

Political Science 134A
Strategy, War and Politics
April 30, 2002

MID-TERM ESSAY QUESTION

Answer ONE of the following two questions:

1. "The most significant cause of both World Wars in Europe is to be found in Germany's strategic position in the European balance of power. Germany's efforts to maximize its own security and protect its strategic interests simply could not be reconciled with the security and interests of other states. Given this strategic environment, a major war of some kind was virtually inevitable."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? If you disagree, what other explanation or explanations do you think better account for the wars in 1914 and 1939? If you agree, why do you think that competing explanations for the wars are not as strong?

2. What theory or explanation best accounts for the causes of the First World War? When composing your answer, please focus on two questions. First, what were the root causes of the conflict? Second, why did the war escalate to a world war involving all the major powers of Europe? Keep in mind that the best explanation for the war's root causes may not be the best explanation for its escalation.

EXAM RULES:

This is an open book exam. You must not, however, discuss the questions or your answers with others.

Use the theories and historical evidence provided in the readings and lectures to support your answer. No outside research is required.

Your essay should be 10-12 double spaced pages in length (around 3000 to 3500 words) with 1-inch margins on all sides. I recommend using the 12 point times new roman font (the font used on this page).

Your essay is due **IN CLASS** at the **BEGINNING OF CLASS** on **TUESDAY MAY 7th**. Late papers will be penalized.

Some pointers for writing the paper:

Make sure to answer the question!

Have a clear argument say exactly what you think and why you think it. Summarize this argument briefly in the first paragraph of your paper.

Do not simply recount historical facts for the sake of giving background or filling space. Instead, use historical facts to support your argument.

You cannot address *all* the competing explanations for your question, but do not ignore major pieces of evidence or explanations discussed in the readings or in lectures that directly contradict your argument.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. You must acknowledge any direct quotations or the close paraphrasing of an author's words.

Include your name and your TA's name on the front page of your paper.

Use a spell checker.

Include page numbers in your essay.

Good luck!