**IST 512: Group Assignment 2**

**Political Science: International Relations: Communication**

*What three areas would best contribute to a solution to the problem if you approaching this theoretically? What three areas would you use if you were approaching from an applied perspective? The paper should provide justification for your choices as well as a summary of your discussion.*

The “crisis” at the border is the culmination of a number of political, cultural, and socioeconomic factors and events – namely the displaced children who are being detained, the increasing tyranny of the drug cartel, and the ongoing executive call for a border wall arriving with the threat of draining valuable resources and funds from the federal government. For the purpose of this paper, we will be focusing on the separation of families and detainment of children. The three areas we chose that we felt could contribute to solving this problem from an applied approach were Political Science, International Relations and Communication.

According to Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, the truth of the matter is that the children are not in “detention centers,” they are in concentration camps.[[1]](#footnote-1) Like the the term “internment camps,” which imprisoned Japanese-Americans in Manzanar during World War II, “detention centers” have been decidedly labeled a euphemism for what they truly are: concentration camps, prisons.[[2]](#footnote-2) Understanding the history and origins of these terms, our group recognizes the great delicacy of language in use, political stressors, and the understanding of international relations required to effectively attempt to ameliorate the horrific effects of this crisis.

Nothing exists in a vacuum, and as such, political science, international relations and communications cannot individually resolve or relieve the border crisis. This unique interdisciplinary blend we are proposing, though it may not address every aspect of this issue, is the most holistic perspective and applied approach we were able to create as a team. Although we are blending all three disciplines together, we will clarify the ways in which each discipline will contribute to the whole. We have aptly named this method the “applied political international communications” approach.

International relations is not the primary aspect of our applied approach, but relying on its own strengths, it not only individually provides a multicultural, geopolitical lens through which to address the crisis, but adds to the particular effectiveness of both political science and communications, as well as how they work together. As one-third of this approach, international relations allows nations to collaborate and to share resources and information for mutual benefit. This is only as effective as its communication with other nations and understanding of the politics on both sides of the border. Communication, through the lexicon of international relations, utilizes its appropriate strengths to ensure the least-hostile conclusion, to strengthen international relations. International relations, leaning on the discipline of political science, also helps move projected solutions (from international relations) onto the ground, with the use of a deeper skill level on moving policies forward through their respective political institutions on both sides of the border. International relations, working with communication and political science, gives a blanket understanding and real-world avenues to resolving the challenges at hand, so communication and political science skills can enhance the swift resolution of this crisis through the tools international relations provides. [[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4)

In a complex, multinational, human-rights scenario like this one, communication is key – and yet it doesn’t stand alone. The field of communication offers theories, tools, and understanding of how individuals and groups convey and receive messaging. Communication theories provide differing lenses through which to evaluate the perspectives of involved parties, and parse, adjust, and make more efficient their discourse. When combined with sophisticated techniques from the international relations field, communication expertise – including language, technique, and scholarly findings – has the potential to move the political location, effecting change. When considered within terms of political science, communication could use the language and context of stakeholders to positively affect international relations. In combination, the three fields suggest promise of motion toward an effective, interdisicplinary solution, one urgently needed for returning these incarcerated, traumatized children to healthier circumstances. [[5]](#footnote-5)

While critical to understanding the context in which these “detention centers” are in use, political science itself is not enough to solve the problem. Political science can offer descriptions of the stakeholders, their motivations, their objectives, and the historical and organizational context in which those stakeholders operate. It can identify the language, phrasing, and diplomatic environment affecting this scenario. Combined with international relations, political science can clarify options for both formal communication channels and other avenues. Communication can draw on those details to recommend motion that political science and international relations might identify as effective or not. [[6]](#footnote-6)

While communication, political science, and international relations each have great value toward solving the tragedy of incarcerated children at the U.S. Mexico border, in combination they could be powerful. By finding intersection between the three fields, drawing on each discipline’s strengths and techniques, an effective set of international, relational communication strategies could operate within the current political environment and effectively change that environment. Whatever it is, it needs to happen immediately.

1. Anna Lind-Guzik, “I’m a Jewish historian. Yes, we should call border detention centers ‘concentration camps.” VOX, June 20, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2019/6/20/18693058/aoc-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-concentration-camps-immigration-border> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Elizabeth Jensen, “Euphemisms, Concentration Camps And The Japanese Internment,” NPR Public Editor, February 10, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/sections/publiceditor/2012/02/10/146691773/euphemisms-concentration-camps-and-the-japanese-internment> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Heather Johnson, “Immigration and International Relations,” https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0204.xml. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Matthew Weiner, “On International Relations and International Migrations,” *Population and Development Review*

   11:3, 441-455. <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.proxy.library.oregonstate.edu/stable/1973247?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Leandra H. Hernandez, “Critical Health Communication Methods at the U.S.-Mexico Border: Violence Against Migrant Women and the Role of Health Activism.” *Frontiers in Communication* 2019:4, 1-12. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2019.00034/full> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Katharine M. Donato, “Crossing the Mexico-U.S. Border: Illegality and Children's Migration to the United States,”

   *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences: Undocumented Immigrants and Their Experience with Illegality* 3:4, 116-135. <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.proxy.library.oregonstate.edu/stable/10.7758/rsf.2017.3.4.07#metadata_info_tab_contents> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)