Overview of the Assignment
This paper provides you with an opportunity to explore one particular question of interest, and the way in which authors from different perspectives have approached that question, as well as to begin to develop one’s own argument and expectations about the question of interest. In order to explore a particular subject connected to international political economy in more depth, students will then write a brief critical review of the academic literature on that subject. This review should be an integrated review of five or six major and related works, possibly including relevant articles, book chapters from different volumes, or books. There should be some evidence of the existence of a major debate within the literature in your review – that is, at least one of the pieces reviewed should offer a different explanation of the phenomenon of interest than the others. Students will choose their topic in consultation with the instructor.

STEP 1: Literature Review Proposal
A literature review proposal must be submitted BY EMAIL (mkrain@wooster.edu) for approval by the instructor no later than 5pm on February 27th. This proposal should provide a full citation for the books, book chapters or academic articles, and a brief description of each scholarly work and how it relates to your question. Failure to turn in a proposal on time will lead to an automatic one-letter grade deduction from the final paper.

STEP 2: Literature Review Paper
The literature review paper itself is due on April 1st. It should be a minimum of 7 pages in length (not counting bibliography). Papers should address the nature of the problem/puzzle, discuss and evaluate the theoretical arguments involved, and develop an argument and a testable hypothesis of one’s own. An effective literature review motivates your research question by synthesizing what we know about the question (synthesis), pointing out where previous research lacks (evaluation), and also conveying to readers the question’s significance and importance (the “so what” question!). It also naturally leads into a clear theoretical argument or informed perspective of one’s own, from which one can derive a clear expectation or hypothesis about how the relationship or phenomenon of interest plays out empirically. Below I elaborate on the different elements of this type of paper:

Introduction
This brief 1-2 page section is the "hook" to get the reader interested in the rest of your paper. What is your larger research question? Try to answer the inevitable "so what?" question. Make your reader understand why they should care about the question that you are examining. Conclude this section with an "organizational preview". This is not a mystery novel, so let us know what to expect.

Review of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature
Write an 5-6 page literature review of a variety of sources closely related to your research question. Be sure to tell the reader what other people have argued (theoretical foundations) and found (empirical results) regarding your topic. Examine what scholars have concluded in literature related
to your question, noting areas of agreement and disagreement in each section. Don’t just report, though – read and write critically. Let the reader know what the literature does well, and where research falls short. Tell us what’s not in the literature and/or how a different approach might fill this gap, or build off of, or add to, what we already know.

**Evaluation and Expectations**

Your literature review should naturally flow into a discussion of the implications of this body of literature, elaborated upon in approximately 1-2 pages. Does this literature make a contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon or process under examination? What are the implications of this literature for future research in this area? Building out of your critique, in your opinion what should further literature in this subject area address in order to build our understanding in this area?

Your review should accomplish the following:

- Clearly *define* your research question & motivate it (possibly accomplished here or in the introduction)
- *Create* synthesis across sources/authors (i.e., thematic organization around ideas, variables, methods, etc.)
- *Summarize* the state of the literature in terms of consensus, disagreement, gaps or omissions
- *Evaluate* the overall state of knowledge
- *Discuss* any flaws in existing research (e.g., critique current literature)
- *Highlight* the importance of conclusions your approach might draw
- *Cite* all sources with in-text citations using APSA style (and include them at the end of your paper in your bibliography, also following APSA style guidelines).

**REMEMBER:** *Do not make this a "book review/article review" section.* Think in terms of clustering your writing by ideas, not by authors. Your task is to tell the reader what we know and don’t know about the subject, to organize that knowledge for the reader, and evaluate what we know.

**Required Specifications**

Approximately 7-10 pages in length; double-spaced; 12 point font; 1” margins; follow APSA style using in-text citations and for bibliographic entries; MUST be proofread.

**REMINDER:** *plagiarism or any other type of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will result in automatic failure for the course!"*
What is a Literature Review & Theory Paper?
• identifies dimensions of current work in your field/provides comprehensive, up to date review of topic
• seeks to describe, summarize, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the theories used to understand the phenomenon of interest, and the empirical research done on that question or topic.
• is nearly always a standard chapter (or multiple chapters) of an Independent Study thesis.
• places your project into the context of established work in the field.

Why write a Literature Review & Theory Paper?
• To increase your breadth of knowledge and understanding in your subject area
• To assess the current state of research in your field and identify trends
• To identify seminal works and authors in your area
• To identify possible gaps in the literature or the research or theories
• To demonstrate your command and understanding of your field and your phenomena
• To provide the background to and justification for the research undertaken
• To give your research a conceptual framework

How do I start?
• Define your topic or research question.
• Keep in mind that during and after your review of the literature, you will very likely be forced to redefine and revise your original topic and research questions.
• Become familiar with the resources available at your library:
  – Become familiar with reference material in your field.
  – Learn how to effectively perform a search in a research database to retrieve resources.
  – Spend time with a reference librarian learning to use a research database, building effective search strategies, request materials and other time savers.
• Gather resources and organize them.
• Evaluate the information you gather:
  – When possible, read the abstracts before requesting or thoroughly reading through materials. Abstracts may tell you enough to make a decision on a document’s value and relevance.
  – Use critical thinking skills to evaluate an academic article’s or a book’s objectives, accuracy, argument, and methodology.
  – Understand that you will likely collect a lot more information than you will actually include in the review; concentrate on relevancy and quality over quantity.

Tips
1. Survey multiple sources! A variety of authors in a range of studies have examined these questions. If not, similar questions have been addressed, and they might be able to provide insight into your question.
2. Don’t summarize articles or books – discuss relevant arguments or findings.
3. Use topic or section headings to help organize your ideas or the ideas of others.
4. Be organized, set deadlines and try to meet them.
5. Give yourself time to read the material.
6. Cite authors appropriately, using the APSA Style Manual as your guide.
7. Here are some links that might help you locate the articles for review:
   • OhioLink Electronic Journal Center: http://journals.ohiolink.edu/
   • J-Stor: http://www.jstor.org/
   • Summon: http://www.wooster.edu/academics/libraries/
   • Google Scholar: http://scholar.google.com/