method to students. This section also introduced the main terms, concepts, and theories dealing with European democracies, roughly divided into issues on political culture and institutions. I had a great deal of positive feedback from students when we discussed Inglehart’s arguments on “Post-Materialism” and Kitschelt’s “Transformation of the European Party System”. The next section was a series of case studies on major European states—Britain, France, Germany, and Russia—looking at the political culture, institutions, issues, and party competition in each country. In the last section we did comparative analysis of several topics in European politics. For example, we compared Britain to France, asking why has the far right been getting electoral support in France, but similar parties in Britain receive negligible support? Students were very interested in the conflict in Northern Ireland (and my research experience there), which we compared to Yugoslavia and Kosovo. We finished with covering various aspects the EU.
See attached syllabus.

Writing Assignment—

Last semester I changed my writing assignment from a research paper to a book review to experiment with different requirements. Student were welcome to select the book they were to review, but I had to approve all selections to make sure that the review would be on a work of social science and that the subject was politically relevant. With the material we covered in class on the comparative method and their knowledge of European political systems, they were to write a review that was be half summary and half critical analysis. As with my other paper, the assignment was divided—book selection, outline, and final paper. The assignment sheet suggests how students can think critically about the book and other requirements for paper. As I say on the sheet, I want students to think critically about politics—“just because it is in print does not mean it is the best book ever written.”
See attached assignment sheet following the syllabus.
Political Science 210-001
Introduction to European Politics: East and West
Spring 2000
(TuTh 2:00-3:15; L 213)

Instructor: John M. Cotter
Office: 1618 Patterson Office Tower
Office Hours: TuTh 12:30-2:00; 3:15-4:30
Phone: 257-7052
E-mail: jmcott0@pop.uky.edu
Course Web Page: http://jcotter.pageout.net

Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to the field of comparative politics in the discipline of Political Science through the examination of the politics of selected European states and issues. The first goal of the course is to help students develop familiarity with the terms and concepts used by political scientists to analyze and make sense of European politics. Second, this course will introduce students to the diversity of political institutions, cultures, and issues of contemporary Europe.

The course is generally divided into three parts. The first part begins with a discussion of the comparative method, or, the way political scientists learn about politics by examining the similarities and differences between different political systems. Europe is a particularly good region for this type of study, because it is often argued that Europeans share certain values and political history, but these are filtered through dozens of different political systems. Students will also learn the strengths and weakness of this method of research. This part also includes a general introduction to various political science concepts/theories used to study European politics, focusing mainly on democratic political culture and institutions.

The second part then applies these various concepts in specific case studies of several European states. As the title of this course indicates, we will be concerned with both “halves” of Europe: the West, primarily established democracies especially since the end of World War II, and the East, which was under Communist control until 1989 and is now attempting to consolidate democratic governments.

In the final section of the course we will actually try to do some comparative analysis by looking at some important contemporary issues/problems in Europe. This part will address what has been called competing processes of “fragmentation and integration” on the continent. We begin with two problems that relate to ethnicity, nationalism, and race in Europe. First, we will look at two instances of ethnic conflict to try and isolate the factors that lead to this problem and what can done to at least mitigate it, and perhaps lead to a long-term peaceful settlement. Second, we will investigate the resurgence of various radical right-wing political parties and violent right-wing extremist organizations to try to figure out why this has occurred in some countries and not others. Finally, on the integration side, we will look at the history and institutions of the European Union and compare the role played by various countries in the integration process, as well, as issues facing that organization in the near future.

The material covered in this class will be new to most students. I encourage you to ask questions during the lectures and participate in the class discussions/debates to help clarify issues that may be unclear. Further, I also encourage you to make an appointment with me, or just stop by my office, to discuss any questions you may have about the exams, paper, or course material in general during the semester. Generally, the reading load for this course is relatively light. Consequently, I urge you to attend class regularly and to read the assigned material before class. This will serve as a lead into the lectures and discussion. You will gain more from the lectures by being prepared, and by using the opportunity to ask questions about the material presented.
Required Texts/Articles:

For Purchase:


On reserve:


Grade Distribution and Course Requirements:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Grade Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>A 89.5 and above</td>
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<td>Exam II</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Book Review Assignment</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Outline</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Exams. There will be three exams approximately after each one-third of the course. The final exam will be cumulative. In terms of format, the exams will be a combination of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions.

