

# POLS 427 International Relations • Fall 2002

## Assignment #1: Instructions

For this assignment, you have three basic tasks.

**First**, select one *current* event or issue related to IR or global politics that you can analyze using both realist and liberal principles. A “current” event or issue is one that is presently being discussed and/or covered in the news media (this includes events/issues that are ongoing). To find a relevant event or issue, you should consult major American and/or international news sources, most of which can be accessed for free on the Internet. These include the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *BBC*, the *Guardian* (Britain), the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Financial Times*, alternative media sources (check my web site), and a whole host of English-language editions of foreign newspapers. Once you find a particular story on which to focus, I strongly suggest you read about the story from a variety of perspectives; that is, do not rely on a single news source for information. You may also need to do “background” reading (e.g., to understand the recent actions taken by Chechen “rebels” in Moscow—the siege of a Moscow theater—it would be necessary to know about the ongoing conflict between Chechnya and Russia).

**Second**, write a clear, accurate, and concise essay analyzing the event/issue you selected from both a realist and liberal perspective. In essence, you need to put on your realist and liberal “hats” to explain the significance or meaning of the event/issue. (Remember, the facts don’t speak for themselves—you need to tell me what the facts are saying from a realist and liberal perspective).

**Third**, after completing your analyses using both realist and liberal principles, analyze both events from a structural or Marxist perspective. This section will differ from the previous ones, however, in that your analysis will directly discuss the limitations or problems of the realist and liberal views from a structural perspective—to put it another way, your job is to criticize realists and liberals by showing what their analyses are missing.

Your essay should be between 4 and 7 pages; neatly typed, double-spaced and reasonably free of grammatical and typographical errors. Your paper must also be clearly organized with a separate introduction and conclusion, as well as appropriate section headings.

**Due date: Wednesday, November 6.**

**NOTE:** Time permitting, I will post a web page with additional information and hints. Check my web site later in the week.