

**PUB POL 510-003 The Politics of Public Policy:
Global Issues and International Relations
Fall 2016
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ON THE CANVAS COURSE SITE TO CONFIRM ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS*****

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This section of 510 focuses on international policy issues and introduces students to the dynamics of global politics and international relations. Students will learn about international institutions and political options open to various state and non-state actors.

The course emphasizes:

- **Concepts and perspectives** commonly used in the study and practice of international relations and foreign policy
- **Actors and institutions:** values and interests of a range of international actors and the workings of global institutions that comprise the political environment of international policy-making
- The **policy process** and the importance of political considerations
- Analytical skills
- Technical writing skills

The course also provides students an opportunity to learn about several substantive issues currently on the international agenda. In addition to work we do together in class, students will work on an integrated course project referred to as "the Roundtable Project" (though in reality it is much more than a single roundtable encounter). Early in the course, students are asked to indicate their personal interests from a list of current problems on the global agenda – for example, fighting terrorism, preserving biodiversity or channeling humanitarian assistance to war zones. From that input several student groups will be formed, each working on a different concern. Most of the papers written for this course will relate to this one topic, and during the last weeks of the course, each group will present its work to the class during a roundtable. In this way, students learn to apply the concepts introduced in class and develop some level of knowledge/expertise on a single issue.

GRADING

Assignments Related to Roundtable Project (total 80% of final grade)

Due Date	Assignment
Sept 22	RT "Cast of Characters" due
Sept 27	Backgrounder (10%)
Oct 6	SWOT Analysis due (5%)
Oct 20 (after break)	State Interests Analysis (10%)
Nov 13 (Sunday evening)	IGO-Organizational Environment Analysis - group paper (10%)

Nov 22	Framing/Advocacy Memo (10%)
variable*	RT Press Release
variable*	RT presentations (5%)
Beginning late Nov, completed by Dec 13	Submit Peer RT Critiques (5%)
Dec 13	Submit Self-Evaluations (with peer critiques)
Dec 19, noon	Internal Strategy Briefing (25%)

* See assignment description below for details about due dates.

Class Participation 5%

Class Preparation 15%

COURSE OUTLINE

Sept 6. Course Basics. In this class period, we will go over the structure of the course and what is expected of students. I plan to introduce some core concepts and objectives for the course. If you are interested in a career in international policy, I encourage you to become familiar with some or all of the resources below (and consult them regularly).

- Foreign Policy: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com> (Links to an external site.) (All students in the course should have a subscription to FP)
- Foreign Affairs: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org> (Links to an external site.)
- UN Wire (a free e-mail newsletter). Sign up at: https://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp (Links to an external site.) .
- What’s in Blue (UN Security Council) <http://www.whatsinblue.org> (Links to an external site.)
- (Links to an external site.)AlertNet. Thomson Reuters Foundation <http://www.trust.org/> (Links to an external site.)
- Foreign Policy in Focus <http://www.fpif.org> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)
- (Links to an external site.)Diane Rehm Friday News Roundup, National Public Radio <http://thedianerehmshow.org> (Links to an external site.)

Sept 8. Introduction to International Policy Analysis. International policy analysis, like all policy analysis, is about solving “public goods” problems. What political dynamics shape the outcome of international policy debates? Good political analysis requires some basic appreciation of a thorough understanding of actors and the institutional setting within which they operate. That’s usually a tougher challenge than it may seem at first blush, and it’s particularly challenging in global politics, with its wide diversity of both actors and institutions. Understanding the nature of collective goods and learning how to analyze actors and institutions are among the main themes/objectives of this course. We’ll refer to these concepts and concerns often, and today’s class lays the groundwork.

- Steve Walt, "[How to Get a BA in International Relations in Five Minutes \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," FP 2014. And Sjoberg, "[Mansplaining International Relations: What Walt Misses \(Links to an external site.\)](#)" (2014)
- [Selection on Collective Goods \(Links to an external site.\)](#), from "Core Principles of International Relations" in *International Relations* by Goldstein and Pevehouse.
- "[National Interest \(Links to an external site.\)](#)" (Oxford Reference)

Sept 13. Thinking Through the Policy Process (and the Roundtable projects). There is no single process for debating and deciding on international policy initiatives – but there are some discernible patterns. This class session will introduce a standard process that is common across policy issues and in multiple settings, even if there are some important (and frequent) variations. The Roundtable projects in this course are intended in part to illustrate/demonstrate the policy process.

- Two [short selections](#) from Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*.
- Review entries on [PUBPOL510 Facebook page on Brexit \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Sept 15. Knowledge and Expertise: Backgrounders as part of the Policy Process. **HEADS UP: This class period relates to the first component of your course project, the Backgrounder, due Sept 27.** Important as it is to be able to identify and understand actors and the relevant institutional context, to do a good analysis you also have to know something about the issue. That’s what backgrounders are all about. In this class period we’ll consider what backgrounders are, how they’re used, why they’re important, and how to prepare them. We’ll examine the structure of one backgrounder in some detail and use it to get you started on your own (much shorter) backgrounder.