Book Review Assignment. Students will be required to write a review of a recently published book on some issue in contemporary European politics. The review may be written on a book dealing with any relevant issue, problem, and/or country in Europe that interests you. However, the instructor must approve all books. The paper requires that you 1) summarize the main arguments and evidence of the book and 2) comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the book using the analytical tools we develop throughout the semester and make an overall evaluation of the work. Additional details and strategies for this assignment will be summarized in a future handout.

Reading Quizzes. There will be several announced quizzes throughout the semester that will test student’s basic knowledge of the week’s reading assignments. These will not be difficult, but are necessary to ensure that students are at least familiar with the topics to be discussed in the lectures and to promote quality in-class participation.
Participation. Good performance on the participation component of the final grade starts with regular class attendance. More importantly, there will be many opportunities for in-class participation and discussion. I will often ask students to summarize an argument from the reading, give an example of a topic being discussed, relate concepts being discussed at different points in the course, or give their ideas on controversial issues. Students may also bring up recent developments in European politics for discussion and relate them to material in the course. Links to various news sources may be found in the above course web page and the Department of Political Science web page: http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/PoliSci.

Class Policies:

Plagiarism and Cheating. Plagiarism and cheating are serious violations and will be dealt as such and according to University guidelines. For specific policies see the University Handbook available from the Dean of Students.

Make-up Exams and Late Papers. Make-up exams will only be given if the student has provided a legitimate excuse for missing a scheduled exam at least 48 hours in advance, or if the student provides a University approved excuse after having missed an exam. A one-letter grade penalty will be deducted for each day any part of the book review assignment is late.

Class and Reading Schedule:

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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”; Frendris, “Explanation of Variation and the Detection of Covariation: The Purpose and Logic of Comparative Analysis” (photocopies on reserve)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>The Field of Comparative Politics &amp; The Comparative Method</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 1-2; Søe Articles 21, 45, 48-50</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>Democratic Political Culture in Europe</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 3; Søe Articles 22-24, 46-47</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Democratic Political Institutions in Europe</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 4; Søe Articles 1-4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 5; Søe Articles 10-13</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 6; Søe Articles 5-9, 18</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/29</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 7; Søe Articles 30-33</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Darby, Northern Ireland: Managing Difference (book on reserve)</td>
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<td>3/9</td>
<td>OUTLINE IS DUE</td>
<td>Gagnon, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia” (photocopy on reserve)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Vaughan, “The Extreme Right in France: ‘Lepenisme’ or the</td>
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<td>Reading/Notes</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>Militant Right-Wing Extremist Organizations</td>
<td>Jeffrey Kaplan and Leonard Weinberg, Ch. 4 of <em>The Emergence of a Euro-American Radical Right</em> (photocopy on reserve)</td>
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<td>4/18</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Almond et al. Ch. 11; See Articles 19, 25-29</td>
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<td>Student Presentations</td>
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Political Science 210-001 Spring 2000
Book Review Assignment
Final Paper is Due April 6, 2000

Assignment: Book reviews in newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals can serve a number of purposes. First, they may serve as a short summary of a book for people deciding whether or not they would like to read it. Second, along with some brief summary remarks, the main purpose of a review may to critique a single book and evaluate its contribution to an area of research. Finally, a longer and more ambitious review may consider several books at one time within a sub-field, and use the review as springboard to a lengthy article that evaluates the state of knowledge in that particular research area, and provides suggestions for future research.

