

17.403 / Van Evera, Carter, Gabbitas, Lischer and Twomey // October 12, 2000

FIRST PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Select a major episode in American foreign policy from the following list, and write a short paper that identifies what you believe is the single best explanation for American policies. Please also identify what you believe are the one or two best competing explanations and explain why you find them less compelling. Finally, feel free to identify policy prescriptions that follow from your analysis, if any do. Use historical evidence to support your argument. You may want to draw on one or more theories discussed in this course to construct your explanation but can also rely on other theories.

1. American entry into and/or conduct of World War I.
2. American entry into and/or conduct of World War II.
3. America's decision to wage the Cold War.
4. The strategies and tactics adopted by the United States in the Cold War.
5. American entry into and/or conduct of the Korean War.

If the facts you need to fully assess your explanations are not found in the available course readings, describe what additional facts you would need to provide a more thorough assessment, and explain why these additional facts would shed light on the questions you address.

Note: extra readings, should you wish to consult any, are on reserve at Dewey library. These are denoted in the "further readings" section of your syllabus with a ##. (Extra reading is not mandatory, but we encourage it if your paper seems to call for it.)

Your paper should be 8 typed doublespaced pages (with normal 1" margins and normal-size typeface, i.e., 10-12 characters per inch).

Remember to start your paper with a short summary introduction that states your question(s) and distills your answer(s).

Your paper is due on Thursday, November 9 at 11:00 a.m. (class time). You can hand it to your TA in class or deliver it to your TA's mailbox.

Your TA will give you early feedback on your paper if you give her/him an outline or rough draft before you submit your final draft. Get moving soon to leave time for this.

You are encouraged to consult with each other as you prepare this paper.

Late papers will be penalized unless extensions are granted well in advance of the paper deadline. Extensions will not be granted except in emergency situations.

Before writing your papers, please familiarize yourself with the rules of citing sources (handed out in class) and make sure you follow them.

Failure to cite sources properly is plagiarism.