- Kendall, Alexandra E. "[US Response to the Global Threat of HIV/AIDS: Basic Facts \(Links to an external site.\)](#)." Congressional Research Service Report, June 2012. (Please bring a copy to class.)
- "[AIDS: More Funding Needed \(Links to an external site.\)](#)." (2010)

Sept 20. Scheduled meeting with RT groups. (Class period to begin promptly at 1 PM rather than 1:10; each group will have 15-20 min with Prof. Waltz and GSI Lora Cirhigiri)


Sept 22. Identifying Stakeholders: The Array of Actors in contemporary IR, and States as Sovereign Stakeholders. For good reasons, nation states are considered the major players in global affairs. But the global stage is actually pretty crowded, and states aren’t the only players or stakeholders. In this class period we will survey the range of international actors and begin to explore the role(s) of states in this cast of characters. Sovereignty is considered one of the defining features of a

modern state, and we will look at its practical implications in the actual policy world of international relations.

Readings related to the range of actors:

- "[Davos 2016: Eight Key Themes For the World Economic Forum \(Links to an external site.\)](#)" Guardian, Jan 2016 (Who attended Davos?)
- "[Brazil and Germany Draft Anti-Spy Resolution at UN \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," BBC, Nov 2013
- Naim, "[Al Qaeda, the NGO \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," Foreign Policy 2009
- Human Rights Watch, "[Yemen: Saudis Using US Cluster Munitions \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," 2016
- [Pope Francis weighs in on climate change. How do his proposals measure up \(Links to an external site.\)?](#), WP (Monkey Cage Blog), June 2015

Readings related to Sovereignty

- BBC, "[UN Vote Gives Palestinians New Diplomatic Powers \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," Nov 30, 2012.
- Krasner, Stephen D. "[Think Again: Sovereignty](#) ." Foreign Policy. January/February 2001: pp 20-29.
- "[The Fragile State Index 2016 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)." Fund for Peace (published by FP), June 2016. [And heads up! FfP has an interesting [internship program \(Links to an external site.\)](#)...]

Sept 27-29 [Backgrounders due Sept 27] Foreign Policy Analysis. Starting with the basics: how do you know (or find out) what a state's foreign policy is? What is the relationship between "national interest" and foreign policy? What resources does a state depend on to deliver its foreign policy? SWOT analysis will be introduced, for SWOT analysis assignment due Oct. 6.

Readings for Sept 27-29 (Please review in order listed; we will focus on first 3 readings on Sept 27)

- The White House [Foreign Policy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) page)
- "[The Obama Doctrine](#)": The Atlantic's Exclusive Report on the U.S. President's Hardest Foreign Policy Decisions (Links to an external site.)"
- "[What Trump Really Means When He Says He'll Make America Great Again \(Links to an external site.\)](#)" The Nation, April 2016 and July 21 [Trump foreign policy interview \(Links to an external site.\)](#)with the NYT
- Dresner blog, "[Why Obama Needs to Choose Whether He's a Liberal or a Realist on Syria \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," Foreign Policy, 2013
- Yan Xue-Tong (Links to an external site.) China's National Interest: [Preface \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and [Chapter 3 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (2002).
- Kaufman, [A Concise History of US Foreign Policy - Chapter 1](#).
- Pay careful attention beginning section on "What Is Foreign Policy?" page 9ff

- [SWOT analysis \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

And here are a couple of additional resources for those seeking a theoretical grounding:

- Waltz recorded powerpoint on IR theories (2015)
- Walt, Stephen M. “[International Relations: One World, Many Theories](#)” Foreign Policy. Spring 1998: pp 29-46.

Oct 4. Diplomacy and Statecraft. In this class period, we will consider the foreign policy tool kit -- including the influence ladder, soft power, and negotiations. [Class sessions Sept 27-Oct 4 lay the basis for the state interest analysis papers, due immediately after Fall break.]

- Ross, Dennis. [Statecraft and How to Restore America's Standing in the World](#). Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007: 21-23, 173-177 and 187-215.
- Walt, "The Myth of a Better Deal (Links to an external site.)," FP August 2015
- Nye, Soft Power. Joseph Nye, "Soft Power: Think Again (Links to an external site.)," FP 2006.

Oct 6. [SWOT Analysis due] (US) Foreign Policy Controversies. What makes a foreign policy (decision) controversial? This class will include a discussion of some current controversies in US foreign policy.

- Readings to be posted. (Either readings related to US elections or Pakistan trade case)

Oct 11. How are Foreign Policy Decisions Made...in the US...and China? Go to war, conclude a trade deal, extend development assistance, participate in UNESCO, accept refugees.... Who makes these decisions, and how are they made? How foreign policy decisions are made varies considerably from country to country, and in some countries it may be a contested matter. In this class period we will focus on the different components of the US foreign-policy making apparatus, including: the President, the National Security Council, the CIA, the State Department, and the Department of Defense. And of course, the US Constitution. We will also consider the US foreign policy process in comparative perspective as we examine foreign-policy decision-making in China.

