

MINI CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT

The following are the parameters for the Mini Case Study Assignment for War and Peace:

All students must choose a civil war from 1945 to the present and conduct a mini case study. This case study should develop a thoughtful critical analysis of the civil war using concepts learned in class. You are able to work independently or choose a partner to collaborate with on this project. *A brief summary (no less than one paragraph and no more than one page) of the case you select is due the second week of class.*

This case study consists of two components: A paper and a presentation. The paper should be 1500 - 2000 words. Hard copies should be turned in during class, office hours, or slipped under my office door. It will be graded based upon how clearly and thoroughly you define and analyze the case. *Do not simply summarize an event.* You must develop a thoughtful critical analysis using the material we cover in readings and class. Presentations which summarize the case study in a logical and thoughtful manner are due at the same time as the paper. Presentations should last 8 to 12 mins and include some visual aid(s). The case study will constitute 30% percent of your final grade.

The case study should be comprised of the following:

1) Summary: Briefly summarize the civil war. Provide historical and political background information, but be concise. You cannot and should not attempt to recount the entire civil war. Simply identify the key points. You may also use a timeline. Do not go back to the beginning to time, the colonial or post-colonial period will likely provide enough information for this assignment.

2) Question: Identify a question—relevant to class—that you will attempt to answer in this case study. Some examples: What is the role of religion in the civil war? How did the civil war end? What impact did resources have on the onset, duration, or end of the civil war? What role did non-state actors play in the civil war?

3) Literature: Provide some information regarding what others have said regarding this question, either in general or as it pertains to your specific civil war. Cite everything.

4) Theory and Analysis: Attempt to answer your question with material from class and from your own research. Develop a critical analysis that gleans information from other sources and applies it to the existing case. In other words, does the accepted academic understanding of x concept (i.e. the role of ethnicity in conflict) play out accordingly in your case or does it challenge conventional wisdom? Cite everything.

5) Conclusion: Summarize the information you have presented with a special emphasis on implications for both your case and our more general understanding of war and peace.

This assignment is not optional; you will receive a failing grade for the course if you fail to turn in acceptable reaction papers.

This assignment cannot be a paper utilized for another class, nor can it be one used by another student. It must be original, and your own. Failure to meet these requirements; either submitting a paper of your own which is unoriginal or used in a separate class (either in part or whole), or a paper not written by you alone, will result in a failing grade for the assignment (at a minimum), and being reported to university officials.

It will be graded based upon how clearly and thoroughly you accomplish the three tasks laid out above. *Do not simply summarize the civil war.*

Here are a few additional guidelines.

Use a reasonable (not Courier) 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, and double-space the text.

Consult a minimum of five sources. This should be a combination of material from and outside class.

Staple your paper, and do not put it in a folder or fancy cover.

Read your paper out loud. If you sound like a jerk, you are. Your goal is effective and efficient communication. In that spirit, parsimony is a virtue.

Write in reasonably coherent paragraphs.

Synthesize facts/the literature you include to the best of your ability, bringing it together in service of an argument that you want to make (rather than simply summarizing material).

There's no need for a cover page—save trees.

Put your identifying information in the top left or right corner of the first page, and then center your title below that.

Cite all material in a scholarly manner. APA, MLA, and Chicago style are accepted.

Use the writing center on campus for feedback (link is on my website).

More about how I grade your assignments:

An **A** paper is a truly outstanding essay that demonstrates a well thought out and expressed argument, discrimination in the use of information and outside sources, and good analytical ability. These essays are well written, logically organized, and address *all the required elements* of the assignment.

A high **A** is considered exceptionally good. These essays will excel in several of the following criteria:

- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- clarity of the argument and expression;
- evidence of wider reading;
- insight into theoretical issues discussed in class.

A **B** paper is a well-argued essay that addresses relevant material and shows a good understanding of critical concepts. These essays provide a clear, logical argument, and move beyond basic description of the topic at hand. At the same time, B essays will probably include a few stylistic mistakes; they will evidence an extensive, but uneven knowledge base; and they may miss out on some important issues.

A high **B** is a good, highly competent essay, which typically includes the following qualities:

- reasonably comprehensive;
- well-organized;
- evidence of some research;
- accurate and well-informed;
- demonstrating a good understanding of relevant details.

A C paper demonstrates only a partial ability to argue logically and organize material. These essays are generally accurate, but they evidence limited research-the knowledge base is nearly confined to course materials and/or unreliable sources. A C essay may identify appropriate subject matter and provide basic exposition, but it doesn't really develop an argument. It will contain stylistic errors and major omissions of content.

A D essay demonstrates a very limited ability to argue logically and organize material. The content is nearly confined to lecture material and fails to demonstrate a wider appreciation of the subject. These essays address the basic requirements of the assignment, but they will include errors and a very shallow exposition of the material.

A failing essay seriously lacks content and accuracy. Information will be poorly presented and organized, and include profound errors and omissions. These essays will provide assertions not supported by research or evidence, and demonstrate only a limited grasp of central concepts.