

Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy: Assignment Help Notes

Target Objective

The *target objective* for this essay is for students to evaluate how far public opinion influences U.S. foreign policy and to arrive at a substantiated judgment about circumstances in which public opinion is *most relevant* and *least relevant*.

Brief Indicative Content

Students will need to investigate relevant themes using a combination of theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence drawn from case studies. Students should aim to establish some degree of analytical balance, even if the essay argues strongly in one direction.

Possible themes may include the relationship between public attentiveness and crisis, the extent of elite control over the foreign policy making process, the relevance of national identity and American values, and public perceptions of the responsibilities of the United States as the world's leading power.

Case studies may include

- (a) Public opinion, wars and military (or humanitarian) interventions e.g. Somalia (1993), Haiti (1994), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001-14); Iraq (2003-11); Libya (2011); and ISIS, the "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria (2014-).
- (b) Public opinion, crises, and non-intervention, e.g. the Rwandan genocide (1998), indecision regarding the civil war in Syria (2011-), and recent efforts to constrain Iran's nuclear program through diplomatic rather than military means.
- (c) Public opinion and non-military issues e.g. Latino migration, border control, and citizenship; economic issues such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (1994) and the recent Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations; climate change, energy and the environment; and international aid.
- (d) Public opinion, lobby groups, and bilateral or regional relations e.g. the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and the U.S.-Cuba Democracy Political Action Committee.

Theoretical perspectives may include

- (a) Realism, e.g. are classical perspectives on state interests more significant as an explanation of U.S. foreign policy than pluralist perspectives?
- (b) Liberalism, e.g. how do American public attitudes towards multilateral institutions such as the UN and NATO affect U.S. foreign policy?
- (c) Democracy, e.g. does the public control the direction of U.S. foreign policy or is the president relatively unfettered (imperial presidency)? To what extent is U.S. foreign policy predicated on the democratic peace thesis?
- (d) Globalization, e.g. how has increasing global economic integration affected public opinion in the United States on issues like trade agreements?
- (e) Pluralism, e.g. how does the media shape public opinion on foreign policy issues? Do interest groups have a significant effect on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy?

Suggested Resources

Students are *required* to use the extracts in the assignment sheet to explain and evaluate competing perspectives on the significance of public opinion. To sustain a well informed and analytical discussion, students will need to go beyond the material in the extracts by using a variety of books and articles, including those from which the extracts are taken.

(i) Textbooks

McCormick, James M. (2014) *American Foreign Policy and Process* 6th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth)

McKeever, Robert and Philip Davies (2012), *Politics USA* 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson), Ch. 20 and 21.

Wittkopf, Eugene R. and Christopher M. Jones (2007), *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process* 7th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth)

(ii) Books [Check Google Books: <https://books.google.com/>]

Baum, Matthew (2003) *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) Ch. 1 available at: <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s7655.pdf>

Berinsky, Adam (2009) *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion From World War II to Iraq* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

Ferguson, Niall (2005) *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of America's Empire* (London: Penguin)

Holsti, Ole (2009) *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press) Ch. 1 available at: <http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472030118-ch1.pdf>

Ikenberry, G. John (2014) *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press)

Johnstone, Andrew and Helen Laville eds (2010) *The U.S. Public and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge)

Knecht, Thomas (2010) *Paying Attention to Foreign Affairs: How Public Opinion Affects Presidential Decision-Making* (Penn State University Press) Introduction available at: <http://www.psupress.org/books/SampleChapters/978-0-271-03753-0sc.html>

Nacos, Brigitte L., Robert Y. Shapiro and Pierangelo Isernia eds (2000) *Decision Making in a Glass House: Mass Media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield)

Page, Benjamin (2006) *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders But Don't Get* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

Sobel, Richard (2001) *The Impact of Public Opinion on US Foreign Policy since Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press)

(iii) Articles and Papers [See sub-folder on Blackboard]

Adams, William C. (1984) "Opinion and Foreign Policy", *Foreign Service Journal*, No. 61, abridged version available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~pad/202/readings/foreign.html>

Aldrich, John H. et al (2006) "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection", *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9, pp. 477-502, available at:
<http://www2.gsu.edu/~poljar/Foreign%20policy%20and%20the%20Electoral%20Connection.pdf>

Berinsky, Adam J. (2007) "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 4, pp. 975-97, available at <http://web.mit.edu/berinsky/www/acw.pdf>

Chan, Steve and William Safran (2006), "Public Opinion as a Constraint against War: Democracies' Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom", *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 137-56.

