

PLS 2220 (International Relations), Weeks One and Two

Reading Assignment: Chapters 1 and 2

Synopsis: During the first two weeks we will introduce the study of world politics, examine the two major schools of thought - realism and idealism - and place the modern political world in its historical context. The past is prologue to the future. We better understand where we are going by understanding where we were and how we got to where we now are. Thus, an understanding of the historical background of the modern political world is essential in understanding many of the current issues and problems.

Original Sources: When doing research, be mindful of your sources, particularly if you are using the internet. Virtually anything can be posted on the web and much of the information found there is factually incorrect or is the author's opinion. Ensure that you use trusted sources when searching for information. If you are citing someone's opinion, please identify it as such. Also, please remember that I'm not so much interested in your ability to research facts as in your ability to analyze what you find. In other words, I'm interested in your critical opinion of what you discover. Here are a couple of links to get you started. The first is a link to Hans Morgenthau and deals with political realism [Morgenthau](#) Here is a link to idealism [Hegel](#)

Thread Question, Weeks One and Two: The major turning point into the modern political world is the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. In this thread I'd like you to research the first half of the seventeenth century (1600-1648) and the events leading up to the treaty. What was the political structure like in the early 1600s? What major events occurred between 1600 and 1648? Who were the major actors? What were the outcomes of these events? How did the political map change as a result of the Treaty of Westphalia? What effect did all of this have on our world? You don't have to answer each of the questions in detail - the discussion will develop in the thread.

Note: The thread question for Weeks One and Two covers the first two weeks of the course. This question will be open for two weeks to allow you time to get used to the concept of thread discussions.

Paper/Analysis: **The paper is due the end of week three. The topic is repeated here for your reference.** It is claimed that world politics has an effect on our lives – that is, what happens around the world can affect us both directly and indirectly. Research a current international issue and discuss the following – What is the issue? How does the issue affect the United States either directly or indirectly? How does the issue affect you personally, either directly or indirectly? What, if anything, is the United States doing about it? What, if anything, can you do? (You may select any issue you choose. Examples of current issues with worldwide impact are the potential collapse of the Euro, sanctions imposed by the US on Russia do to Russia's actions in Ukraine, or the current hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians).

I am often asked by students how long a paper should be. I will tell you that I am more interested in quality than quantity so I don't necessarily like to specify requirements for length. Your paper should be of sufficient length to address the questions/issues at hand and

to answer the requirements. Typically, I would expect that a typical paper in this course would be approximately 3-5 pages, double-spaced.

Note: Thread responses/comments must be posted no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Time Sunday, September 7, 2014 for Weeks One and Two. Papers for Week Three must be posted no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Time Sunday, September 14, 2014.