

COURSE: AP Capstone: Seminar

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Lim (nlim@hbuhsd.edu)

SUMMERTIME COURSE WORK

Hello and welcome to Seminar, the first year of the AP Capstone course. I would like to begin by applauding you on your decision to take a very important step in advancing in your academic careers. As you all know, the summer break between academic years is long and many hours can go wasted. Moreover, this AP course is extremely rigorous, and therefore, it is in your best interest to prepare by completing the assignments detailed below prior to the first day of class.

1) First, you will need to read regularly. In other words, read as often as you can. Do not let a day go by where you do not read either an article, an essay, or a book. Do not underestimate the importance of this step. You must be a strong reader if you want to be successful in this class.

2) Open a new Google document and create a list of topics that are of genuine interest to you. You must have a minimum of 10 topics. Additionally, for each topic you have identified, you must write out at least 3 research questions. Please use the template I've attached as a guide to organize your research topics and questions. We will discuss how to develop research questions at the beginning of the school year, but until then, go to the following links to learn about how to develop a research question.

<https://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/research/research-paper-steps/developing-questions/>

https://libraries.indiana.edu/sites/default/files/Develop_a_Research_Question.pdf

<https://youtu.be/LWLYCYeCFak>

3) Become familiar with Performance Task 1 by reading through the materials I have provided for you labeled PT 1. After you have read and reviewed both rubrics for the Individual Research Report and the Team Multimedia Presentation, I would like you to try and score the student samples. For the Team Multimedia Presentation, watch the following student samples on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/juiDdgIsbpg>

<https://youtu.be/yf-J3S46JIQ>

***If you have any question regarding any aspect of the work you are being asked to do, please contact me through email (located at the top of the page).*

Research	
Research Topic #1	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #2	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #3	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #4	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #5	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #6	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #7	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #8	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #9	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3
Research Topic #10	1) Research Question #1 2) Research Question #2 3) Research Question #3

AP Seminar Assessment Overview

Students are assessed with two through-course performance tasks and one end-of-course exam. All three assessments are summative and will be used to calculate a final AP score (using the 1–5 scale) for AP Seminar.

- ▶ **Team Project and Presentation — 20%**
- ▶ **Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation — 35%**
- ▶ **End-of-Course Exam (2 Hours) — 45% (College Board Scored)**

AP Seminar Performance Task 1: Team Project and Presentation

Weight: 20% of the AP Seminar score

Recommended Completion Date: February 28

Submission Deadline: April 30

Note: *Teachers must carefully plan a calendar that provides time for all the tasks to be completed, scored, and uploaded by April 30.*

Teachers must upload and submit the following for this task by April 30:

- ▶ Individual Research Report for each student
- ▶ Internal Score Report for the following components
 - › Individual Research Report (IRR)
 - › Team Multimedia Presentation and Defense (TMP)

Task Overview

Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, and analyze an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options and evaluates alternatives; develops a multimedia presentation to present the argument for their proposed solution or resolution; and provides a defense to questions posed by the teacher.

Components

The following components are formally assessed:

Component	Scoring Method	Weight
Individual Research Report (1200 words)	Teacher scored, College Board validated (individual score)	50% of 20%
Team Multimedia Presentation and Defense (8–10 minutes, plus defense questions)	Teacher scored (group score)	50% of 20%

Task Guidelines

In this project, three to five students collaborate as a team to identify a problem or issue (e.g., local, national, global, academic/theoretical/philosophical). Each team develops a team research question and conducts preliminary research. They identify approaches, perspectives, or lenses and divide responsibilities among themselves for individual research that will address the team’s research question.

Individually, students investigate their assigned approach, perspectives, or lens on the issue or topic of the team research question. Each student presents his or her findings and analysis to the group in a well-written individual report that:

- ▶ identifies the area of investigation and its relationship to the overall problem or issue;
- ▶ summarizes, explains, analyzes, and evaluates the main ideas and reasoning in the chosen sources;
- ▶ identifies, compares, and interprets a range of perspectives about the problem or issue; and
- ▶ cites all sources used and includes a list of works cited or bibliography.

