

First week assignments for Professor Casey's VA 366-America's Future

Welcome back! Good to get started on a new year. Unfortunately, the American Political Science Association seems unaware that Rose-Hulman stops for nothing and scheduled their annual conference to coincide with the start of the fall term. As a result, we will NOT have class this Thursday and Friday. I am sure you are all quite devastated by this news, but fear not! This is Rose-Hulman after all; you'll still have work to do for the class.

The syllabus for the course is available online ([http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~casey1/AmericasFuture\(VA366\).htm](http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~casey1/AmericasFuture(VA366).htm)) and the books are available from the bookstore. There are four books assigned: (1) Andrew Bennett and George Shambaugh, eds., *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in American Foreign Policy*, 4th Edition, McGraw Hill, 2007; (2) George McKenna and Stanley Finegold, eds., *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Political Issues*, 15th Edition, McGraw Hill, 2007; (3) Cullen Murphy, *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America*, Houghton-Mifflin, 2007; (4) Brink Lindsey, *The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America's Politics and Culture*, Collins, 2007.

FIRST WEEK ASSIGNMENTS: (Yes, that is plural. *BOTH* assignments are due at the start of class, Monday, September 3)

Read: *Taking Sides – American Foreign Policy*, Introduction and Issue 2. (This is all you have through Monday. You should probably go ahead and start reading *Are We Rome?*)

Assignment 1 -- After reading the *Taking Sides – American Foreign Policy*, Introduction, write a one page paper (typed) that:

- a) Briefly summarizes/defines the three major international relations theories (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) discussed in the Introduction.
- b) Answers the question: With which of these perspectives do the policies of the current Bush Administration best fit?

Assignment 2 – After reading *Taking Sides – American Foreign Policy*, Issue 2, write a paper that addresses the points outlined below. Please note that these should be treated as guidelines rather than as a rigid formula to follow. What is important is that your paper cover the substance suggested below.

Summarize: Briefly summarize the main point that each author makes. What is the author's thesis (i.e., his/her one main point -- something that can be stated in a single sentence)? What sorts of arguments are used to backup this point (i.e., 'real world' examples and evidence? theoretical concepts and logical argumentation)? In addition to what they actually say, are there any unspoken assumptions or implicit arguments that the authors employ to support their points?

Analyze: Critically analyze the two articles you have read. In doing so, you should consider (among other things): Is the argument logically sound? Are the examples or

evidence used to support the argument valid? Are they appropriate for the argument being made? Are there other examples or evidence (either historical or from current events) that could counter the argument? On the whole, is this an intelligent and sensible argument?

Argue: Having read these two pieces, which do you think has the better argument (or do neither of them have it right)? What do you think is the proper policy to be pursued for the issue in question? Make sure that you fully elaborate the rationale and implications of your argument. Remember that you need to think your own argument in the same way that you are analyzing others (i.e., in terms of logic, evidence, etc.).

There is no set length to the paper, but it will be difficult for you to do the above in less than 3-5 pages. Remember! successful argumentation is a question of quality, not quantity. Please also include a COVER PAGE with your name on it.

We will have class as normal on Monday, September 3. So you get to experience the joy and excitement of the first days of a new year at Rose while I have to suffer through open bar receptions and expense account dinners. Such are the burdens of my job.

See you next week.

Prof. Casey