Prioritize readings/resources marked with (*) :

- Annotated powerpoint on US foreign policy institutions
- National Security Council Website: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/>.
- (*) Rothkopf, David J. “[Inside the Committee that Runs the World. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)” Foreign Policy, March/April 2005: pp 30-40.
- Department of State website: www.state.gov
- (*) "Ten Ways to Fix America's Ailing State Department" Foreign Policy, July 2015

- "State and Pentagon Tussle Over Control of Military Aid (Links to an external site.)" Washington Post, July 2016 State vs. Defense
- (*) Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress
- Comments by SoS John Kerry), FY 2014 Executive Budget Summary - Function 150 and Other International Programs (scroll further down in the document to see the actual budget request). If you want, you can compare Kerry's speech in 2013 to H Clinton's speech in 2012.
- US Code Title 22 – Foreign Relations and Intercourse [US laws directly related to foreign policy]
- (*) Yun Sun, CHINESE NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION-MAKING: PROCESSES AND CHALLENGES, May 2013
- (*) Mintz and DeRouen, Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making: "Biases in Decision Making" (2010).

Oct 13. State Interests Analysis due] About Audiences (Focus: US). When statesmen, politicians, and pundits speak, who are they talking to? And at least as important, who listens, who cares? In this class period, we'll consider several concepts and concerns related to audience response, including the role of public opinion, audience costs, two-level games. The broad issue of framing will be introduced during this class period (and further elaborated after Fall Break).

- "Two Level Games and the Greek Financial Crisis (Links to an external site.)", World Politics News Review, 2011.
- "Framing Policy Issues" (Framing handout)
- BBC, Eight Reasons 'Leave' Won the UK's Referendum on Brexit (Links to an external site.) (24 June 2016) (Which of the 8 reasons relate to framing?)
- On audiences, see this story published by the Korean Broadcasting System. "In Donald Trump's Rise, Allies See New American Approach (Links to an external site.)" (May 5, 2016) [See original NYT story here (Links to an external site.)]
- "How to Do Social Science (Links to an external site.)" (Walt in FP on audience costs, 2011)


Oct 20. [State Interests Analysis due.] Do Institutions Matter? Institutional Settings and International Law as International Policy. This class period will serve as an introduction to intergovernmental organizations and institutions (including international law). We will revisit the issue of collective goods, and consider efforts to address (and solve?) collective goods problems through international institutions. [This class period will be in a combined "lecture" and "workshop" format].

- ILSA, "Introduction to International Law (Links to an external site.)," Read and digest sections: A, B, C 1-2, E 1-2, H
- UN Charter

Oct 25. Norms/Policies/Law in Context. (Heads up: this class period will involve work related to your roundtables, as well as a short case from the World Trade Organization) In this class period we'll explore how IGO's "work" by reviewing the Shrimp-Turtles WTO case. In the second half of the class there will be opportunity to work in groups to identify the international norms, policies and treaties relevant to your Roundtable. (And the IO assignment will be reviewed.)

- Hurd, *International Organizations*, Chapter 3 (with focus on the Shrimp-Turtle case on pp. 61-64, and the background information on most-favored nation status, pp. 50-52, and the WTO dispute mechanism, 58-61).

Oct 27. Global Frameworks – The United Nations. The UN has [five main organs](#) (Links to an external site.) controlled by member states, the best known of which are the [Security Council](#) (Links to an external site.) and the General Assembly. It also has more than two dozen quasi-independent agencies and programs. In this class period, we will distinguish between activities dominated by member-states (UN Security Council) and activities managed by the [UN Secretary General](#) (Links to an external site.). We will also take stock of the political considerations surrounding choice of the new Secretary General.

- [2015: UN Year in Review](#) (Links to an external site.) (15 minute video, full version)
- Weiss et al, [Excerpts from Introduction](#),  The UN and Changing World Politics, 2014.
- "[Appointing the Secretary General: The Challenge for the Security Council](#) (Links to an external site.)." June 2016 (12 pages) [produced by Security Council Report]
- Add last-minute news update on selection of next UNSG
- "[Behind Closed Doors, Russia and Turkey are Still Battling](#) (Links to an external site.)" (FP, Aug 16). Question: Was Turkey's ambassador present for the meeting described in this article?

Additional resources to explore as time permits:

- 71st UNGA agenda, fall 2016 (link not up yet: see [70th UNGA](#) (Links to an external site.))

Nov. 1. Global Frameworks - Politics in the Bretton Woods System (World Bank and International Monetary Fund). The World Bank and IMF were both created in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 -- and they are known as "Bretton Woods institutions." The IMF offers loans to cover balance of payments deficits (preferably short term) and the World Bank makes loans for development projects. We will review the functioning of the Bretton Woods institutions and also use this class period to consider the way power and influence are used within these institutions.

