

POLS 335: International Conflict
Prof. Ahmer Tarar
Paper Assignment

Work entirely on your own, and not in a group. If your argument is very similar to someone else in the class, the suspicion of cheating is raised. To avoid this possibility, work entirely on your own and do not discuss your paper/ideas/argument with anyone else.

Instructions: The paper must be typed and double-spaced, with a 12-point font. There is no need for a cover page. Staple it. The paper should be about 5 pages long (don't go above 5 pages), not including the bibliography (list of references) at the end. For the rationalist explanations for war, you don't have to research anything beyond the Fearon article that we cover in class. For World War II, you should consult and cite at least 2 sources (books and/or articles published in scholarly journals).

Citing the work of others: If you present an idea or argument (or an obscure, controversial fact) made in one of the books/articles you consult while doing your research, you need to cite that book/article in order to give proper credit for the idea/argument (or obscure fact). You don't need to give citations for well-known facts, for example, that Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

Use the following citation style: "Jackson (2004, p.78) argues that World War II could have been avoided if..." Jackson is the author's last name, and 2004 is the publication year of the book or article. If the page number doesn't need to be given because the idea/argument permeates the entire book or article, use: "Fearon (1995) argues that there are three rationalist explanations for war..."

At the end, you should have a bibliography (list of references) of all of the works that you cite in the paper. Use the style used in the syllabus (for books, see the syllabus reference to Waltz; for journal articles, there are many examples in the syllabus).

Quote the works of others sparingly, if at all. You should overwhelmingly be using your own words, and quote others only if you think it is absolutely necessary to make the point.

Topic: A common explanation for World War II is a first-image explanation, namely that it was entirely the result of one man, Adolf Hitler, becoming Germany's ruler. Discuss the extent to which the three rationalist explanations for war (issue indivisibility, informational problems, and commitment problems) help explain the outbreak of WWII. For each explanation, briefly explain the explanation (use your own words; do not quote Fearon or other authors) and then discuss the extent to which the explanation is relevant to the origins of WWII. Even if you do not find an explanation to be very relevant, you need to explain why.