Overview and Goals: This project is team-based and will be created in multiple steps. The topic of the project is to research and analyze a problem of international security. The cases to be analyzed by each team will be provided by the instructor. Each team will formulate a plan by which to divide up the research that goes into the presentation, and the organization of the presentation itself. The team will also produce a joint document that includes all of the research sources and categorize them by type, reflecting a diversity of sources (print and electronic). Each student will also write their own paper analyzing the problem and the policy suggestions within the team. More details on this are provided below. Policy Research teams will be established during the first two weeks of the semester. This project involves the collaboration with instructional librarians, with whom you will learn about various research resources and strategies. The course instructor and instructional librarians will also provide additional documents that contain resource suggestions in addition to this document. The premise of the project so as to write from a more global, and possibly objective vantage point, is to presume that your team is an ad hoc group appointed by the United Nations Security Council to study your assigned problem. You will report to the UNSC your findings and recommendations.

Step 1: Once your team is assigned, the first step is to meet each other and exchange contact information. You should have everyone’s contact information and discuss how you will get organized. We will take some class time to hold a meet and greet session for this purpose. Each research team will be a group that has a space in Blackboard, which will include a communication and file-sharing technologies. The librarians, Mr. Jacob Galindo and Ms. Angela Lucero, will also have access to these groups, allowing you to directly converse with them electronically.

You will need to discuss how to divide up the work within your team. Each student will be responsible for obtaining useful research sources for the group presentation. The group organizational plan should reflect this division of labor. The team will meet with the instructional librarians to customize a research strategy, but this meeting should occur only after the team has divided up the work and started the research process. The librarians can then help mold and polish this research process and help identify and educate students on relevant and legitimate research sources, which is an important component of information literacy. These research sources must be diversified and include more than websites.

The research plan document that outlines the division of labor amongst the team members should discuss what types of research sources will be used by the team, and how the team will research the topics that pertain to their problem. This research plan document should document who found each reference source. Each student will be personally responsible for identifying five research references that are legitimate and relevant to the project, and shared with the rest of the team, and these must reflect some diversity in print and electronic sources; discuss this with the librarians to confirm such. This requires that you have engaged in at least some research prior to meeting with the librarians. All research will be shared within the team, and this will be used to create the presentation and student papers discussed below. Students will lose points in their original papers if they fail to use at least 15 reference sources and not use what the team documented in their team organizational plan. This organizational plan document will be turned into the course instructor for review and approval before
moving on to the next step. Each student will receive a separate grade for the organizational plan document that is tied to their labor, attendance with librarian meetings, and the sources (varied types and quantity) they provided to the group. A model of an organizational plan will be provided from the spring POLS 4330 course, which used a similar assignment; however, note that this model of an organizational plan lacks the listing of research sources.

Step 2: Once receiving instructor approval, your team will then execute the research strategy. Each team member should be responsible for their part of the research. This research should be compiled into the team’s PowerPoint presentation, and be prepared to present on the day assigned. All team members must be in attendance the day of the presentation. Each team will receive a single grade for the presentation. This presentation will be made to the class and should take no more than 20 minutes, which will then be followed by Q/A up to an additional 15 minutes depending on the quality of discussion. Each student should be dressed in business professional attire, not casual dress. Take this presentation seriously as if it was being presented to government officials or your boss in a company. Dress for success! Presentation slides should also use 28 or higher text font size. Here are the main questions by which you should organize the presentation:

- What is the general problem of your research topic? What are the main challenges? It is vital that you start with this main research question and discussion of the topic to set the tone. Do not start with background information and history; you need to get to the point and clearly communicate to your audience the most important take-away points. History is important here to the extent that it affects current relations and problems of interest to the UNSC. You should focus on what is important to discuss to understand the situation, and not fixate/include of facts and figures that do not prove a point of argument in the analytical part of the presentation. Simply starting your presentations and papers with history or encyclopedic information is a lazy way to start a paper and a bad habit left over from middle school. In the real world you have limited time to make an argument, and you need to get to the main point. If all you do is talk about encyclopedic information and history outside of relevant argument, then you do not have a point to make.

- Explain the important players relevant to your topic, such as countries or other non-state actors. How do the players play a role and are affected by the situation? Be as objective as possible explaining different perspectives about the situation and relevant debates. Explain the implications of your problem situation for the world community from the perspective of the United Nations. You need not actively research what the UN has reported on various issues in the past, but that may be useful. We are using the vantage point of the UN as an objective third-party so as to not assume the latent viewpoint of any one state in the world.

- What actions and policy suggestions would your team advance? The first part of the presentation and paper involves coming to a contextual understanding of the problem, whereas the second part is an analytical discussion about what/can be done about the situation. What are the implications of policy suggestions? Who stands to gain or lose? Why are your policy recommendations logical and rational? Here you are advancing an argument that you need to defend.
Step 3: Each team member will turn in their own paper, based on the deadline provided by the instructor. The basis of this paper is to show that you can individually communicate the content that was in their team presentation in paper form. You may of course share the research references and aspects of the presentation with each other for your papers, but your papers cannot be written together – they must each be individually written without sharing of entire sentences or paragraphs. This is also an opportunity for students to try to improve on the research if they think that is necessary. The teams will be created randomly, and some teams may be stronger or weaker than others. In the end, each student is responsible for their own paper, which also allows one to out-perform their team mates if necessary. Papers will be submitted through the Safe assign portal that will be provided in Blackboard for our course. The structure of the paper begins by first duplicating the structure of the presentation. If an individual student has their own policy suggestions that deviate from the group, then these should be presented with an alternative argument as to why so. The final section of the paper will include a discussion of how the team functioned and an evaluation of one’s team members. Please be candid. Did your team work well? Did team members pull their weight? What was learned or could have been improved if there was a chance to do this again? Additional paper guidelines on formatting and such will be provided in a related document.