- [ABOUT](#) (Links to an external site.) the World Bank
- [ABOUT](#) (Links to an external site.) the International Monetary Fund
- Barnett and Finnemore, "[Expertise and Power at the IMF](#)," selection from *Rules for the World*

- [Bretton Woods Project \(Links to an external site.\)](#)-- critical voices on the WB and IMF

Nov 3-8. When and Why Do States and Other Actors Choose To Work Within International

Organizations? Historically, large states have often acted on their own (via bilateral foreign policy), independent of an institutional context. Increasingly, though, European states conduct foreign policy within the context of the EU, and the US likewise pursues some of its foreign policy objectives within the constraints of a specific institutional setting. Small and medium states tend to pursue most of their foreign policy within institutional contexts. Abbott and Snidal suggest there are 2 main reasons why states use international organizations to manage their everyday interactions and more dramatic episodes – “centralization” and “independence.” We'll discuss the BREXIT vote and the future of the EU in light of these insights. If we haven't already done so, we will have opportunity to discuss principal-agent theory and its application in international organizations.

- Abbot and Snidal, "[Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations](#)" JCR, 1998.
- [Principal Agent dynamics](#) -- handout by Waltz
- Hawkins et al., "Delegation and Agency in International Organizations ([Part I](#) and [Part II](#))" 2006.

Nov 10. The Advocacy Role of NGOs and other Non-State Actors

HEADS UP: Analysis of the Organizational Environment (OE/IGO) is due on electronically by 11pm on Sunday the 13th

- Keck and Sikkink, "[Transnational Advocacy Network](#)," Ch 1 in *Activists Beyond Borders*, 1998. [Or you may find it easier to digest the material as re-packaged in short essays, "[How Do Transnational Advocacy Networks Work](#)" and "[When are Transnational Advocacy Groups Most Likely to Be Effective?](#)" by the Center on Law and Globalization].
- James A. Paul, "[NGOs and Global Policy Making \(Links to an external site.\)](#)" Global Policy Forum, 2000
- [Briefing on Arria Formula Meetings](#)
- [Avaaz: Can On-Line Campaigning Reinvent Politics \(Links to an external site.\)?](#)" The Guardian 2013
- ISHR, [Human Rights Monitor \(Links to an external site.\)](#), 2016
- Greenpeace: [Save the Heart of the Amazon \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (campaign)

Additional Reading, and highly recommended for anyone playing an NSA in your Roundtable:

- Wapner, Paul (1995). "[Politics Beyond the State. Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics](#)," World Politics, 47.3:311-340.

- Martha Finnemore, "[Norms and War; The International Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions](#)" in *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996) Read beginning (69-73) and end (86-88) carefully; scan the middle part on Dunant unless you're just interested in the story.

Nov 15. Advocates in Action - What Role, What Effect? In this class period we'll use a case study on the failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment to explore advocacy efforts in international relations. (The entire class will be devoted to the case study -- see notes on preparation.)

- Case Study: Charan Devereaux, [The Multilateral Agreement on Investment](#), 2005.

These additional materials (not required) may be helpful to clarify and expand on the role, efforts, strategies, and positions of NGOs in the MAI case.

- Martin Khor, "[NGOs Mount Protests Against MAI \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," Third World Network Features, April, 1998
- AI-UK, "[Human rights must be central component of multilateral investment rules \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," November 1999.

Nov 17-22. [Framing/Advocacy analysis due Nov 22] Options and Implementation. What makes for a good policy decision? The policy analyst making proposals should have a good sense of what is achievable and what is required for implementation. In these class periods we'll take another look at the influence ladder and consider the general question of "options" (and how to weigh them). We'll discuss the discipline required for robust counterfactual analysis and compare advice from Clausewitz and Sun Tzu on strategy. And oh yes, we'll discuss expectations about the final paper and roundtables.

- Mintz & DeRouen, "Options for Iraq" (2003) [1 page]
- Baldwin, David A. "[Success and Failure in Foreign Policy](#)." Annual Review of Political Science 3 (2000): pp 167-182.
- Kuperman, Alan J. [The Limits of Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda](#). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001: pp 1-4, 84-91 and 97-99. (First pages present idea of counterfactual analysis; following selections illustrate its application)
- W. Pietersen, "[Six lessons from Clausewitz for the Modern Strategist \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," 2016.
- David Brim, "[Seven Lessons Sun Tzu Can Teach You About Strategy \(Links to an external site.\)](#)," 2013.

Optional readings related to strategy:

- Transcript of 1975 US National Security Council deliberations about future of the Panama Canal, from Ford Presidential Library

- NSC memo format
- Republican Policy Committee "[Conflict in Liberia and US Policy Options](#)" (This is labeled as a "backgrounder," but it is in fact an options paper). In format, it has some strengths -- and weaknesses. How would you critique it?

Nov 29. – Dec 8. Round Tables

Dec 13. Debriefing the Roundtables and course wrap up.

