

POL340 Politics in Advanced Industrial Societies
Fall 2007
Friday Forum Assignments

Group 1: (Oct 12)

Adapting to globalization: Lessons for the US from the UK?

- Discuss how the UK has and has not succeeded in adapting to globalization.
- What are the major challenges the UK has faced? Where have they adapted successfully? Where have they failed to adapt?
- What lessons does the UK hold for the US?

Reading:

Britannia redux: The Economist Special Report (found on the Economist.com under “special reports”)

Group 2: (Oct 19)

The EU: The Supranational Solution

Discuss how the EU as an institution has worked to solve the collective problems faced by its member states.

- What was the EU designed to do?
- How well has this worked?
- How does this supranational solution (a solution that is created above and beyond the nation-state) complicate the problems of policy-making we have discussed in the class? How has this helped solve these problems?
- Does the EU offer a model that other states can follow in their own efforts? For example: would a North American Union make sense?

Reading:

Fit at 50: The Economist Special Report on the EU at 50 (found on the Economist.com under “special reports”)

Group 3: (Oct 26)

Are there enough smart people?

- Does the world lack enough talented people?
- What solutions to the problem of a lack of talent offer changes of success?
- Are AIS capable of adapting their education systems to address the problem of a dearth of talent?
- To what degree does the globalization of the labor pool help and hurt AIS in the context of the global talent pool?

Reading:

The Battle For Brainpower: The Economist Special Report (found on the Economist.com under “special reports”)

Group 4: (Nov 2)

Will business go Green without government?

- What are the major obstacles to businesses seeking to promote greener activities?
- How does government policy affect business decision making in these areas?
- Can the market dictate greening of business practice without the government?
- Can the major industrial states learn from each other in this process?

Reading:

Cleaning Up: Business and Climate Change: The Economist Special Report (found on the Economist.com under “special reports”)

Group 5: (Nov 9)

Economic competition in the era of globalization

- What are the basic differences between the US and Europe in their approach to the marketplace?
- How do these differences reflect different cultural and political traditions?
- How do each of these groups respond to competition from lower-cost developing states?
- Is one of these models inherently better than the other?

Reading:

Who are the Champions: The Economist Special Report (found on the Economist.com under “special reports”)

Group 6: (Nov 16)

The world economy and the state of AIS

- What is the basic state of the world economy today?
- How does the increasing interconnectedness of the AIS, both with each other and with the rest of the world, affect their relative position in the world economy?
- How do political differences manifest in different responses to economic challenges?
- Can the problems of the economy of today be effectively dealt with by the AIS?

Reading:

The Economist Special Report: The World Economy in 2007 (this report will be released on October 20 and is not yet available on the web site.)

Friday Forum Papers:

The Friday Forum papers are produced individually. While there will of course be common features between the papers within the group, the individual papers are to be the work of the individual authors. They must be the sole work of the author.

Each group member will produce a 5 – 7 page, double spaced paper addressing the following:

- 1) A survey of the topic discussed and how it relates to the course material more broadly. This is a discussion of the readings that will tie them to the material from the course more broadly. In particular, this should reflect how the topic can be used to engage in comparisons across states applying the model of policy comparison outlined by Rose. This section should be the bulk of the paper and should demonstrate the critical thinking skills of the student.
- 2) A survey of the class discussion. What was the group's plan to engage the class and promote discussion. Did this work? What worked and what did not? Did anything unexpected emerge from the discussion?

Friday Forum papers are due the Friday following the group's presentation date by 4pm in the Political Science Department Office. Example: October 12 Group must turn in their papers on October 19th by 4pm in the Political Science Office. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade (10 points out of 100) per business day late. This means that papers on Monday, October 22nd will be one day late, Tuesday, October 23rd, 2 days late, and so on.

The 5 – 7 page paper length is based on the following assumptions about formatting:

- 12 point font (Times Roman or Courier)
- 1 inch margins on all sides
- Double spaced

Papers must be submitted using this format. Failure to follow this format will result in a lowering of the grade on the paper.

Group Assignments

Group assignments will be made in class on Wednesday, October 3rd. Groups will be assigned by caucus of the students in class on this date. Groups will ideally contain 6 – 8 students. Groups outside this limit will be allowed at the discretion of Professor Dixon, but only in unusual circumstances. Students not in attendance will be assigned to groups at the random whim of the professor. The default will be to create a group entirely of students who were absent from class and to assign them the earliest possible date for their Friday Forum.

Students are encouraged to check their calendars before selecting a group and a topic. Once groups have been assigned, students will not be able to change groups. Exceptions may be made in cases of extreme emergency, but only with the prior permission of Professor Dixon. Let it be known that these exceptions will be granted only if the reasons are unforeseeable.

On the day of the Friday Forum, the group will be given a sign-in sheet which will include the names of all members assigned to the group. Group members will sign this sheet and return it to Professor Dixon. This will serve as the official attendance for the group that day. This important due to the

grading rules discussed below.

Grading of the Friday Forums

The Friday Forum grade will have two components:

- 1) The Friday Forum paper
- 2) The in-class discussion forum

The bulk of the grade will be determined by the paper subject to the exceptions outlined below. The paper will be graded on the degree to which the paper meets the criteria in the section relating the paper above. Critical thinking and the ability to apply the materials of the course to the topic in question will be the primary criteria in assigning these grades.

The grade will be influenced by the class discussion. If the discussion is a disaster, this will negatively impact the grade. If the discussion is smooth, this will positively effect the grade. As the quality of discussion is dependent both on the quality of the group's preparations and the quality of their classmates preparations, Professor Dixon reserves to the right to adjust the grade based on the quality of the paper as he sees fit given the individual dynamics of each group presentation, subject to the following:

Exceptions to the standard grading:

- If a group member is not present on the date of the group presentation, they will have their paper grade lowered by 40%. Exceptions will be given for extreme circumstances (car accidents on the way to school, hospitalization, death, etc.) or if all group members present on the date of the presentation provide, in writing, prior to the presentation, a statement that the absence was known of in advanced, discussed, and approved by ALL members of the group present on the day of the presentation. This provision is intended to eliminate the problem of free-riders. It will be ruthlessly enforced.
- In no case shall the classroom discussion lower or raise the grade on the paper by more than one letter grade for students who were present during the Friday Forum. In other words a disastrous discussion can only cost you 10 points out of 100, a brilliant discussion can only gain you 10 points.