This assignment requires you to concentrate on the first two purposes outlined above—summary and critique of a single book. Specifically, you must choose a recently published book on a relevant issue in European politics and write a book review. This review will be roughly divided into two parts. The first half will be a concise summary of the main issue/problem, arguments, evidence, and conclusions of the book. The second half will identify and discuss the main strengths and weakness of the work. The overall grade for the paper will be based on 1) the clarity and conciseness of your summary, 2) the thoroughness and incite of your critical analysis, and 3) the overall coherence and organization of the paper.

Getting Started: The first thing you need to do is choose three or so books that are possibilities, among which you will choose one that will be reviewed in your paper. These books must have been published recently (late 1980’s onward), and on some relevant topic in contemporary European politics. The book must make some kind of argument about why a certain problem, phenomena, or pattern is occurring or has occurred, and support that argument with some kind of evidence. In other words, the book must have some kind of point, rather than a simple historical review of a problem. It is almost always better to choose books on an issue or country that interests you. One of the better ways of locating some possibilities is by looking at the “Suggested Readings” and “Endnotes” sections for each country/topic in the textbook. I will be happy to discuss possibilities and/or make some suggestions if you tell me what issue(s) interest you. I recommend you choose books that are written by the same author(s) throughout, as opposed to an edited volume that is a series of articles by different contributors on a related topic put together under a single cover. Edited books are generally more difficult to summarize because the chapters, while in the same general area, may actually be quite diverse in terms of subject and methodology.

Annotated Bibliography (due February 24): The first part of this assignment is an annotated bibliography, which consists of a bibliographic citation and brief description of the books under consideration. Read through your selections thoroughly enough so that you will be able to write a five to ten sentence summary for each. You must provided citations for at least two books that you are considering, rank ordered according to your first, second, third… preferences. Use the following format for the bibliographic citation, which should be immediately followed by your brief summary:

Author. Title: Subtitle (Publication Location: Publisher, Date of Publication, Page Length).
Approximately 4-5 sentence summary.

Example:
This book focuses on the impact of Margaret Thatcher’s administration…

Outline (due March 9): The second part of this assignment is an outline, which will briefly summarize your final paper (more on how to write the final paper below). The assignment must be in actual outline form (Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers, etc.). Although I don’t want you to write the paper and put it in outline form, it must be detailed enough so that I can see the organization and arguments of the final paper. This almost certainly cannot be done in a single page. I expect the length to be somewhere between two and three single-spaced pages.
Writing the Paper (due April 6): Once I have approved your choice, thoroughly read the book and take detailed notes on the content. You may want to consider buying your own copy of the book at a bookstore or an on-line bookseller so that you may mark up the text as much as you like. Remember as you are reading that you are going to have to summarize and critique the book, so read with a critical eye—just because it is in print does not mean that it is best book ever written. Ask yourself the following questions while reading and taking notes:

- **Topic**: What is the main issue/question being addressed by the book? Why is this issue important? How does the author differentiate his/her study from others in this area?
- **Argument**: What is the author’s theory, or, what is the author’s main argument(s) about why this pattern, phenomena, or problem is occurring? Sketch out a flow chart of the basic argument. Does it make sense to you? Are there any important factors missing from the theory? Is this argument likely to be useful for explaining a similar outcome in other countries?
- **Methods**: What kind(s) of evidence is used to substantiate the author’s claims? How is the use of this evidence and methodology justified? Why were these cases chosen? Note any contradictory evidence. Are there any other examples that would have been useful to justify the author’s claims?
- **Conclusions**: What are the main conclusions of the study? How well does the author fulfill his/her goals set out at the beginning? What are the most useful aspects of the study? Are there any insightful policy suggestions? What are the main shortcomings? Are the conclusions influenced by any identifiable preconceptions the author has about the subject?

The final paper should be in extended essay format—that is, it should have an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction is the most important part of the paper. In this section tell the reader what the paper will do. Introduce the book, the issue or problem under consideration by the author, and the author’s basic argument. Why should others be interested in this issue? The last part of the introduction should briefly outline the rest of the paper.