- Re-read the [selection from Howlett and Ramesh](#) assigned during the first week of the semester. *To what extent did your roundtable preparations/experience reflect the policy process described in pages 11-14 of the H&R reading?*
- Now read selected readings from chapter 3, focusing attention particularly on the passages about the International System (pp. 54-60) and the first part of the section on Domestic State System (pp. 60-65). [The chapter goes on to discuss a range of domestic actors, but they are not included here.] *To what extent can you relate their insights (and conceptual descriptions) to your experience throughout the semester, working on assignments related to the roundtable?*

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Assignments related to class preparation. These are of varying shapes and sizes, depending on the particular topic and focus of specific class sessions. Each student will have about 4 specific class preparation assignments during the semester, and other class preparation assignments may be required for the entire class. [One example](#) of a class preparation assignment is on canvas. Reflecting the emphasis placed on class preparation in this course, these assignments will count for **15%** of the final grade. As a feature of the Canvas platform, any class preparation task assigned specifically to you will show up at the bottom of the Syllabus page when you log in with your unique name.

Except where noted, assignments related to class preparation will be graded on a $\checkmark -$, \checkmark , $\checkmark +$ basis. In nearly every case, such assignments will be due the day before class, with sufficient time that I can evaluate your work and respond to it in class. For that reason, I have to be very strict about the posting time. Submissions that arrive after I have started reviewing will be subject to a penalty. Papers that arrive after I have completed the review will not be accepted (or credited).

II. Assignments related to the Roundtable Project (totaling 75% of final grade).

In this project, you are asked to focus on one contemporary policy issue. The intent of the project is for you to look at a single issue from different angles and to use the issue as a lens through which to view and consider the way that actors and institutions work in international relations.

This project has many parts, which together will make up most of your grade for the course. It includes:

- a basic backgrounder
- a short SWOT analysis related to state interests
- an analysis of state interests
- an organizational environment analysis (a group assignment)
- a framing/advocacy strategy memo
- an internal strategy briefing
- participation in an in-class policy roundtable (and associated self/peer critiques)

The project is designed to help you apply concepts and analytical tools to a contemporary international policy issue. Work on the project should also help you acquire a respectable amount of knowledge about an issue on the global agenda. Some aspects of the project will rely on individual work; other parts will involve working in a group.

The basic setup. The class will be divided into several groups, each of which will create a public forum on its assigned policy issue. Based on your response to a quick survey distributed very early in the course, you will be assigned to a roundtable group. (Groups will be composed during the second week of the semester.) Each group will have a rather narrowly focused topic, such as the feasibility of forgiving sovereign debt or efforts to reduce nuclear proliferation. Professor Waltz and GSI Lora Cirhigiri will work with each group to identify a single policy question that will guide the work of all members of your group. In most cases, Professor Waltz will formulate the group's unifying policy question. Each person in the group will ultimately "represent" a different perspective, or actor, on the same policy question for class assignments and at the policy roundtable. While you may share research with members of your group, each of the class assignments must be individually prepared.

The semester-long roundtable project is divided into several shorter assignments, each designed to hone a particular skill. The project culminates with a policy briefing memo and an in-class policy roundtable. The policy roundtable is a chance for you to balance substantive research on a policy area with strategic thinking about the policy's political significance. At the roundtable, each member of the group will role-play a particular viewpoint, and the forum as a whole should include representatives of different states, inter-governmental bodies, and concerned interest groups (such as NGOs). For instance, a roundtable on international AIDS policy could include students playing Zambia, the US, Canada, the OECD or the World Bank, and Doctors without Borders, each of which has different interests and brings different concerns. Most of the papers will be written or presented with the perspective of your chosen actor--or another RT actor-- in mind.

It is important for you to review all of the instructions before beginning work on your policy project. To the extent they are available, you are also encouraged to consult samples from previous years that are on file with the Ford School writing tutors and GSI Lora Cirhigiri. You are highly recommended to meet with the Ford School's writing center throughout the semester.



Getting Started. The first task for your group is to get comfortable with the policy question that will guide the work of all members of your group and determine the relevant actors. In most cases, Prof. Waltz will supply the group's question, but refinement of the question is possible! You will be working individually on this project throughout the course, but it is very important that each member of your group is guided by the same policy question, as group members will ultimately present alongside one another at the policy roundtable. On Tuesday September 20, Prof. Waltz and Lora will meet with each group for about 20 minutes (during the regular class time) to clarify the roundtable policy question and discuss specific actors for each member of the group, with attention to balancing viewpoints and roles. By Thursday, September 22, each group should submit the proposed "cast" of its roundtable to Lora, with roles assigned to each member. (Everyone should be well into the work on the backgrounders by this time.)

One last general piece of advice: Don't rush into discussions of strategy. The final paper is a strategy paper, and the framing paper requires strategic thinking -- but save your strategizing until late in the semester. One overarching objective in this project is to help you differentiate analysis (the question "what am I looking at?") from strategic thinking (questions: "how do I get from here to there?"). The backgrounder and the analysis papers are just that: analysis. Learn the difference between analysis and strategy, and don't hesitate to ask questions or challenge when the lines seem blurred!

Please keep track of your graded papers, to be re-submitted as a package (together with your strategy memo at the end of the semester. All papers will be returned in early January.

