

Research Paper Guidelines

American Foreign Policy
Baruch College, Fall 2018

1. Topic

You have two options for this paper: you may either write about an American foreign policy decision or you may write about an American foreign policy decision maker. The two options will lead to slightly different formats, which I describe below.

2. First Option: Foreign Policy Decision

You will select a consequential government decision in American foreign policy and write about why it occurred. You may write about any decision at any level of the government about any foreign policy topic. This gives you a great deal of freedom, and I welcome creativity in choosing a topic. I do, however, encourage you to clear your topic with me in advance if you are unsure about its suitability.

In choosing a decision to analyze, please keep the following things in mind:

- You should write about a single or a closely related set of choices, made at an identifiable point in time. For example, you may not write about the topic “Why did the United States escalate the Vietnam War” because this involves many different decisions at many different points in time (spread across multiple presidencies). If you are interested in a broad topic, you should plan to eventually narrow down to a specific action or decision (e.g., “Why did the United States carry out the Operation Linebacker II bombings of Vietnam in 1972?”)
- You should pick a consequential decision that has been the subject of at least some scholarly attention. That is, write about a decision that mattered in some way.
- You must use declassified official documents in your research. As such, I recommend choosing a decision that occurred in **1976 or earlier**. If you can prove that you will have access to declassified documents, then you may write about a later decision if you receive advance permission from me.
- You may not write about the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The goal of your paper is to answer the question “Why did [actor(s)] choose [decision]?”. You will probably begin your research by asking “Why did the United States do X?” You might later narrow this down to focus on specific people, but this is not necessary. The introductory paragraph of your paper should clearly state your specific question. It should also include a clear thesis statement that summarizes your answer. The main body of your paper will develop and defend this answer.

Your paper should include the following components:

- An introduction that clearly states your question and your answer.
- A brief section providing the relevant historical background of the decision you are analyzing. Focus only on the background that is directly relevant to your answer.

- An outline of the setting of the decision. This should address:
 - What problem or opportunity were policymakers facing?
 - Who was involved in decision making?
 - What options were considered?
 - What beliefs did policymakers hold about these options? What outcomes did they believe were likely in response to different choices? What were the costs and benefits of each option?
 - Did policymakers, or other participants in the process, hold different views of the situation?
- Your own argument about why a given decision was eventually reached and why other options were not chosen.
- Identify at least one other argument about why the decision occurred and contrast your answer with this (for example, arguments made by political scientists, journalists, or historians about the decision). If you are unable to find specific arguments, you can develop an alternative grounded in the theories we have discussed in class and contrast your argument to this. If there are many prominent theories, you are encouraged to discuss more than one of these.
- A conclusion in which you summarize your argument and why it matters. If you have not done so elsewhere, this section of the paper should draw connections between your specific case and the general theoretical perspectives discussed in class.

So long as you cover these points, you may organize your paper in whatever way is most appropriate. For most papers, it will be best to proceed in the order stated above.

3. Second Option: Foreign Policy Decision Maker

You may write an analytical biography of an American foreign policy decision maker. If you select this option, you must choose a mid-level decision maker. You may **not** write about any of the foreign policy principals (President, Vice President, Cabinet Secretaries, National Security Advisor, CIA Director). You also may **not** write about a military officer. You may write about someone who served in the military, but only if they held an appropriate non-military office.

You should select someone active at the mid-level of foreign policy making. For our purposes, this includes ambassadors, Senate-confirmed sub-Cabinet officials (Deputy Secretaries, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries of State/Defense), or others of similar standing.

You should select an official who was active primarily **in or before 1976**. As above, if you believe that you will have sufficient access to declassified documents, you may write about someone primarily active later on, but you must obtain advance permission. It will generally be helpful to select an individual who is the subject of one or more published biographies.

The goal of the decision maker paper is to identify your subject's worldview and influence. That is, your paper should aim to answer two questions: "What was X's worldview? How did X, and that worldview, influence US foreign policy?" Ultimately, you may determine that your subject

did not have a significant influence over US policy — this is an acceptable conclusion if it is what your evidence shows.

