PASS 2019
Instructions for the Research Essay

September 2019
Overview

• The purpose of the research essay
• The research question
• Key requirements and deadlines
• Resources to assist you
• Citations
• Avoiding Mistakes
• 10 Tips
• Writing about another country
Why a research essay?

• We think you have something important to say!

• We want you to become familiar with the GCMC Research Library and the resources (books, databases, etc.) you will have access to even after you leave Garmisch.
Other Expected Outcomes

• You will:
  – Leave Garmisch with a written product that might be of personal or professional use later on
  – Get individualized feedback on your essay writing skills and use of English
Views from last year’s PASS class...

- 88% rated the project a “4” or a “5” on a 5-point scale, indicating they thought it was a “very important part of PASS”.
What will be the greatest security challenge in country X in 2035, and how would you mitigate it?
What is “Country X”? 

• “Country X" is as often as possible a neighboring country of yours.

• “Neighbor” is broadly defined.

• “Country X” assignments will be posted on SharePoint.
  • No requests for change will be accepted.
A few other words on “Country X”...

- PASS participants from the same country will each be assigned a *different* “Country X” (e.g. 4 Ukrainians in PASS; each will be given a separate “Country X”)

- PASS participants from different countries may have the same “Country X”
Why did we choose *this* particular research question?

- It gives you an opportunity to:
  - Apply pre-existing knowledge of your region
  - Expand (through research and interviews) your knowledge of a neighboring country
  - Put yourselves in the “shoes” of a neighboring country and try to think about security from its perspective
  - Analyze and prioritize national security challenges
  - Consider possible mitigation strategies

- All of which relate to our program objectives and expected outcomes ...
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Participants will...</strong></th>
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<td>... understand the strategic environment in which their country/organization is operating and identify the most significant challenges to regional and international peace, stability, and security – current and future</td>
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<td>... be able to discuss and analyze various approaches for addressing current and emerging threats and challenges as well as opportunities at the national, regional, and international levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>... be familiar with national security structures and be able to explain U.S. and German strategic decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>... be able to develop a basic national security strategy, national security structure, and security budget</td>
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<td>... understand the importance of cultural awareness, and bi-/ international relations, and will leverage the Marshall Center’s international network of security sector practitioners.</td>
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3 Main Tasks

1. Identify important threats and risks
   • Draw on your pre-existing knowledge and experience
   • Conduct research to see if experts agree with you and/or what their ideas are in terms of future challenges
   • Interview other participants and PASS 17-15 seminar leaders

2. Prioritize among the threats and risks and choose **the one** that will be the most severe in 2035.

3. Devise a mitigation strategy.
Key Paper Requirements - I

- Attend a library database training session (mandatory)
- Submit 3 products to your seminar leaders
  - Outline (due Wednesday, 19 September)
  - Draft (due Thursday, 04 October)
  - Final essay (due Monday, 22 October)
  - Note: you cannot skip right to the final draft! All 3 milestones must be met.
- All submissions must be in English.
- All submissions must be typed.
- You must have a page of Sources/Works Cited.
Key Paper Requirements - II

• The word limit is 1500 words (+/- 10 per cent). If you want to exceed that, you must get advance approval from your seminar leader.

• *All submissions are to your seminar leaders*

• You must complete the essay in order to graduate from PASS.

• 13-14 Nov: oral presentation to your seminar (maximum of 15 minutes followed by discussion).
Research Feedback

• Seminar leaders will provide feedback on:
  • the challenge and mitigation strategy/strategies you propose.
  • Basic grammar and essay composition issues.
  • Feedback from seminar leaders is private.
When will you find time to work on the Research Essay?

• Research time built into the schedule:
  – Fri 21 Sept  (research afternoon)
  – Wed 3 Oct   (research day)
  – Mon 8 Oct   (research day)
  – Fri 19 Oct  (research day)

• Most PASS days end at 1600, allowing you at least 1 hour of research/writing time (it is not forbidden to work until midnight either) 😊
Resources to assist you

• Sample Outlines and Model Papers on SharePoint soon.
• GCMC Research Library Database Training — Please, sign up on SharePoint (sessions start Monday).
Citations

• Citations are an integral part of a strong research essay
  • Citing authoritative sources helps to strengthen your argument, not weaken it.
• Citations are necessary to avoid plagiarism
  • When you are taking an idea from another source, you must cite that source.
• See SharePoint (Library Resources) for help with citations.
Sources/Works Cited List

• Identify the papers, newspaper articles, books, websites, etc. that you consulted when writing your essay.

• Must identify at least 3 sources!

• Remember: Not all sources are created equal! Some are more reliable and credible than others.
Avoiding Mistakes
9 Common Mistakes....

1. Focusing on a present day challenge

• What will be the greatest security challenge in country X in 2035, and how would you mitigate it?
17 years from now is a long time and also *not* a very long time...

And don’t forget...
Black Swans
Black Swan

• A Black Swan is an event that is:
  - an outlier
  - has an extreme impact
  - retroactively explainable

2. Writing about a “tier-two” challenge and pretending it’s the greatest challenge.

3. Not doing any research.

4. Using sources that are not credible.

- Wikipedia is not an acceptable source
9 Common Mistakes....

5. Answering only ½ of the question

What will be the greatest security challenge in country X in 2035, and how would you mitigate it?
9 Common **Mistakes**...

6. Not being specific enough about your mitigation strategy or strategies.

7. Taking a sentence from another source without identifying it (i.e. plagiarism).
9 Common Mistakes...

8. Waiting to the last minute
9. Writing about multiple security challenges

What will be the **greatest** security challenge in country X in 2035, and how would you mitigate it?
Tips
Tips

• Spend a significant amount of time *just thinking* about the strategic environment. Country X may face in 2035.
2. Choose the GREATEST challenge (just one).
3. Be frank.
4. Answer BOTH parts of the question.
5. Devote an equal number of words to the “challenge” part of the question and the “mitigation/strategies” part of the question.
10 Tips - continued

6. Make sure your strategy is specific
7. Start early
8. Identify sources and cite as needed
9. Begin with an outline, even a basic one
10. Draw on reliable and credible sources
Writing about another country

• Our mission at the Marshall Center is to gather countries together to discuss issues frankly with each other. The research paper is merely an extension of this.

• The Chatham House Rule governs this assignment. We won’t release your research paper and your presentation in seminar is covered by non-attribution.
We expect you to be able to raise controversial issues and put forward critical positions in a professional manner.

If there is a PASS participant from the country you are writing about, you are encouraged to conduct an “informational interview” with him/her as part of your research.

- Can be “on background” or “for attribution” (i.e. you list him/her on your sources page).
If your country is being written about:

— Don’t take it personally.
— The analysis may be flawed, but **PERCEPTIONS MATTER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**. Use this as a valuable opportunity to see how your neighbors perceive your country. This might help you engage them productively in the future.
KEEP CALM AND WRITE YOUR RESEARCH PAPER

Questions?