

## **A Few Tips for the Paper from your Friendly TAs:**

- **Avoid long quotes of more than one sentence.** Furthermore, consider whether or not you need to quote in the first place. The best reason to quote is if you need the *exact* phrasing of the author's idea for your analysis. Otherwise, just paraphrase the author's argument and add the citation for it at the end of the sentence. Be sure to avoid "orphan" quotes that are basically disconnected from the rest of the argument and seem to be in there to take up space.

- **In-text citations are fine.** You might try to use the author's name and article's original publication date rather than just the textbook date since there are multiple citations from some authors in the textbook. Just "(Morgantheau 1948)" or "as Doyle (1983) argues" should be fine.

- **Focus on clarity in your writing rather than long, disjointed sentences** that use lots of SAT words. You want to make sure that readers can understand your argument and follow your reasoning. Attempts to "pad" papers by adding excess verbiage take up valuable space that could be used for analysis and make it harder for readers to follow your argument.

- **Use the articles from the readings and show that you understand them.** You need to demonstrate that you know them and are familiar with their arguments. You don't have to make the articles the centerpiece of the paper (though that's fine), but you should use them enough to show that you are familiar with the arguments.

- **Make an argument in your paper.** Your evidence and analysis should be put to serve an argument that is very clear to the reader from the start and which the entire paper is structured around.

"The Democratic Peace makes the world more peaceful because of democracy." <- not a good argument.

"Trade helps lead to peace while norms don't matter." <- a bit of an argument, but it doesn't explain why and is still rather vague

"Trade increases the opportunity cost of going to war, which makes countries less likely to prefer war regardless of government type or the structure of the international system." <-good argument, explains WHY we see the result, explicitly compares it to other explanations

"Both theories have some good aspects and some bad aspects and we need a combination of both to understanding what's going on." <--this may be true! But it's not a good argument. Why? It lacks specifics, it doesn't explain what combination matters (and WHY that combination matters), and it doesn't effectively address the prompt.

- **Make sure to compare and analyze the theories.** You do not need to spend much time describing each theory by itself and you can easily weave together description with comparisons and analysis. Also, think about critiques of the theory you support as well. None of these theories are perfect and all present some opportunities to be challenged. If you really want to show that you have a good theoretical understanding, you present your argument, figure out where people might have objections, and then address those objections.