Working collaboratively, the team considers all of the research and analyses from individual team members for the purpose of proposing one or more solutions or resolutions. The team:

- ▶ collaboratively synthesizes and evaluates individual findings and perspectives to create a collective understanding of different approaches to the problem or issue;
- ▶ considers potential solutions or resolutions and conducts additional research in order to evaluate different solutions within the context of the problem; and
- ▶ proposes one or more solutions or resolutions and prepares an argument to support their proposal.

The team develops an 8–10 minute presentation that presents a convincing argument for the proposed solutions or recommendations. The team should ensure the claims made are supported by evidence and that they have considered different perspectives and the limitations and implications of their proposed solutions or recommendations. The presentation and the media used to enhance the presentation should consider audience, context, and purpose. *Teachers should collect presentation media from all teams in the school's AP Seminar course(s) before any team actually delivers the oral presentation.* Following the presentation, the team will defend its argument, with each student responding to a question posed by the teacher. Each team member should be prepared to answer questions about any part of the presentation.

Role of Teacher

Teachers

- ▶ must ensure students are aware of the task, timeline, components, and scoring criteria
- ▶ may explore issues, discuss topics and perspectives, and/or question students as necessary
- ▶ oversee the formation of groups
- ▶ may continue whole-class teaching of skills pertinent to the performance task as students are working on their research and/or presentations
- ▶ may share the rubric with students
- ▶ may encourage students to review each other's work

Teachers may not

- ▶ assign, provide, distribute, or generate research questions for students
- ▶ conduct or provide research/articles/evidence for students
- ▶ write, revise, amend, or correct student work
- ▶ give specific, directive feedback to individual groups
- ▶ reveal defense questions to students prior to the presentation

Instructions for the Oral Defense

Following the presentation, teachers should ask one question of each individual student. The questions are designed to assess the students' reflection on their experiences of collaborating as a group. It is important that teachers ask students questions that allow them to provide specific evidence of their collaboration (for example, asking one student about another team member's research). Teachers may select questions from the list or formulate more specific questions appropriate to a team's presentation, as long as the questions posed address this criterion. Teachers may also ask follow-up clarifying questions to allow students the opportunity to fully explain their answers.

AP Capstone Program

Here are some examples of the types of questions your teacher might ask you during your oral defense. These are *examples only*; your teacher may ask you different questions.

1. Describe how the content of the team presentation was changed as a result of group discussion.
2. Student A, how did the group decide to include Student B's perspective/lens/conclusions into the overall presentation?
3. Student A, give one specific way that your thinking changed as a result of learning about Student B's findings.
4. In the future, what change would you make to your group norms, and how would you expect that to improve the team presentation.
5. Reflecting on your colleagues' work, which one had the greatest impact on your overall understanding of the problem your group identified?
6. In what way did you improve your ability to work with a group as a result of this project?
7. What is an example of a compelling argument from one of your peer's individual reports that you decided to exclude from your team presentation and why?
8. What is a way in which your team's resolution makes you think differently about your own individual research?
9. What was the strongest counter argument to the solution or conclusion your team identified and why?
10. Describe an argument from one of your peer's individual reports that made you think differently about your team's solution or conclusion?
11. Having finished your project, what if anything do you consider to be a gap in your team's research that, if addressed, would make you feel more confident about your conclusion?