Your paper should include the following components:

- An introduction, in which you identify your subject and briefly state your thesis about the subject's worldview and influence.
- A brief section providing relevant personal background (that is, the person's history before assuming a foreign policy position of interest) and relevant historical background (the historical circumstances under which the person assumed office — for example, if you are writing about someone who served as US Ambassador to India, you should briefly discuss the relevant history of US-Indian relations).
- An outline of your subject's worldview:
 - What were the subject's views on international relations and US foreign policy? For example, was the subject a "hawk" or a "dove"? What were their views on human rights? Do not provide an exhaustive catalogue of views — instead, you should attempt to characterize the most relevant and important aspects of the worldview.
 - For individuals with responsibilities for specific countries or regions (e.g., ambassadors), what were their views about the country(ies) of responsibility? For example, how did an ambassador to Greece feel about Greece (pro-Greek, anti-Greek, etc.)?
 - Where did this worldview come from?
- An outline of your subject's influence:
 - Identify the position(s) the subject held. Why were they appointed to these positions?
 - What were the most important issues facing the subject in those positions?
 - What were the subject's views about those issues? Did these differ from those of their superiors?
 - What influence did the subject have over policy outcomes (if any)? Why did they have (or not) that influence?
- A conclusion in which you summarize your argument and why it matters. If you have not done so elsewhere, this section of the paper should draw connections between your specific case and the general theoretical perspectives discussed in class.
- If your subject had an extensive career, you may choose to focus your paper on a single position they held, allowing you to go into greater detail.

3. Sources

Your paper **must** use a mix of both primary and secondary sources. If you are unfamiliar with this distinction, please see <http://lib1.bmcc.cuny.edu/help/sources/> or talk to me. We will also discuss appropriate sourcing in class. You should start your research with one or more secondary sources, but it is absolutely essential that you use primary sources in your research.

In conducting your research, the following primary source collections will be extremely helpful:

- 1) Foreign Relations of the United States (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>): These are sets of official documents released by the State Department about American foreign policy. Each volume covers a country or region over a short timeframe, and documents are typically organized thematically within volumes. These are available systematically until 1976, and some later volumes have also been released. I expect that all, or nearly all, students will consult these documents in preparing their papers.
- 2) The CIA Electronic Reading Room (<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/>): While somewhat hit or miss, this website contains a large repository of declassified CIA documents, all of which are electronically searchable. The crown jewel of this collection consists of copies of the President's Daily Brief from 1961 to 1977 (see <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/presidents-daily-brief>). For any project within this timespan, these records will almost certainly be helpful.
- 3) Presidential Library Websites: There is a separate library for each president, beginning with Herbert Hoover. These libraries, operated by the National Archives, are responsible for the release of presidential documents. While the quality of available resources varies considerably, several of the libraries have strong digital collections. For example, the Ford library's collections can be found at <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/digital-foreign-affairs.aspx>.
- 4) The National Security Archive (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>): The National Security Archive provides a variety of collections on specific issues that may prove helpful. Some of these documents are available directly on their site, but most are available through the Digital National Security Archive. This is a subscription service and Baruch does not subscribe, but the database is available both at the CUNY Graduate Center library and at the New York Public Library.
- 5) The National Archives has digitized nearly all State Department cables from mid-1973 to 1979 and made them electronically searchable (<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=4073&cat=WR25,26,27,28,42,43&bc=,sl>). This database only covers the period from 1973 to 1979 but contains millions of documents. If the event you analyze occurred during this period, this will be an invaluable resource.
- 6) The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Interviews (<http://adst.org/oral-history/oral-history-interviews/#.Wm8vqBOPLxQ>). The ADST has conducted oral history interviews with over 2,000 individuals who held foreign policy positions. For most twentieth century topics, you should be able to find one or more interviews of people involved with your topic.
- 7) The Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS): This is a rather clunky and poorly organized, but large, compendium of declassified documents covering the period from World War II to the 1970s. It is not available at Baruch, but you can access it as the CUNY Graduate Center library.

Other specific collections related to your topic may be available. You should also look for published primary source collections along with memoirs and similar resources.

You **must** use primary sources in writing your paper and you should include at least some direct quotes from primary sources in your final draft. **The primary sources you use must include at least some official documents and at least two memoirs or retrospectives by people who were involved in decision making.**

While I will not impose a firm rule, I expect that at least half of the material in your paper will come from primary sources.

4. Length and Formatting

Your paper should be approximately 15 to 18 pages, excluding the bibliography. This is not a firm length requirement and is primarily intended to give you a sense of the level of detail I expect in a finished paper. As firm requirements, your paper must be at least 12 pages long and must not exceed 20 pages in length. I will not read past the twentieth page of text. These page counts *exclude* your bibliography.

