

Gov391: Politics of Nuclear Weapons – Guest Speaker Response Paper

- What is this?** You will write a 3–4 page response paper in which you will discuss two or more of the guest lectures in the course, identifying common themes, areas of disagreement, or opportunities for future research.
- Why do it?** The response paper gives you the chance to reflect more deeply on the guest lectures and identify ways in which the speakers are in conversation with each other. Understanding the connections between speakers will help you see the common themes of the course, rather than a series of separate guest lectures.
- What is it worth?** This assignment is worth 10% of your course grade.
- When is it due?** The response paper is due before class on April 26. You can submit it at any time—no need to wait until the end of the semester—and I recommend you submit it soon after the visit of the speakers you choose to write about.

For the response paper, you will:

1. **Identify and explain a common theme between two or more guest speakers.** The theme you identify should be something more specific than “nuclear weapons” (all our guest speakers are talking about nuclear weapons). It might be an area of disagreement between two speakers, an issue where one speaker raised a question that was answered by another, two speakers that apply a similar framework to different cases or parts of the world, or just the fact that the speakers are raising the same questions about how nuclear weapons function in international relations.
2. **Respond to the guest lectures you have chosen, and the common theme you have identified, in some way.** There are many ways to respond to the ideas of the guest speakers, but here are some ideas:
 - If you identified a disagreement between speakers, explain whose position is more persuasive and why.
 - Think about how you might apply the ideas of the speakers beyond the cases that they discussed in class, or how you might approach additional research to answer the questions that they raised.
 - Point out the flaws in the speakers’ arguments and explain how you would improve upon their work.
 - Identify a perspective that was missing from the guest lectures—using the readings or your own knowledge of the subject—explain how that perspective would affect the speakers’ argument.

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- Examine whether the speakers' views are having policy impact, and how their work could be made more policy relevant.

Your response paper should be 3–4 pages of double-spaced text (not including your references or bibliography, if you use sources beyond the lectures), using a standard 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Please number your pages. You do not need to explicitly cite the guest lectures, but you should identify the speakers clearly in the text of the paper. If you use outside sources, you must cite them correctly using whichever citation style you prefer. Ask for help if you're not sure how or whether to cite material. For guidance on appropriate sourcing, see the following resources:

<http://guides.swem.wm.edu/writingandciting>
<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism>

Please submit your response paper via Blackboard sometime before class on April 26. Note that you do not need to wait until the end of the semester to turn in the paper—I encourage you to submit it as soon as you can after the visit of the speakers you are writing about.

Need help?

- Consult your notes from the guest lectures and the slides that some of the speakers provided.
- Email me, visit me in office hours, or contact me to set up another time to meet.