PT 1

AP Seminar Rubric 2016-17: Performance Task 1

Component 1 of 2: Individual Research Report

Performance Levels

Content Area/ Row	Low	Medium	High	Points (Max)
1 Understand and Analyze Context	The report identifies an overly broad or simplistic area of investigation and/or shows little evidence of research. A simplistic connection or no connection is made to the overall problem or issue.	The report identifies an adequately focused area of investigation in the research and shows some variety in source selection. It makes some reference to the overall problem or issue.	The report situates the student's investigation of the complexities of a problem or issue in research that draws upon a wide variety of appropriate sources. It makes clear the significance to a larger context.	6
2 Understand and Analyze Argument	The report restates or misstates information from sources. It doesn't address reasoning in the sources or it does so in a very simplistic way.	The report summarizes information and in places offers effective explanation of the reasoning within the sources' argument (but does so inconsistently).	The report demonstrates an understanding of the reasoning and validity of the sources' arguments. This can be evidenced by direct explanation or through purposeful use of the reasoning and conclusions.	6
3 Evaluate Sources and Evidence	The report identifies evidence from chosen sources. It makes very simplistic, illogical, or no reference to the credibility of sources and evidence, and their relevance to the inquiry.	The report in places offers some effective explanation of the chosen sources and evidence in terms of their credibility and relevance to the inquiry (but does so inconsistently).	The report demonstrates evaluation of credibility of the sources and selection of relevant evidence from the sources. Both can be evidenced by direct explanation or through purposeful use.	6
4 Understand and Analyze Perspective	The report identifies few and/or oversimplified perspectives from sources.**	The report identifies multiple perspectives from sources, making some general connections among those perspectives.**	The report discusses a range of perspectives and draws explicit and relevant connections among those perspectives.**	6

PT 1

AP Seminar Rubric 2016-17: Performance Task 1

Component 1 of 2: Individual Research Report (continued)

		Performance Levels			Points (Max)
Content Area/ Row	Proficiency	Low	Medium	High	
5	Apply Conventions	The report includes many errors in attribution and citation OR the bibliography is inconsistent in style and format and/or incomplete.	The report attributes or cites sources used but not always accurately. The bibliography references sources using a consistent style.	The report attributes and accurately cites the sources used. The bibliography accurately references sources using a consistent style.	3
		1	2	3	
		6	Apply Conventions	The report contains many flaws in grammar that often interfere with communication to the reader. The written style is not appropriate for an academic audience.	
1	2			3	

*For the purposes of AP Seminar, "validity" is defined in the glossary of the CED as "the extent to which an argument or claim is logical."

** For the purposes of AP Seminar, "perspective" is defined in the glossary of the CED as "a point of view conveyed through an argument."

Additional Scores

In addition to the scores represented on the rubrics, readers can also assign scores of 0 (zero) and NR (No Response).

0 (Zero)

- A score of 0 is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric. For rows 1 to 4, if there is no evidence of any research (i.e. it is all opinion and there is nothing in the bibliography, no citation or attributed phrases in the response) then a score of 0 should be assigned.
- Scores of 0 are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

NR (No Response)

A score of NR is assigned to responses that are blank.

What are the causes of the Syrian Civil War and how can we use our understanding of these to combat the current refugee crisis?

Introduction

Since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, more than 4.5 million people have left the country in search of sanctuary, security, and opportunity. The impact of this large-scale migration has been profound in not only Syria's neighbouring countries, Turkey and Lebanon, but also in the European continent as a whole, as countries struggle to accommodate the sudden influx of refugees. Although several international bodies such as the United Nations have attempted to stabilize the region through negotiations and ceasefires, all efforts thus far have failed (Rodgers et al.). To try and find the best solution to this issue, we must use a historical lens to look back on what caused the Civil War in the first place. This will give us an in-depth understanding of the roots of the issue and what needs to be addressed to bring back stability and security to the region. While Bashar al-Assad, the current President of Syria, maintains that the United States' involvement in the Middle East is to blame, research from historical perspectives suggests that the legacies of colonial intervention and the Assad regime's history of political wrongdoings are major factors that need to be considered when attempting to combat the issue.

Ethnic Minority Rule

One of the causation arguments most often cited by Western media is one regarding the long-term consequences of decisions made by colonial powers post World War I.

