

# **POL455 AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

## **PROJECT SUMMARY GUIDELINES**

The project summary is intended to be a starting point for your final research paper for this course. It reflects your initial work on formulating your topic and preliminary research.

The project summary should be approximately 2 double-spaced pages in length using a 12 point font with 1 inch margins, not including the bibliographic section.

The project summary should consist of three sections:

### **Section 1: Your Topic**

This section should explain what your topic is and why it is significant for American foreign policy. This section should very briefly summarize the historical background of your topic as it relates to the United States. There should be some discussion of the international context of the issue.

### **Section 2: Potential Positions**

This section should summarize a range of potential positions that could be taken on your topic. There should be at least two different potential positions for the United States to take on the issue you have selected. In most cases you will have many potential positions. The project summary need only give a short range of choices, four potential positions at the most.

For each potential position, there should be a description of the policy position, and a sense of where this position fits within the context of the larger issue. (example: If the United States has taken a particular position on the issue in the past, that should be mentioned and discussed.)

### **Section 3: Annotated Bibliography**

This section should include a list of the sources you have selected thus far along with a brief description of how that source is to be used (is it just for background, is it a position paper on a similar issue, is it a government document on the issue, etc.)

The number of sources depends on the type of sources you have selected. It is assumed that you will have selected several sources by now, but you will not have really started the research in depth.

Books: If all your sources are books, then 2 books are sufficient for the annotated bibliography. Your description of the source should be more comprehensive and describe the subject matter, when the book was published, and how you intend to use the book in the context of this project.

Academic Journals: If your sources are academic journal articles, then you should have at least four articles. These descriptions will be shorter than those for books and should include a brief summary of what the article describes and how it fits your topic.

Newspaper Articles: If your sources are newspaper articles, then you should have at least five articles. The amount of description will vary depending on the type of article and how long it is. Generally you should include a short description of what the article describes and how it fits your topic.

Web Sites: Web sites are hard to categorize. They range widely in their content, length, and usefulness. If all your sources are web sites, then you should have between five and eight of them. The exact number will vary based on what kind of site you are using. The description should follow the form of the newspaper articles. Please site the web site with the full URL. (example: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/middle\\_east/newsid\\_1795000/1795362.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/middle_east/newsid_1795000/1795362.stm))

The project summary is not a binding contract and if you find that you are unable to complete the work on the topic you may change topics if you discuss the issues with me first. If you find that your initial bibliography contains works that turn out to be worthless, you can drop them from the final form at your own discretion.

Sample topic and outline:

### Drug Certification and Latin America

The United States requires the State Department to certify that countries are supporting America's efforts in the drug war each year. If states fail to receive certification, they will have their economic aid cut off by the United States and the United States will oppose aid to these countries by international organizations.

Outline:

Section 1:

- History of the certification process
- Latin American states' positions on the process
- Effect of the drug war on policy towards Latin America

Section 2:

- Position 1: The US should continue to make support in the drug war a requirement for receiving US aid.
- Position 2: The US should de-emphasize the drug war and shift the emphasis towards economic liberalization and the opening of markets.
- Position 3: The US should abandon the certification concept altogether.

Section 3:

A list of sources on the certification process and its effect on relations with Latin America