

Gov 1780: International Political Economy

Section 9
25 Mar 2021

Agenda

- Essay #1 debrief
- Midterm exam logistics
- Practicing for the midterm using terms from Study Guide #7
 - Activity: individual exercise + peer grading

Essay #1 debrief

- Overall, great job! We've given detailed comments on your papers. Please come to office hours to talk through them.
- We heavily reward **improvement** in this class, so please take that feedback on board to write an even better paper for the next assignment!
- Almost everyone in the class could benefit from investing more in their writing skills:
 - For FAS students: go see Julia!
 - For DCE students: check out the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.extension.harvard.edu/>)

Essay #1 debrief

The biggest reason that most of you lost points was that you failed to answer the question we asked...

So let's talk about how to **decrypt** an essay prompt!

Essay #1 debrief: The Trump Question

For most of the post-World War Two period, the United States has generally supported trade liberalization. After 2017 the Trump Administration pursued substantially more protectionist trade policy measures than previous administrations. How do you think each of the three factors emphasized in class (interests, interactions, and institutions) could be brought to bear to explain this change in trade policies? Give specific examples in illustration of the application of each of the three factors.

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This is the key word! Many of you spent too much time describing the change, and not enough time explaining it.

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Takeaway: Get comfortable with referring to policies, without needing to use a whole paragraph to describe them. Use that space for *analysis*.

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These hedging words tell you that there is some scope to reject the premise of the question!

Interestingly, *almost no-one* brought up examples of US protectionism pre-Trump...

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Interestingly, *almost no-one* brought up examples of US protectionism pre-Trump...

- The “Nixon Shock”
- Reagan’s “Voluntary Export Restraints”
- GWB’s steel tariffs

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Takeaway: Think carefully about the examples you want to discuss. A well-chosen case study can illuminate your argument much better than a sweeping chronological narrative...

Essay #1 debrief: The Other Question

It has been argued: "Throughout modern history, economic ties among nations have largely determined their military and diplomatic relations. In the 19th century international trade and investment flourished, which helped preserve the peace among the great powers of Europe. When the 1920s and 1930s were hit by economic uncertainty and depression, diplomatic harmony gave way to conflict. As Western economic cooperation grew after World War Two, it facilitated the diplomatic and military unity of the West. If economic relations among the industrial powers break down, Western military and diplomatic cohesion will follow suit." Present arguments for and against this position. How might the three factors emphasized in class (interests, interactions, and institutions) be brought to bear to explain these developments? Use specific historical examples in illustration of the application and evaluation of each of the three factors.

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Very few people actually presented arguments for and against this position!

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Takeaway: Read the prompt! Write out the prompt in full at the top of your essay! Create a checklist and ask yourself: did I do everything the prompt asked me to?

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The prompt mentions 3 particular historical periods. This is a “freebie” – we’re suggesting a way to set up your argument!

- Do you agree with this characterization of those periods?
- What other examples can you bring in that might support a different conclusion?

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Takeaway: Use everything in the prompt. Rather than organizing your examples chronologically, organize them according to whether or not they support a particular claim or argument.

Midterm logistics

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See the Canvas announcement.

- Midterm will be live for 72 hours (9am ET April 1 - 9am ET April 4)
- Once you open the exam, you have 90 minutes to submit
- You will pick 8 terms from a list of 18
- For each one, you will (i) define the concept; (ii) explain its importance in IPE
- We have given specific guidance on plagiarism/citations for this exam: *please read it carefully*

The 2-paragraph technique

— — —

The midterm exam has a very different structure to the essay assignments... so let's practice!

For each term, you have to:

- (i) define it
- (ii) explain its importance in IPE

As a guide: we are looking for **2 substantive paragraphs** for each term and you will have approximately **10 minutes** for each.

The 2-paragraph technique

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The midterm exam has a very different structure to the essay assignments... so let's practice!

For each term, you have to:

- (i) **define it**
- (ii) explain its importance in IPE

This part is *relatively* straightforward.

Imagine you are explaining the concept to one of your peers who hasn't taken this class.

As a guide: we are looking for **2 substantive paragraphs** for each term and you will have approximately **10 minutes** for each.

The 2-paragraph technique

— — —

The midterm exam has a very different structure to the essay assignments... so let's practice!

For each term, you have to:

This part is less obvious... so let's brainstorm!

(i) define it

(ii) explain its importance in IPE

As a guide: we are looking for **2 substantive paragraphs** for each term and you will have approximately **10 minutes** for each.

The 2-paragraph technique

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The midterm exam has a very different structure to the essay assignments... so let's practice!

For each term, you have to:

(i) define it

(ii) explain its importance in IPE

This part is less obvious... so let's brainstorm! *What kinds of things might you include in this 2nd paragraph?*

As a guide: we are looking for **2 substantive paragraphs** for each term and you will have approximately **10 minutes** for each.