Fareed Zakaria, the recipient of a Peabody Award and multiple Emmy nominations for his journalistic work, is one of the most significant proponents of this argument. According to Zakaria, western colonial powers essentially “carved up” the Middle East after World War I, paying no heed to the religious and cultural differences when drawing up borders. The situation was further exacerbated when these powers put in place three minority regimes in the region - one of which was the Alawites in Syria - so they could have greater control over its resources and political decisions (*Fareed Zakaria: Stay Out Of Syria*). This, Zakaria argues, is the cause of the current civil war, as it is the “inevitable re-balancing of power along ethnic and religious lines, with the Sunni Arab majority retaking control from the Alawite minority” (Fisher).

Zakaria’s argument regarding the current Civil War being a result of ethnic minority rule is backed by scholarly consensus. For instance, a research paper done by James Fearon and David Laitin of Stanford University, and Kimuli Kasara of Columbia University, analyzes the correlation between ethnic minority rule and civil war onset. They concluded that although a majority of evidence relied on the experiences of few countries, countries led by members of an ethnic minority - especially countries in Eurasia - are more likely to have civil wars (Fearon, Laitin and Kasara 192).

However, although this view is widely shared by Western media and is accepted as the true cause by many, some believe it is only a minor issue - and one that couldn’t have been avoided in the first place. In his article, “Stop Blaming Colonial Borders for the Middle East’s Problems,” Nick Danforth, a doctoral candidate of Middle Eastern history, argues that the idea that borders were the cause of war incorrectly implies that better borders were possible in the *first place*. Danforth contends that if colonial powers had made smaller states that were

ethnically homogenous, there would have just been more borders to fight over, and concludes that, “the militarization of these ethnic and religious identities, rather than the failure of perfectly placed state borders to alleviate tension between them, explains much of violence in the Middle East today.”

Nevertheless, even with questions regarding whether the West could have done a better job in the past, we must consider the dynamics and beliefs of the ethnic groups in Syria today, as we try and deal with the repercussions of the conflict.

Political Issues

To some however, the current crisis is merely the result of a political crisis rather than a purely sectarian conflict. For instance, Reverend Nadim Nassar, a Syrian Anglican priest and founder of World Watch Monitor, a UK based awareness foundation, believes that “what is happening in Syria today is not merely the result of a minority ruling a majority...The change the Syrians desire with all their hearts is the change from oppression to freedom, from corruption to the rule of law, from dictatorship to democracy.” According to Nassar, who himself is from a Christian minority in Syria, when the Assads came into power, many actually thought they would bring stability to the region, regardless of their ethnicity. Reese Erlich, a well-renowned freelance journalist who has won several awards for his exposés on the Middle East, agrees, and claims that for many years Syrians lived in relative peace and stability, while largely ignoring their ethnic and religious differences (Erlich 182).

The real cause of the war, as argued by both Erlich and Nassar, was the malpractices and blatant human rights violations of the Assad regime. In making his argument, Nassar goes back to when Hafez al-Assad, the current President’s father, was in power. He explains how Assad

unnecessarily got Syria involved in several conflicts, including Egypt's war against Israel and the Lebanese Civil War, all of which led to needless bloodshed on the Syrian side. He also speaks of the corruption, censorship and violence that took place under his rule as key foundations of today's revolution (Nassar).

When Bashar al-Assad came into power, many hoped he would reform Syria's political system due to his young age and Western education. However, when several of the earlier practices of his father's regime continued, the Syrian people were pushed over the edge (Erlich; Nassar). To Nassar, and many others, the causes of the war were purely political, and religion was merely used to "rally the troops" (Erlich; Nassar; Fisher).

Erlich's experiences in Syria as he researched his book, *Inside Syria*, corroborate such claims regarding the use of religion to assemble and empower dissidents. "Many of the Free Syrian Army guerillas...pray five times a day...not out of religious conviction, but in order to appear pious. To get funding from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, groups must appeal to religious sensibilities. To the pious go the guns" (Erlich 154).

Such accounts from locals show that while religion played a role in the conflict in helping bring rebels and allies together, it was not always considered the primary source. Instead, the political wrongdoings and unethical practices of the government were what truly pushed them to revolution, and should be taken into account when efforts to stabilize the region are underway.