WRITTEN COMPONENTS OF THE ROUNDTABLE PROJECT

1. **The Backgrounder. Due in Class, Sept 27. (10% of final grade)**

Policy professionals and think tanks often develop backgrounders to introduce new/obscure issues and problems to their constituents and the public. Backgrounders are also developed internally, to brief agency staff on a new or changing issue. (The Congressional Research Service regularly prepares backgrounders for members of the US Congress, and while these are much longer than the backgrounder you'll write, CRS reports are good examples. The Council on Foreign Relations has also begun to publish a series of backgrounders, which may provide useful examples.) Less formally, I often draft a backgrounder whenever I set out on a project that requires me to have my facts straight -- as for example [this document on US arms transfer policy](#)   that I drafted to share with a few colleagues.

The backgrounder is a short, tightly referenced essay presenting the essential background, and facts, related to the policy issue. The content of a good backgrounder will vary from issue to issue - but it should *always* provide factual information, presented succinctly. Generally, it should convey -- in neutral tone-- the scope of the problem and factual information that explains events or developments that have created some urgency around it. It should include a brief summary of current international policy or note the absence of existing policy, and it should present the controversy surrounding the policy issue without commenting on the merits of individual positions.

This paper should be very succinct, with an abundance of footnotes. (In this paper, you can't go wrong by adding footnotes. You will need them later, to track your sources and establish credibility for your claims.) You should write the backgrounder from a neutral perspective, but do include facts of specific relevance to your actor. For example, if you will be representing the US in a roundtable focused on aid for international development, you might want to discuss mechanisms for administering US assistance and quote donor statistics for the US (after reviewing the global situation). You should NOT, however, focus entirely or mainly on your actor's concerns, or discuss strategies or make policy recommendations for your actor. The challenge for this assignment is to synthesize extensive research and present what you have learned in a clear, concise, and organized manner. This assignment may involve a lot of work, but the reward is that by the end, you will have acquired some knowledge and expertise!

The backgrounder should be about 2 pages, single spaced, with space between paragraphs, wide margins and lots of white space (excluding footnotes or endnotes). This should equate to approximately 750-1000 words, exclusive of notes. Please provide a list of "Sources Consulted" in lieu of a bibliography, and include at least one scholarly article or book. "Sources Consulted" and footnotes/endnotes should be prepared in standard format, e.g., Chicago style or MLA. See the [handout on citations](#), or pick up a guide on footnotes and bibliography readily available at Hatcher library.

Example backgrounders on Canvas. You will likely find it instructive to review and compare the two papers.

2. SWOT Analysis. Due in class Oct. 6. (5% of final grade)

This assignment prepares you for the state interest analysis paper that is (also) part of the Roundtable Project. SWOT stands for Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat and is one of the analytical tools you may wish to employ in that paper. (A SWOT analysis can help you assess a country's capabilities -- and limitations.) This short assignment offers you the opportunity to test your understanding of how it works.

With respect to the issue you are working on for your larger policy project, prepare a SWOT analysis on a country that is NOT your own home country and whose perspective you will NOT be representing in the policy roundtable. For example, if you are from the US or are representing the US in the policy roundtable, you may not choose the US for the SWOT analysis. Likewise, if you are Chinese or will be representing China in the roundtable, choose a different country. (And no, the EU is not a state...it is an IGO. France and Luxembourg are states.) Though it is often useful to do the analysis from the perspective of a fellow group member's country, for this assignment the country you choose need not be a participant in your roundtable.

SWOT analysis will be discussed in class on September 29; you may also want to revisit [this resource \(Links to an external site.\)](#) listed in the course outline. Remember: the SWOT analysis is not complete unless you have commented on the profile that emerges from your matrix. Hardcopies due in class on **October 6** (with penalty-free extensions possible for any students with designated class preparation responsibilities on Oct 6 -- See GSI if you wish to exercise this option).

3. State Interests Analysis. Due in class Oct 20. (10% of final grade)

Choose a state that is actively involved in your issue area. (it can be any state EXCEPT the state you analyzed for your SWOT analysis.) Prepare a clear-eyed analysis of that state's interests with respect to the issue. This paper offers you opportunity to focus on the interests of one main player. Your paper should address these questions: **What are the state's essential interests with respect to the issue at hand? What does the state want (and possibly need) from others? To what extent does it have the capability to satisfy or protect its interests?*** Please make use of this assignment to apply the materials –concepts and analytical tools—explored in class and in readings. You will want to reflect on such concepts as sovereignty, power, and capability. Useful tools include the influence ladder, SWOT analysis and 2-level games. You may use any combination of these concepts and tools to develop your analysis of the state's strategic situation. (*For emphasis: I will be looking for answers to these specific questions as I grade the analysis paper.)

CAUTION: Do not use this paper to develop a political strategy or “policy position” for the roundtable – save that for the final policy briefing! In most cases, this paper should not even mention the roundtable, and it is probably NOT a good idea to put this analysis in memo format.