The body of the paper should be divided into two main parts. The first section should briefly summarize the book’s contents. Use the questions above as your guide and tell me concisely what the book says. You may assume some basic knowledge of the reader, however, the summary should be detailed enough so that I have no difficulty understanding what the book is about—the issue, argument, and evidence. Keep in mind that this is supposed to be a concise summary, so be sure to avoid excessively quoting from the text—direct quoting should be kept to a minimum. The second section will be a critical analysis of the book. Again, use the questions above for guidance, but don’t limit yourself to only these questions—if you find a shortcoming in the book, then tell me about it. What is wrong with the book? What could have been better? Does the author successfully answer the questions raised at the beginning? You are welcome to point out positive aspects of the book, but the emphasis here is on constructive criticism. Be creative, but make substantive critiques—avoid nitpicking and/or criticizing the aesthetic appearance of the book.

The conclusion should sum up what you have found so far in the review, and then finally make a final general evaluation of the book. What is the book’s contribution? Or, does it lead to more questions than answers? What might be some useful avenues for future research on this topic? Are there any interesting implications for policymakers dealing with similar problems in other countries?

Other Stuff:

- There is no maximum or minimum length for this paper, however, 10 to 15 pages will likely be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this assignment.
- There is a one-letter grade penalty for each day an assignment is late.
- All requirements for this assignment must be typed with normal sized font (10 or 12) and margins (1” all the way around). Don’t bother playing around with these settings.
- Use the spell-check function of your word processing program. This, however, will not catch all errors—so proofread thoroughly.
- Use headings and sub-headings for organizational purposes.
- Do not hesitate to get in touch with me if run into any problems, or if you have any additional questions as you are working on this assignment.
Appendix A

So You Want to Get A’s on Exams--
John’s Free Guide to Writing Essays On Timed Exams

I. Why ask essay questions?

1) To test students’ knowledge of the material.
2) To see if (and how thoroughly) students have critically thought about the concepts, issues, evidence, and implications of the material.

II. How to go about completing the task of writing essays-

1) Start at the beginning-
   a) What questions are being asked, what issues do I have to address? → Take a second to consider the question.
   b) What information can I draw on to support points/argument?
     • Throwing in a bunch of stuff convinces me you have a good short-term memory, not how well you can answer an essay question/extent to which you have thought about the material.
     • You have the info. from class, you must select and organize this information (irrelevance is irrelevance no matter how long).

2) Organization is everything, almost—you have studied, thought about the question, and what types of information could be useful
   a) Next, you must think concretely how you are going to answer the question→ sketch the form it will take.
   b) Why not outline (briefly, obviously) what you are going to say and how you are going to say it?

3) Keep it simple, while completely answering the question-
   a) Introduction, body of essay, wrap it up.
   b) Political science is not just a matter of opinion—evaluations should be informed from course material.
**III. What should I avoid?** (aside from poor sentence structure and grammar) you are not just receptacles of info., at this level answering questions requires some thought on the issue at hand.

1) Avoid “buttering up” the instructor—this will not lead me to ignore the content.
   - Just because I have assigned or discussed an issue does not mean one perspective is right.
   - Engage the material, do not just accept the conclusions as fact simply because they are from academics.

2) Avoid “conversational” writing—must demonstrate knowledge, which will almost always involve some use of political science terms.

3) Avoid overuse of jargon without telling me what it is.
   - After peeling away jargon, does the essay say anything?
   - Don’t let terms get in the way of making a good argument.

4) Avoid “mind-dumping”—or putting all of what you remember on paper regardless of the question.
   - Good to know some concepts and facts, but throwing in everything is of little help.

5) Avoid the “bait & switch”—substituting one essay for another, you must demonstrate knowledge of the question answered.

6) Avoid making Political Science “just a matter of opinion.”
   - Avoid arguing that everyone’s judgements are so clouded by their own prejudice that anyone’s opinion is just as good as anyone else’s.
   - Many times this answer may have some thought behind it, but try not to let “intellectual skepticism” get in the way of drawing a conclusion, evaluation must be informed.
   - Avoid taking both sides.

