

EU Paper Project



Paper due by Mon., January 19th
Revision due by Mon., February 16th

For this paper you will compare and contrast two books dealing with the crucial question of the role of Europe in the 21st century – Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: American and Europe in the New World Order* and John McCormick, *The European Superpower*. There are four steps to this assignment.

Step 1 -- Read the Books: I would STRONGLY advise that you have this done by the end of Christmas break. I would also advise you to either underline or take notes on the book while you are reading them. This will both facilitate writing your paper and participating in our in-class discussion later in the term. I expect that, having read both works, you can concisely summarize and criticize the arguments therein, which leads us to...

Step 2 – Write a Compare and Contrast Essay: Both of these books deal with the same basic issues – the role of Europe in the 21st century and the future of transatlantic relations. Your paper should start with a proper introductory paragraph and end with a summarizing conclusion. Within the body of the text you should summarize the books, compare and contrast their arguments, and critique them, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of both and which has the better argument overall. The following offers some guidance to this end, although it should not be taken as a template or formula for writing your papers.

- ❖ **Summarize the books:** A good summary should take a large argument and distill it down to its core points. To use a culinary analogy, you want to describe the finished entrée, not recite the recipe. What is this book about? What are the basic questions that they are trying to answer? What evidence are they bringing to bear to answer these questions? How you organize this is a question of style, but what you want to avoid is, “McCormick says in Chapter 1...McCormick says in Chapter 2...” PLEASE NOTE: You are not simply writing two book reviews, but a *comparative essay*. You need to summarize the books sufficiently to allow the reader (who you should assume has not read the books) to make sense of your critiques, but that is all. **NO MORE THAN HALF** of your paper should be taken up by summarizing the books. *To this end, you should count pages; I will.*
- ❖ **Compare and contrast the books:** What points about these books are similar? What points are different? Are they essentially addressing the same research question, or is their initial perspective different? Do the authors bring different assumptions to the table? Do they rely on similar evidence to support their arguments? Are they arguing over the same points or “talking past each other”?

- ❖ **Critique the books:** How convincing were the respective authors' selection and interpretation of this evidence? Were these logically sound and reasonable? Are there alternative arguments that were not explored? Was the evidence used appropriate for the argument being made? Based on your answers to the above questions, which author do you think has presented a more compelling case?

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, and include a cover page. Your initial paper is due on **Monday, January 19th**. Having explored these issues in detail, you should be well-prepared to participate in....

Step 3 – In-Class Discussion: We spend time in Weeks 8-9 discussing these books in class. We will both elaborate the details of these books and discuss the validity of their respective theses. Having hashed out all of these issues in class, you should now be able to....

Step 4 – Revise Your Paper: By this point, I will have returned your papers to you. You will then have the option (it is not required) to review my comments, revise your paper, and turn it in for a *potentially* higher grade. Simply fixing spelling and grammatical errors is not sufficient to receive a higher grade. Your revision must show significant improvement in both its content and presentation. It is not just about fixing your typos; it is about making a *better argument*. Revisions must be accompanied by the original paper with my comments and are due no later than **Monday, February 16th**.

If you have any questions at any point during the project, please come see me.