Maximum 900 words (excluding any footnotes), single-spaced with lots of white space. Diagrams are welcome, but if you use them, be sure to provide explanatory text. [Example State Analysis available on Canvas](#)

4. Analysis of the Organizational Environment (OE/IGO) Due electronically by 11pm, **Sunday, Nov 13. (10% of final grade)**

NOTE: This is a group assignment; each RT group will submit a single OE/IGO memo. (It is meant to include contributions from everyone in your group but how you divide up the research, writing, and editing portions of the process is up to you. This is a team-effort, and the professional expectation is that everyone will strive to pull their own weight. Appended to the memo -- but not included in the word count -- should be a description of the contribution of each group member.)

Choose an IGO or other international institution that is prominently involved in your issue area and could logically provide an institutional setting for policy decisions related to your issue area -- for example, the IMF or the G8 on international debt relief. Assume that you are preparing this analysis for a non-governmental organization looking to influence related international policy, in this example, Jubilee 2000. [In the instructions below I am using the terms "IGO, institutions, bodies or deliberating bodies, gatherings" interchangeably. If your group has questions about the choice of IGO/OE, please consult with the GSI in the first instance, and difficult questions will be referred to Professor Waltz.]

Your supervisor has asked you to prepare a memo providing information about the following aspects:


- Who generally attends the meeting of this body? How are meetings run/organized, and what is the process for placing a new issue on the agenda of this organization/gathering?
- Describe, and if possible, analyze the process for making decisions within the IGO/institution. If at all possible, identify a policy-related decision taken by the IGO and walk it through the steps. (For example, how did the 2013 Security Council resolution authorizing force in Mali come to

be? Who usually proposes a resolution—a member state, or the UNSG? And what are the voting rules?) You may find that this information is not accessible. If you aren't able to do the analysis, report on your efforts to locate information and discuss areas that do not seem transparent.

- Does this IGO/body have the definitive say over policy issues in your RT area? (Explain)
- Who are the principals, who are the agents in this IGO/institution and what is their relationship? Within the organization, which actors are most influential? (Staff? Member states?--name names!--which ones and why? Members of the epistemic community (academic experts)? NGOs?) Please identify the main players, but don't stop there. In addition, analyze the use of power and influence – how is influence exercised, and how does it affect decision-outcomes? (For example, what actors have power to shape an agenda? Power to make decisions? Power to withhold resources? Etc.)
- Describe the extent to which non-governmental organizations have access to and influence upon this IGO.

Target 1000 words; maximum 1500, single-space. Be sure to append a page indicating the contribution of each RT member.

5. Framing/Advocacy Memo. Due in class Nov 22 (10% of final grade)

We will initially discuss “framing” in class on October 13. Also see the [handout on framing](#)  [on Canvas](#). With your roundtable role in mind, write a brief memo to your colleagues (whoever they are – fellow senior managers of an NGO; colleagues on the National Security Council staff), proposing and justifying the “frame” you recommend for presenting your views. The framing memo is an “internal” communication, not intended for the public. Your memo should:

- Present the situation that you are facing (i.e., provide real-world context - not the roundtable)
- Propose and justify a frame (or if there is compelling reason to do so, a choice of frames)
- Identify the audience you will try to reach with your message. If you are writing from the perspective of an advocacy group, include some commentary on what you hope to achieve with your framing.
- Include analysis of how you expect the intended audience to react. If you are writing from the perspective of a state or IGO, include some commentary on the likely reaction of the advocacy group you consider most influential.
- Include analysis of any downsides to your proposed framing strategy

The most difficult part of this assignment is choosing and developing an appropriate frame. The choice of a frame is closely linked to how your actor sees the issue, and the frame you choose must be compatible with your actor's identity and perspective. (Some actors—states, for example—have considerable latitude in their choice of frames; NGO and IGO choices tend to be more constrained.) So the first step in choosing a frame is to clarify your actor's own perspective.

A second consideration in the choice of frame involves the likely response of your audience. Frames are rarely neutral – they will draw some audiences closer, but they may push others away. Ideally, you won't choose a frame that will alienate your main audience or constituents, but in some cases your choice may be limited by your actor's purpose. In any case, you don't want to be surprised by reactions to your frame. So consider, who are you trying to reach? How will the audience you speak to react to your frame? How will those beyond your intended audience react? What is the best way to present your issue to maximize response from those you hope to reach? These questions point up the *strategic* nature of the framing memo. (In considering the choice of a frame and its likely impact on your intended audience, you will naturally be thinking about your actor's overall strategy. You should NOT, however, offer strategy recommendations about substantive policy issues in your framing memo.)

The page limit for the framing memo is 1250 words, single-spaced, normal fonts - not including the situational cover page. **Your paper should have lots of white space (i.e., indentations, lists, double spacing between paragraphs).** The situational cover page simply tells me--in a few lines-- what role you are playing and under what circumstances. (To grade this paper appropriately, I need to know who you are and what you have been asked to do.)

Instructions for this assignment have been substantially revised from previous years, so unfortunately there are no samples available. But that, too, is a situation that frequently arises, and as a professional you'll often be called on to develop analyses for which no previous examples exist. Just follow the guidance.]