The body of your paper must be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins on all sides. The bibliography should be single-spaced.

Students should follow MLA style for citations (see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>). I am not a stickler for the details of bibliography format, provided that your citations clearly identify your references, so it is not necessary to obsess over the details if you are unsure. For primary source collections, you should abbreviate the in text citation with some shorthand. For example, if you are citing several versions of the President's Daily Brief, it would be acceptable to simply cite each edition in text with the letters PDB and the date (e.g., "PDB 10/24/1970") then include an entry for the entire collection on your "Works Cited" page.

5. Academic Integrity

The research paper that you complete (and all intermediate products) should be your own work. If you take words or ideas from any other source, please ensure that you cite that source appropriately in your paper.

I *encourage* you to discuss this assignment with your classmates and share ideas. You may also wish to make arrangements with your classmates to proofread or provide comments on one another's work. The final product must, however, be your own work. Providing or receiving comments or suggestions is acceptable and encouraged, but you should not ask anyone else to write sections of your paper or do research on your behalf.

6. Intermediate Products and Due Dates

I expect you to work on this research paper over the course of the full semester. In order to ensure that you are making adequate progress, you will turn in several intermediate products.

A. Research Paper Outline (due October 9 in class)

I expect that by October 9, you will have chosen a topic and conducted at least some preliminary research. Ideally, at this point, you will have read some secondary sources about your topic, developed a basic familiarity with events, and begun to identify primary sources. In order to keep you on task, you will turn in an outline on October 9 in class as a hard copy.

Your research paper outline should consist of the following elements in list form.

1. State your research question in the form “Why did X do/choose Y?” (Or if you are writing a biography, identify the subject).
2. State a preliminary form of your thesis. You are not committed to this answer as it will probably change during your research.
3. Identify five secondary sources for your research (books or scholarly articles). For each source, provide a complete citation and then a one or two sentence summary of why it will be useful.
4. Identify at least two memoirs or retrospectives by officials involved in the decision you are researching. For each of these, provide a complete citation. Unless the entire work concerns your topic, list specific pages that discuss your topic (for example, the memoirs of the relevant president might contain two or three pages discussing a particular event — identify these).
5. Identify some collection of primary sources that you will consult. Provide a two to three sentence summary of what can be found in this collection.

B. Research Paper Update (due November 13 in class)

The research paper update serves to ensure that you have been making progress on your research project since the outline. Ideally, at this point, you will have developed a strong thesis and conducted significant primary source research. Your update should consist of the following elements in list form.

For the decision paper:

1. Restate your research question.
2. State the current version of your thesis. You will likely have changed your thesis already, but you are still not committed to the thesis that you state at this stage.
3. Identify five secondary sources, two memoirs or retrospective, and some collection of primary sources. Summarize each what information you have learned from each of these briefly.
4. Provide two to three sentences answers to the following questions:
 - What problem or opportunity were policymakers facing?
 - Who was involved in decision making?
 - What options were considered?
 - For each option, what did policymakers see as the costs and benefits?
5. Identify an argument other than your thesis to explain the decision you are analyzing. Summarize this argument succinctly.

6. Briefly identify the three most important pieces of evidence in favor of your thesis (one to two sentences each).

For the biography paper:

1. Identify the subject.
2. State your current thesis about the subject's worldview and influence.
3. Identify five secondary sources, two memoirs or retrospective, and some collection of primary sources. Summarize each what information you have learned from each of these briefly.
4. Briefly summarize the evidence about the worldview. Identify your sources for the worldview.
5. Briefly summarize the evidence about the subject's influence:
 - What decisions/outcomes did the subject influence?
 - How did they exercise influence?
 - How important was the subject's role overall?

C. Rough Draft (due December 4 in class)

On December 4, you will submit a complete rough draft of your paper as a hard copy in class. The rough draft should contain most, or all, of the material for your final draft. The rough draft must be at least 12 pages long (and no longer than 20 pages). I will return your rough drafts by May 8 with comments to give you time to revise the final product.

D. Final Draft (December 16 by 11:59 PM by email)

You will upload your final draft to TurnItIn by December 16 at 11:59 PM. **I will not accept late papers. If you turn in your final draft even one minute late, you will fail the assignment.** In the unlikely event that some emergency prevents you from turning in your paper on time, please contact me immediately. I will not grant extensions on this assignment for any reason other than a completely unforeseeable accident or emergency.