Assad Point of View

A more biased, yet prominent argument on the cause of the Civil War is one offered by Bashar al-Assad himself. The Civil War erupted in 2011, eleven years after Assad gained office, and since then Assad, along with several other parties have been fighting for control over the

region. When asked in 2015 about what he thinks caused the Civil War, Assad referred to US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which Syrians thought would turn Iraq into a sectarian country. “To the west of Syria there is another sectarian country – Lebanon. We are in the middle. Consequently, the beginning of the Syrian crisis...was the natural result of that war and the sectarian situation in Iraq, part of which moved to Syria” (“Bashar al-Assad”). Although an unpopular view regarding the causes of the war, it is still worthy of being considered when trying to combat the current crisis, as it reflects the views held by the Syrian government.

Conclusion

The Syrian Civil War has been raging on for almost five years. With 250,000 casualties and 4.5 million refugees, it is crucial that international efforts to stabilize the region are successful (Rodgers et al.). For such efforts to be successful in the long run, they must take into account the conditions that caused the Civil War in the first place, and ensure that such tensional environments are not created once more. Thus, they must be mindful of the dynamics and demands of the various ethnic groups, the long history of political oppression, and certain governmental views regarding western involvement in the country.

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AP Seminar Rubric 2016-17: Performance Task 1 Component 2 of 2: Team Multimedia Presentation

		Performance Levels			Points (Max)
Row	Content Area/ Proficiency	Low	Medium	High	
1	Establish Argument	The presentation is disjointed and offers little argument or makes minimal unsupported connections (if any) between evidence and claims. It offers a solution unsupported by evidence (or does not offer any clear solution or resolution).	The presentation offers an argument that is logically organized, generally connecting claims and evidence (but shows a tendency towards oversimplification) AND the solution proposed is largely supported by the evidence.	The presentation offers a coherent argument with claims consistently supported by evidence and linked to the overall thesis. The argument illustrates the complexity of the problem or issue AND demonstrates an understanding of implications and limitations of the proposed solution.	6
2	Understand and Analyze Context	The presentation identifies potential solutions but does not consider their consequences or implications.	The presentation offers superficial or simplistic consideration of implications or consequences of potential solutions.	The presentation offers a thorough evaluation of potential solutions by considering their implications and consequences.	6
3	Engage Audience	The presentation's design does little to effectively convey the information.	The presentation's design aligns with the information.	The presentation's design aligns well with and effectively contextualizes or emphasizes key information.	3
4	Engage Audience	The selection and execution of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy) severely limit the presentation's impact.	The selection of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy), OR execution of those techniques, supports communication of the argument.	A careful selection of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy), coupled with a dynamic execution of those techniques, strongly supports the communication of the argument.	3

AP Seminar Rubric 2016-17: Performance Task 1 Component 2 of 2: Team Multimedia Presentation (continued)

Performance Levels				
Content Area/ Row	Low	Medium	High	Points (Max)
5 Collaborate	The overall presentation is comprised of a series of separate presentations of each individual's work, or the presentation AND/OR the oral defense demonstrates strong disparity in the participation levels of specific team members.	The presentation of each individual's work is somewhat connected to work of the team. The presentation AND/OR the oral defense demonstrates some imbalance in the participation of team members.	The presentation is cohesive, clearly connecting the work of each individual to that of the team. The presentation AND/OR the oral defense demonstrates complete support and equal participation from all team members.	3
6 Reflect	The oral defense responds to the questions in a way that is simplistic or unsubstantiated OR describes a process that does not answer the question.	The oral defense responds to the questions asked and provides some evidence that may be general rather than specific about the team's collaborative work.	The oral defense articulates detailed responses to the questions posed, supported by relevant and specific evidence about the team's collaborative work.	3

Additional Scores

In addition to the scores represented on the rubrics, readers can also assign a score of 0 (zero).

- 0 (Zero)
- A score of 0 is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.