

Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Democracy

Research Paper

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This course requires a 20-page research paper. You are responsible for choosing your own research question based on your own interests. The final aim for this research project is for you to increase your ability to reason logically, to argue coherently, and to write correctly. This paper can also serve as a writing sample for both graduate school and law school applications, should the need arise.

Components

The research paper that you write will attempt to determine the effects of a factor of your choice on the causes of ethnic conflict in democracies (research question). Make sure the factor you choose is discussed in the ethnic conflict literature (literature review). A good literature review will provide you with a tentative answer to your research question (hypothesis). You will test this hypothesis using an ethnic group of your choice (case study), making note (implications) of any discrepancies between the group's actual history and the expected history.

Due Dates

Research Question: September 10 [25 points]

Identify the question (factor) you will be examining. Write approximately two pages describing to me why the question is important, which ethnic group and state you will use to answer your question, why that group is relevant, and at least ten academic sources from this millennium you can use.

Literature Review: October 12 [75 points]

The purpose of the literature review is to argue a preliminary answer to your research question. Use current research to build an argument to answer your research question. This section ties in to your research question and culminates in the hypothesis, which is a preliminary answer to your research question—how your factor should affect ethnic conflict in democracies.

Case Study: October 31 [75 points]

The case study is an illustrative answer to your research question. It may or may not provide the same answer as your literature review provided. If it does not, then you should explain why it does not in the 'implications' section at the end. In the first section, you need to motivate why your choice of state/group is an appropriate selection to test your hypothesis. Are there defining characteristics to the group that are relevant? Is the state unique in an important manner? Both of these answers should also come from the literature. Your middle section should be a history of the ethnic group in the state, with important things discussed. What are those important things? Look to your literature review for answers. In your concluding section (implications), make sure

you specifically tie your case study to current literature in how it either supports the literature or contradicts it.

Final Draft: November 12

[25 points]

The final draft is the sum of the three previous parts, with an introduction and a conclusion added. Your introduction has two purposes: to motivate the research question, and to give a brief overview of your paper. The introduction should be approximately two pages, if not longer. The conclusion should be approximately one page.

Everyone's paper is due on the same day—the first day of presentations. This increases the fairness of the process. There are several things I am looking for in the final product.

- Are all of the required issues addressed? Do you go beyond merely what is required, or do you go above and beyond with your research and writing?
- Is there an underlying logic to how you present your paper? Every paper that has a point (as this one does) has an argument attempting to compel the reader to agree with that point.
- Have you defined the concepts central to your paper? Do you tell me what you are going to examine as precursors to the conflict and why one should look at *those* factors instead of others?
- Did you overlook a major argument or a major section of the literature (especially with respect to the theoretical causes of ethnic conflict)?
- Did you keep to the logic of your argument; that is, did you stay focused?
- Did you use a sufficient number of sources/citations to help avoid bias in your results? Do you use academic sources? Are your sources reputable?
- Did you avoid general-purpose reference books? Did you cite and reference everything correctly?
- Does the paper actually say what you want it to say?
- Is the paper *at least* 20 pages (not counting the reference list)?

Presentations: November 12 – December 5

[50 points]

You are responsible for presenting your paper. The presentation will be *at most* 10 minutes in length. The actual order for presenting will be posted later.

In the presentation, you must discuss your research question, the relevant theories as they relate to your research question, and the answer provided by the theories (hypothesis) before you start discussing your ethnic group. If you do not do this, your audience will be wondering what it matters.

In addition to just presenting your paper, you will be responsible for thoroughly reading another's paper and writing three thoughtful questions to be asked after that presentation. This will be worth 20% of your presentation grade.

Suggestions

The following are some suggestions to help create a better final product. Of course these are not hard and fast rules, but they do tend to work as good guidelines. If you have no clue what to do, the best thing to do is to stop in and chat with me.

- Pick a factor (and relevant group) that interests you. Since you are going to work on this for the entire semester, you might as well pick something you enjoy.
- Read, read, and read some more! Start with JSTOR. Mine reference lists. Examine dissertations recently published. These will help with the effects of your factor. As for your group, start with the general history of your group and progress to the more specific. These histories should provide you with the vast majority of the facts that you need. Make sure you find *several* sources for your facts, as each source will tell a slightly different story. Stuck on getting good sources? Look at the reference lists, as they serve as indicators of what sources and people are most important in your chosen topic.
- The most important part in any research project is structure of the paper. Once that structure is created, everything else should flow. Of course, allow for that structure to change should the need arise. A research paper is an organic thing; it grows and changes with the level of knowledge you have.
- Proofread your paper. Have someone else proofread it—your parents, maybe. Pay special attention to whether or not what you wrote makes sense. I do not care what you meant to write. I only care what you actually wrote.
- I will deal severely with any instance of plagiarism. With that in mind, make sure you cite and reference your sources *properly*. If you use a fact that is not common knowledge, it needs to be cited. What is common knowledge? Ask one of the servers at Starbucks or McDonald's. If he/she knows the fact, then we can assume it is common knowledge.