

POLS105- Primary Source Analysis Assignment
Sarah Fisher, PhD

Primary Source Analysis Paper 20% of Final Grade

- Rough Draft: due at the beginning of class on February 26.
 - This counts as two quiz grades and is separate from the 20% of your grade that makes up the paper.
 - You need at least two pages in order to receive credit. This can be two pages of outline or two pages of draft in sentence form.
 - I highly recommend that you have a polished draft. This will give you an opportunity to get feedback from both your classmates and instructor before you submit the assignment.
- Final Paper: Due March 4 at 8am.
- The paper needs to be submitted via Moodle by 8:00am
 - I will automatically deduct 10 points from any paper that I receive after 8:00am.
 - Anything received after 8am on March 5 will receive a “0.”
 - If Moodle isn’t working, email it to me. No excuses.

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- Citation style: APA
 - More information: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>.
- Number of pages: 6-9 pages
 - Works cited page and inclusion of primary source(s) do NOT count toward length requirements.
- Double-spaced
- Times New Roman
- 12 pt font. and 1 inch margins
- No cover page

Prior to Writing the Paper

1. Choose a primary source (or 2-3 primary sources) related to international affairs.
 - Consult “Primary Source Guidelines” posted on Moodle before you begin searching for a primary source.
 - I am happy to approve your primary source and talk to you before you write your paper.
 - You get to pick your primary source(s) – choose wisely.
 - You may choose one or a set of related documents (no more than **three** unless you have permission from the instructor).
 - When sifting through sources, ask yourself how a realist, liberal, constructivist, etc. would interpret this document.
 - Choose a topic that interests you (historical or contemporary).
 - If you are at complete loss for where to begin searching here’s a start:
 - The National Security Archive: <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>
 - Internet Modern History Sourcebook: <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/modsbook.asp>.

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- George Mason's Center for History and New Media
<http://chnm.gmu.edu/teaching-and-learning/>.
 - For US political ads- The Living Room Candidate:
<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>
 - Contemporary political speeches on foreign policy issues
 - If you would like to use a source in a language other than English, feel free. Just be sure to provide a translated copy for your instructor's benefit.
2. Choose a perspective through which to view the document
- You may choose to view this document from a realist, liberal or constructivist perspective. You may also choose a theory of decision making.
 - Some questions to ask yourself:
 - How would x theorist view this document?
 - How does the language in this document reflect/contradict this theory?
 - If you are comparing documents, what theoretical views are expressed in these documents? The same? Different? What accounts for this difference?

Paper Outline

1. Introduction: Briefly introduce your document(s)
 - Include contextual information about the source. What does the reader need to understand about the context in which this document was made in order to understand your analysis of the document?
 - Include the information the reader needs to understand the document, but do not include extraneous information.
2. Thesis statement (Keep this short – 1 paragraph max)
 - This should be at the end of your introductory paragraph or directly following the introduction.
 - Make an argument from a particular perspective
 - Example: Although realists would disagree with A about B, this document perfectly illustrates three of realism's primary assumptions X, Y, and Z.
 - Example: Despite President X's call for a more globalized and peaceful world order in B document, her overall foreign policy view is decidedly constructivist as seen in document A.
 - Example: Throughout this film, the main character's primary motivations stem from a constructivist understanding of the world as seen in XYZ.
3. Brief summary of the document(s)
 - Ideally, this should be no more than a page.
 - Your introduction and summary should include most of these points described in "Primary Source Guidelines."
 - including: author, purpose, time and place, word choice, omissions.
4. Providing Context for the document(s)
 - What does a reader need to know about the context in which this document was created?
 - This should be ideally no more than a page.
 - Use references as needed.

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5. Analysis

- This is the main part of the paper and the length of this section should reflect this.
- I want this to be **YOUR** argument that you outlined in **YOUR** thesis statement.
- Be as specific as possible when presenting evidence from the document
 - o A X theorist would view this document as... because...
 - o These three points correspond to X theory's core assumptions...
 - o Use references as needed.

6. Conclusion (keep it short!)

- Restate your thesis at some point in the conclusion.
- Offer some concluding thoughts- draw connections to other material, current or historical events, etc.

7. Inclusion of Primary Source Material

- This is NOT included in the page count.
- When reasonable, include the primary source(s) as an appendix at the end of your paper.
 - o This is NOT required for some types of source (ex. a film).
 - o If your medium is visual (ex. propaganda poster or painting), you must include a copy of the source at the end of the paper.
 - o If the source is written and relatively short (<10 pages), include this document at the end of the paper.
 - o If you have translated a document for this assignment, include both the original and the translation (for your instructor's benefit).