1. Past Model UN experience

* SOCHUM at Rutgers Model UN 2012
* Human Rights Commission at Harvard Model UN 2013
* Senate Committee on Foreign Relations at Rutgers Model Congress 2013
* Legal Committee at Rutgers Model UN 2013
* IAEA (Historical) at Ivy League Model UN 2014
* Senate Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs at Rutgers Model Congress 2014

1. I believe that the Ukraine crisis is the most important geopolitical crisis in Europe since the fall of communism. While there have been the events of Russia in 1993, the atrocities of the Yugoslav War, the highly concerning (but short) Russo-Georgian War in 2008, and the Eurocrisis, the events of Ukraine have redefined the relationship between the West and Russia for the foreseeable future. Barring something radical happening in the near future, like a Russian invasion of the Baltic states or the Eurozone/EU making massive reforms/dissolving, the eventual endgame in Ukraine (which despite the current ceasefire, I believe we have not reached) will be remembered as a turning point in European history. To be living in such an important time and to watch world leaders make such important decisions, completely fascinates me.
2. Obviously, Russia sees Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence, and a good part of Putin’s reign has been spent trying to install politicians in Ukraine that would follow his commands. I feel like there are two reasons for this. The first is that Ukraine’s always held an important place in Russian history, whether as the bread basket for the old Russian and Soviet empires or Kiev being one of more important centers of culture and civilization for the Russian Empire. Because of this, I think that Russia finds sentimental value in keeping Ukraine, as an extension of Russian nationalism. The other reason is that the Russian state, being in demographic decline, wants to continue to exert whatever power it has left. Russia’s influence used to extend all the way to central Germany, and now it’s threatened with “losing” Ukraine to the West. The West doesn’t seem anywhere as intent on taking in Ukraine, and western European countries seemed to be extremely worried about the prospect of Russian energy being cut off if they decide to place too many sanctions on Russia or give too many arms to the Ukrainian government. From the general perspective, there is also the worry of a worst-case scenario of war with Russia. Along with this, I imagine that there has to be some reluctance to bringing in Ukraine to regional organizations such as the EU and NATO due to the relative about of weight it would hold because of bordering Russia and having more people than every other EU country but five.
3. Crime. It was a Russian land grab, poorly legitimized by a sham referendum, and not recognized by any other country. In my eyes, the only the way the transfer of land between two nations is fully legitimate is if it has the consent of both governments and the governed. Russia had no legal reason to create chaos and invade Ukraine to commit the first involuntary transfer of sovereignty in Europe since 1945. While because of the Russian majority in Crimea, it might be possible that a majority of Crimeans would’ve supported joining Russia, it is still illegitimate because we will never officially know.