

Washington Semester Program
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016
Spring 2007

Dr. Leroy Miller

The Research Project

The research project offers you the opportunity to pursue focused inquiry on a topic in US foreign or domestic policy. Through this experience you will learn how to use research sources in Washington, DC and practice your analytical and writing skills. You will learn methods of information gathering which go beyond typical library research. Your project research will be enhanced by your involvement in the seminar and the internship.

You are expected to pursue original first-hand research in the course of your project. In addition to the usual primary and secondary sources, you should include interviews with decision-makers, undertake observation of committee hearings, and initiate direct contact with relevant individuals and agencies. You should complete a minimum of 3 interviews.

While you are responsible for selecting and defining your research topic, and will be allowed wide latitude in your choice, you should choose a contemporary topic in American foreign or domestic policy. Although your research should reflect an awareness of historical context and theoretical concerns, the project should not be a purely historical paper or a completely theoretical discourse. Utilize the Washington environment to the fullest extent possible.

Due Dates: You are expected to adhere to the following deadlines.

1. Project Title, Central Question and Contact Information **Friday, January 19, 6 p.m.**

Send an email to me at [lmiller@leroymiller.com] by 6 p.m. with the following information in the email text and as a word attachment: your name, telephone number, email address, research project title and central question. To avoid the “technology ate my homework problem”, don’t wait until the last minute to send me your email.

2. Research Proposal (2-3 pages plus bibliography) **Tuesday, February 13, 8 p.m.**

Send your research proposal as an email attachment by 8 p.m. Include: Problem Statement, Central Question, Central Statement, Methodology, Research Techniques, Chapter Outline, Bibliography.

3. First Chapter **Tuesday, February 27, 8 p.m.**

Send your first chapter as an email attachment by 8 p.m. The introductory chapter (5-7 pages) is simply an expanded and enhanced version of your research proposal with footnotes. Include your Problem Statement, Central Question, Central Statement, Methodology, and Research Techniques. Attach a revised chapter outline and expanded bibliography.

4. First Submission of Entire Paper

Tuesday, April 10, 8 p.m.

Email your first submission of your entire paper via email as one file with page numbers (title page, table of contents, all chapters, bibliography, footnotes...complete paper!!).

5. Final Paper

Monday, May 7, 8 p.m.

Email your final paper as one file.

Submission of Papers: Submit your assignments by email. Check your email regularly for feedback and announcements from me.

Length: While quality is more important than quantity, the completed project should be between 35 and 50 pages (double-spaced).

Evaluation and Grading: There will be no "incompletes". Any papers submitted after deadlines will be considered late papers, and will be graded accordingly. *Remember to save your work (and print it out) frequently.* Always have a backup.

The following grading criteria will apply:

Structure = 30%

Your introductory chapter (and your research proposal) should include a clear exposition of the following: Problem Statement, Central Question, Central Statement, Methodology, and Research Techniques. Make particularly sure that your central statement clearly expresses the main idea of your paper. It should be one to three sentences in length. Think of your central statement as a short reply to your central question. Underline your central statement or place in [brackets].

The body of your paper should flow from your central statement. Using sources as mentioned below under "Content" you should offer support for your central statement. Your conclusion should summarize how you have supported your central statement.

Content = 55%

Your ability to coherently integrate primary and secondary sources, interviews, hearings and other sources supporting your central statement will be evaluated. Content will also be measured in terms of the extent to which you demonstrate reflection and contemplation in your paper. Do you go beyond mere repetition of the material you have assembled and seek to contribute your own thoughts and standpoint to the paper?

Spelling, Grammar and Style = 15%

Clear writing is essential. Papers should be proofread carefully.

Recommended Text: Turabian, Kate L. **A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations.** Revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 6th Edition. University of Chicago Press. 1996, Paper \$12.95.