6. Policy Roundtable. Beginning Nov 29. (5% of final grade)

The last several class periods will be devoted to policy roundtables. GSI Lora Cirhigiri will be managing the roundtables, and she will be able to provide more information as the semester progresses. Basically, though, the roundtables will simulate a structured conversation among stakeholders with different perspectives on an international policy issue.

Each roundtable will have a full class period. Each group is responsible for figuring out how to organize and manage the class period in which it is presenting. Each of the stakeholders, however, must have equal time to present his/her position (this should include at least 5 minutes of uninterrupted time) and the group **MUST** reserve at least 20 minutes of class time for uninterrupted classroom questions and discussion. This discussion period should not be planned in advance. Handouts (such as a FAQ) and other visual aids (Power Point presentations, graphs, charts) are encouraged if they add to the presentation. Remember, though, that aids can sometimes be a distraction, so use them with caution.

You should meet as a group to plan the forum itself – the type of forum you will use, whether you will use a joint handout or individual handouts, the order of presentations, etc. Creativity in forum design and presentation is encouraged and rewarded. The best group presentations are those in which members anticipate and respond to one another's arguments, to really bring the conflict into full view for the audience. Be careful, however, not to practice too much (or share too much information) with one another. Remember that you are independent stakeholders, and often adversaries; in the real world you are unlikely to communicate with each other in advance of such a forum. The presentation is graded

chiefly on content and strategy, including your success at making key points clearly and in a short time. You should try to practice, or develop, public speaking skills – but I will not be grading you on poise or eye contact. Your grade on the presentation will include a group as well as an individual component. For a good sense of what is expected, [see the video of the RT discussion on Canvas](#)

Presentation - 5% of final grade.


7. Group Press Release: For RT #1, Due Mon Nov 28 by 9 AM to Lora. All other RTs: due at least 36 hours before your RT.

Each group should issue a one-page press release stating the type of forum at which you will be presenting, the names of the people who will be presenting (including the organizations that they are representing), and summarizing the policy issue you will be discussing. You are also expected to provide one short reading for your classmates to do in preparation. (Not graded)

8. Peer Critiques. Due after every session, with set completed no later than **December 13.** (5% of final grade, with self-evaluation)

At every roundtable where you are not presenting, you will be assigned a person to critique. Templates for the critiques will be distributed, and completed forms are due on the next class day following the presentation. Your critiques will be anonymously returned to the presenter

8. Self-Evaluations. Due by **Dec 13.** (5% of final grade, with peer critiques)

Your own roundtable will be video recorded, and you will have opportunity to review the recording. You will then [evaluate](#)  the roundtable and yourself, and respond to the peer critiques you have received. Due within one week of presentation, and no later than **Dec 13**, in class.

9. Internal Strategy Briefing (Options Memo). Due by noon, Monday, December 19th (25% of final grade)

This final assignment wraps up all the work you have done on your group's issue and stands in lieu of a final exam. By the time you approach this final assignment, you should have at hand all the basic research and most of the analysis you need to write a comprehensive *internal* policy briefing with attention to strategy.

This final policy memo is a **strategy document**, written by a staff member (you) to the colleagues and supervisors in the organization/department you represent, analyzing the options that lie before you.

To elaborate: As a student in this class, you have already completed a background memo and several analyses - so you are knowledgeable about the issue and have considered it from several perspectives. **Drawing on the separate papers you have already written**, your final policy briefing **should include** an analysis of the international political context in which the issue is being discussed, and it should contain a frank assessment of your organization's ability to pursue its interests and objectives within that political context. The memo should identify the allies and the opposition that you anticipate and a strategy for achieving the stated goals, including **advice about framing**.^{*} In most

cases, you will want to **present options and talk your way through them**, pointing out advantages and drawbacks of each. Throughout, you should make clear the basis (your reasoning) for any positions you advocate. Your colleagues will have more confidence in your assessment and advice if you are well reasoned and able to identify weaknesses even in options you prefer.

The target length is 2000-2500 words (not to exceed 6 pages), single-spaced (with lots of blank space) normal fonts, not including references. It should be written as an internal [memo](#) (i.e., to your colleagues, not as a public document). Structure and formatting can make a real difference in the overall effect of your paper, especially given the space constraints. You are encouraged to consult samples for ideas but please bear in mind that instructions for this assignment have been altered over the years. Irrespective of what you may see in sample papers provided, please follow instructions above.

This memo should help you to think through **the elements of a good political analysis**: a sharp definition of the policy problem; identification of relevant actors and their various goals and interests, and a proposed strategy (options) to accomplish your own goals. Your strategic analysis should take into account your main audience (constituents) and it should include advice about how to frame your actor's position for maximum effect. It should also provide some insights into the task of strategizing -- assessing the merits of alternative strategies, considering how to meet likely attacks, and anticipating the repercussions of your actions.

Submit your paper together with your original backgrounder and your other RT papers (the papers that Professor Waltz commented on) by noon on **Monday, December 19**.