7) Avoid sentence fragments—*you must write in complete sentences.*
Appendix B—Why study ethnic conflict? (Ethnic Conflict and IR)

1) Widespread

- as of late 1995, 35 internal wars going on, most between competing ethnic groups.
- most pervasive form of conflict today → attention.

2) Tremendous Suffering

- stakes are higher than conflict with states: most states live to fight another day, sometimes even with borders restored.
- attacks on civilians, with intention to drive out/systematically kill opposing group → the number of causalities rises fast.
  - Bosnia (1992) and Rwanda (1994) – cases of attempted genocide.

3) Often affects & involves neighboring states

- Refugees – often to places that already lack resources.
  - Ex.: 1994—250,000 Rwandans to Tanzania in one day.
- Military aspects:
  - Spillover: supplies, military bases, etc. in another country.
  - Intervention of outside powers into internal dispute.
    - Ex.s: Israel and Syria → Lebanon.
      India → Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
      Serbia and Croatia → Bosnia.
      Russia → Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan.

4) Affects interests and actions of distant powers and IOs

- foreign nationals in trouble spots, disrupts access to resources.
- undermines state power projection & protection of international norms and law.
Appendix C—
Electoral Rules/Voting Systems—Plurality vs. Proportional Representation

Simple Plurality and Majority Rule Variations:

1) **Simple Plurality**—often referred to as the “first past the post” system, where the winning candidate is the one that receives the most votes, regardless of how many other candidates there are and no matter how small the winning percentage may be. This system is almost always used with single-member districts, so the whole system may be called the SMSP (Single Member Simple Plurality) System. This system is used in only used in one place in Europe—the United Kingdom. Other examples include the USA and Canada. While this system is simple (for election officials and voters), it tends to produce “disproportionate election results”—the distribution of votes among the parties does not closely match the proportion of seats they get in the legislature. Example: In the last British General Election, the centrist Liberal Democratic Party received 17% of the popular vote, but only 7% of the Parliamentary seats; the Labour Party gained a substantial majority in Parliament with only 44% of the vote.

2) **Second Ballot**—seeks to avoid the distortions caused by the SMSP rule, by requiring the winning candidate to receive an absolute majority (50% + 1 more vote). If no candidate receives this amount in the first election, a second “run-off” election is held between the top two candidates (or more) from the first round—thus (virtually) guaranteeing that one will receive a majority. Example: French Presidential Elections.

3) **Alternative Vote**—another variation of the plurality system, where voters may indicate their first, second, third,…and subsequent preferences among candidates. If no candidate receives a majority after counting the first preferences, then subsequent preferences may be taken into account, using various schemes for weighting these preferences.

Variations of Proportional Representation: seeks to ensure that party seats in the assembly more closely resemble the party’s voting strength.

4) **Party List System**—prior to the election, parties draw up a list of candidates in order of preference for each district, so that they are elected in proportion to the total number of votes received by the party, starting from the top of the party lists. So, if a party receives 20% of the vote, the top 20% of the candidates on their list go to the assembly. This is most widely used system in Europe—with some variations—in at least 20 countries.

5) **Single Transferable Vote**—voters may rank order their preferences for candidates. If their first-choice candidate achieves the necessary quota, then their other choices may come into play. If their first-choice candidate is eliminated, then the other preferences may be taken into account. Thus, if a voter supports a minor party with their first choice vote, this avoids the problem of a potentially “wasted vote.” This system can get quite complex—in Ireland voters may rank order within and across parties. On the other hand, this may be the most accurate reflection of voter choice in the assembly.

6) **Mixed**—includes features of the plurality and proportional systems. First, single-member districts elect representatives using the simple plurality rule, and on a second ballot, seats are allotted on some version of the proportional system. In Germany, equal numbers of seats are allotted at the district and national levels. Each person gets two votes—one for their district representative, and one for the national party list.

Threshold—in order to prevent “parliamentary fragmentation,” systems may set a minimum percentage of votes needed by parties in order to send any members to the assembly. The higher the threshold, the more difficult it is for more minor parties to win seats.

**Which system is better for the voters? for the running of the government? for “democracy”?**