

MA International Relations: Assessment Criteria for Seminar Papers (“Paper Virtues”)

Formalities

- The paper is flawless in terms of spelling, quality of articulation, and formal presentation (cover sheet, table of contents, page numbers, reference list, etc).
- The paper is based on the relevant scientific literature, which is referenced in accordance with the rules described in the MAIR Stylesheet.

Structure

- The research question is stated clearly in the introduction. Its empirical and theoretical relevance is adequately elaborated and discussed.
- The structure of the paper clearly reflects the research question. Each part of the paper makes a specific contribution to answering this question. It is always apparent what this contribution is, why it is needed to answer the question, and how it fits into the overall argument.

Analysis

- Concerning empirical (aspects of) papers: the paper draws on relevant theories, discusses relevant hypotheses, and uses relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence to answer the research question.
- Concerning theoretical (aspects of) papers: definitions, concepts, arguments, and normative statements are clearly explained. Their theoretical significance is appropriately discussed and critically evaluated.

Presentation

- The empirical data is appropriately presented and discussed.
- The theoretical concepts and arguments are clearly and correctly described.
- The sources of empirical evidence or theoretical concepts are correctly cited.

Originality

- Ideally, in answering its research question, the paper goes beyond a restatement of known empirical facts or established theoretical arguments. It may introduce, for example, a novel interpretation of an existing body of literature or draw attention to an empirical pattern that has not received appropriate attention in the literature so far.