Kaufman, Robert. (2006) "Morgenthau's Unrealistic Realism", *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 24-38, available at:
<http://yalejournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/061202kaufman.pdf>

Knecht, Thomas and M. S. Weatherford (2006) "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision Making", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 705-27, available at: http://home.comcast.net/~lionelgram/592_Knecht_PublicOpinion_4092800.pdf

Kriner, Douglas L. and Francis X. Shen (2012), "How Citizens Respond to Combat Casualties: The Differential Impact of Local Casualties on Support for the War in Afghanistan", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 4, pp. 761-70.

Smeltz, Dina et al (2012), *Foreign Policy in the New Millennium: Results of the 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago Council on Global Affairs), available at:
http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2012_CCS_Report.pdf

(iv) Web sites

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Surveys, available at:
http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/files/Surveys/Chicago_Council_Survey_Home/files/Studies_Publications/POS/Public_Opinion.aspx

Council on Foreign Relations, "Public Opinion on Global issues", available at:
<http://www.cfr.org/thinktank/iigg/pop/index.html>

Foreign Policy Centre, "Public Opinion and Diplomacy", available at:
<http://fpc.org.uk/topics/public-diplomacy/>

Pew Charitable Trusts, "Foreign Policy and Global Attitudes", available at:
http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=298

Students are not required to conduct internet-based research for this assignment, and indeed are discouraged from using electronic sources except those listed above. However, if students find an electronic source that they wish to use and have any questions about the reliability of the material found online, they should consult their instructor.

Technical Requirements

Students must follow the advice given in (a) the *Politics Study Skills* guide on “Researching, planning and writing essays”; and (b) the *Student Guide for Politics Courses On Ground*, which contains writing exemplars. In brief, essays must conform to the following requirements:

- Between 2,000 and 2,500 words i.e. 8-10 double spaced pages with one-inch margins, and font size of 11 or 12. A word count must be provided at the end of the paper.
- Referenced using APA (Harvard) system. See Indiana University Bloomington, Campus Writing Program, ‘APA Style: A Quick Guide’, available at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~citing/APA.pdf>
- Bibliography of sources used (which is the convention for APA).
- A clear structure with an obvious introduction, middle section, and conclusion.
- The introduction must establish a thesis and indicate the content that will be discussed.
- Each subsequent paragraph should discuss only one analytical point, or two closely-related points.
- The conclusion should reiterate the line of argument and should highlight what is most significant.

Late Assignment Policy

Research essays that have not been through the structured drafting and review process (further details below) will not be accepted for submission, and any research essay submitted after the deadline will receive zero points. If there are extenuating circumstances that are properly documented, you will be permitted to write another research assignment on a completely different topic to the first submission (i.e. you will have to start all over again).

Plagiarism Policy

Students are reminded about Baker College policies on academic honesty (syllabus, p.2): “Academic honesty, integrity, and ethics are required of all members of the Baker College community. Academic integrity and acting honorably are essential parts of professionalism that continue well beyond courses at Baker College. They are the foundation for ethical behavior in the workplace. There are four possible consequences for violating Baker College's Honor Code:

1. Failure of the assignment
2. Failure of the course
3. Expulsion from the College
4. Rescinding a certificate or degree”

Your instructor may require you to submit your essay to Turnitin, as stated in the syllabus: “Baker College utilizes plagiarism detection services and has the authority to submit any papers or assignments to such services to determine authenticity. Some assignments may need to be submitted electronically for this purpose.”

Assessment

Essays will be assessed on the basis of three criteria:

- *Analysis and evaluation* (80 points). The significance of the information deployed must be analyzed consistently and a clear line of argument maintained throughout the essay.
- *Factual knowledge and understanding* (80 points). The information deployed must be accurate and relevant to the question.
- *Communication and presentation* (40 points). The essay must be properly structured, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and supported by a sufficient number of references and a bibliography consistent with the APA style guide.

In addition, 50 points are available for the structured drafting and review process, which will be assessed EITHER by using the “Milestones” rubrics, OR the submission of a prospectus. Your instructor will advise you which method will be used. Students should familiarize themselves with the detailed descriptors in the rubrics, which are available on Blackboard under “Course Information”.