The “pivot” technique

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Here is a simple heuristic to help you formulate that 2nd paragraph:

Try to **pivot** between
theory and empirics

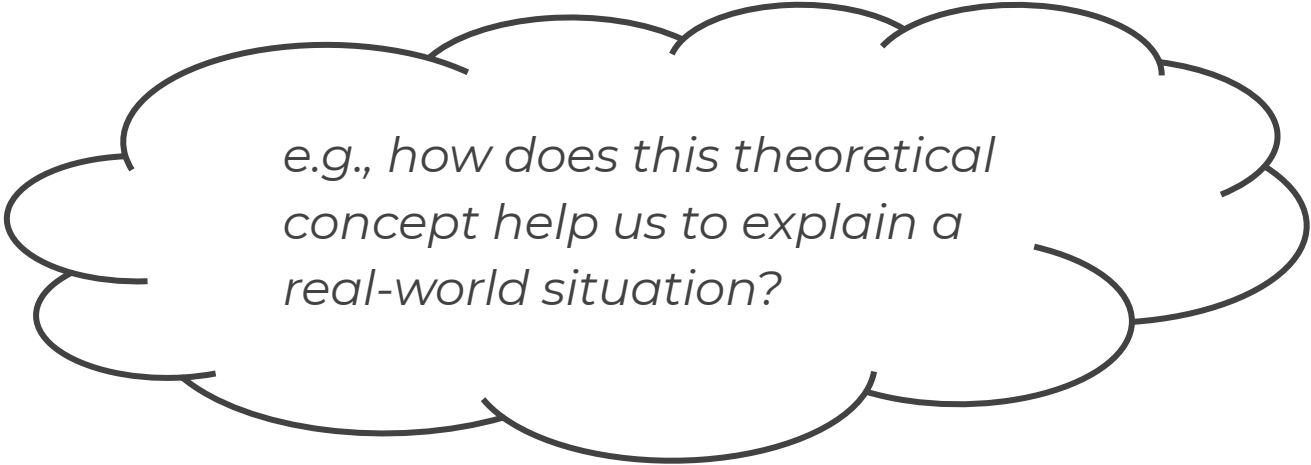


Bonus points if you can identify this iconic football (soccer) player and his eponymous pivot.

The “pivot” technique

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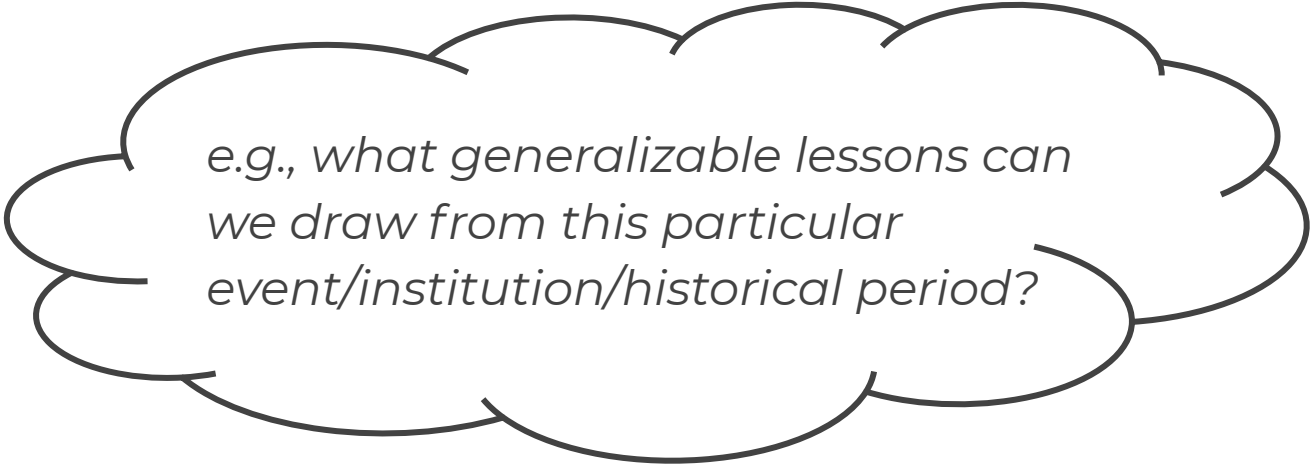
If you have a **theoretical term** (e.g. the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, or the Prisoner’s Dilemma), then pivot to **empirics** in your 2nd paragraph.



e.g., how does this theoretical concept help us to explain a real-world situation?

The “pivot” technique

If you have an **empirical term** (e.g. the Gold Standard or the Industrial Revolution), then pivot to **theory** in your 2nd paragraph.



e.g., what generalizable lessons can we draw from this particular event/institution/historical period?

The “pivot” technique

— — —

Note: This technique is just a *suggestion*! It will work better for some terms than others. There are many ways to write a great 2nd paragraph.

The “pivot” is a simple heuristic to make sure your 2nd paragraph moves beyond a definition into a broader point.

Practice!

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- Each of you will pick a concept from Study Guide #7
- I will then put you into breakout rooms in pairs
 - You don't need to have picked the same concept as your partner
- You will have **10 minutes** to *individually* write a 2-paragraph explanation of that concept, as you would in the midterm exam
- After 10 minutes, share your 2 paragraphs with your partner
 - e.g. paste into the chat in your breakout room
- Provide constructive feedback on your partner's work
- Then we will debrief together as a group