

# Group Project Rubric

Please refer to this rubric when completing your *Group Project*. It outlines the expectations, due dates, grading, and other information that you will need to successfully complete the project.

## Purpose of the Assignment

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Writing, presentation, and cooperative work skills are important aspects of nearly every job today. This project is designed to help students further hone, or develop these skills while also providing students with the opportunity to engage in creating their own research project in a group setting.

## Skills

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This project will help you to develop several skills:

1. **Writing Concisely** - You are expected to explain the complex issues of a topic of your group's choosing in no more than a few pages, which will help you to write concisely for a broad audience.
2. **Critical Thinking** - You are expected to evaluate concepts that do not always have a single "correct" answer, and you will evaluate claims and concepts from our readings.
3. **Presentation Skills** - You are expected to explain and present on a salient political topic of your group's choice to your peers in a clear and concise manner.
4. **Group/Team-Building Skills** - You will work your peers to create, develop, and present deliverables (presentation and paper) in a collaborative environment.

## Due Dates

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This assignment is composed of two (2) parts. The group presentations will be due during either weeks 12, 13, or 14 of the course (see below and course syllabus) and the paper will be due on Friday, April 27th at 11:59 P.M.

## Reference Materials

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Our text is a good resource for source material. The text, however, should not be your primary source, or even an important one. Instead, I advise using it as a jumping off point to find ideas, or other resources that may be of assistance in the completion of your project. Once your group has settled on a general topic I advise student to use the following tools to find the appropriate peer-reviewed and scholarly sources: Google Scholar, the UNLV Library scholarly databases, or texts from the UNLV Library, or other libraries. You should refer to the skills developed during our **library resources day** when evaluating appropriate new sources for your project. You may (should) also come to me during my office hours should you want (need) further help.

## Directions

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### Components of the Group Project (250 Points Total):

Your group project will consist of two parts: the **group presentation** and the **paper**. Once you select your topic, both your **Group Presentation** and **Group Paper** should assess your topic along the four (4) themes of our course (political culture and(or) history; institutions; politics (elections/parties/media); and policy).

### I. Group Presentation (100 Points):

Each group presentation should be a minimum of 16 minutes and no longer than 25 minutes in duration. After the presentation there will be a 15 minute period in which the group may be asked questions by the class, or the professor. Group members will be expected to have adequate responses to these questions as long as they are related to their topic. Every student must present during the group presentation (and in an equal manner - substantively and in terms of time). Students are expected to dress appropriately and in a professional manner (sorry, wrinkled t-shirts and athletic attire will be penalized). The group, and each student in the group, will be graded in terms of content, presentation style, length of presentation, and appearance (see rubric). Each student will be assessed on their individual effort and as a group.

Presentation formats and materials are largely left open to the preferences of the group. Students may use power point slides and other technologies. Brief video or audio clips (30 seconds or less), pictures, diagrams, documents, and other materials may be used during the presentation to highlight salient concepts or points. These resources, however, should not be the main portion of the presentation. For instance, if Student A is responsible for presenting five minutes of material and Student A decides to show a three minute video and have the class listen to a 2 minute audio recording and then walk off the stage they will suffer a great penalty to their grade. You want to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise, the work of others should only be used to accentuate your key points and findings.

**Group Presentation Dates:** Group presentations will be conducted during weeks 12, 13, and 14 of the course as outlined in the course syllabus. Group presentation dates will be assigned randomly, unless a group notifies the instructor beforehand that they would prefer a certain date to present their project. Requested presentation dates will be given on a first come first serve basis. It should be noted, however, that I will likely be more lenient in my grading of groups that present earlier in the schedule, rather than those that present later and have had more time to hone their presentation.

## II. Group Paper (150 Points):

The group paper will summarize the key findings of the group presentation and will be due by the end of Week 15 (Friday @ 11:59PM). Each group member is expected to contribute an equal share to the paper. The section written by each student should be identified as such and roughly equal in terms of length and substance as those sections of the other students and sections of the group paper. The paper should be at least ten pages and no longer than 15 pages in length, 12-point font, Times New Roman, with one-inch margins. Cover pages, appendices, and reference pages do not count toward the paper page minimum or maximum. Note: hitting the minimum is not a guarantee of a good paper, in fact it is more likely a sign of a poor paper that lacks depth and substance.

The paper should have a minimum five (5) relatively current news sources and five (5) scholarly or peer-reviewed sources, i.e., a peer-reviewed journal article or university press book (a total of at least 10 sources in all). Each section of the paper therefore should have at least two sources. These sources must be cited in the paper and included in a reference page at the end of the paper (this page does not count toward the 10 page minimum).

### Getting Started with Your Group Project:

This is a group project. All students have been randomly assigned to their groups. You may find your group members on WebCampus under the groups navigation link on the left (default). Here you should notice that you can create many tools for your group in order to facilitate the completion of your project and to maintain group communication (discussion boards, etc.). It is a good idea to use these tools as they can be accessed by all group members at their convenience. I will also be able to access them to verify your participation in the group project.

Your first step is to acquaint yourselves with your fellow group members. I suggest introducing yourself and then listing the days and times that you would be available to consult with your group for this project. Next, begin brainstorming about your project idea(s). For this assignment you are asked to assess an institution, policy (issue), or other political phenomena of interest to your group. Being as specific as possible will make your work easier so spend some time on this. For topic suggestions reflect on the readings that we have done so far, and look at the topics in the book. There are plenty of topics to be found here. If you already have some issues that you are passionate about, go ahead and see if your group can agree on it. Once a topic has been selected someone from the group should email me your proposal, or come to office hours to meet with me to discuss the topic.

### Narrowing Down Your Topic: An Example:

When beginning a research project it is important to make it as narrow as possible for many reasons. First, you do not want to overburden yourself (or group). In general, the more broad your topic the more onerous it will be to complete. Second, and related to the first, a sleeker more focused topic will generally be easier to accomplish in terms of the amount of work required. Finally, a more refined topic will generally lead to a better product output (a better read and presentation for your consumer, and a better outcome for you, your grades). In order to help students get a sense of how this process of narrowing a topic could look, I will briefly sketch this

out below with an example.

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**Example:** My group has decided after consulting with each other that foreign policy is what most interests us. We each skipped ahead in the readings, reviewed that chapter, and then began thinking about something more specific. We decide that North Korea's nuclear program is both timely and interesting. We then think of how we would present on this issue along the four themes identified above.

1. What is the history between the U.S. and North Korea as it relates to nuclear proliferation? How does the political culture in both of these countries affect this issue?
2. What are the primary actors, or institutions that deal with this issue? Certainly the President, and the Secretaries of Defense and State play a large role. What about Congress? The United Nations? The Department of Defense?
3. How has this issue affected political parties, elections, or influenced the media (or how does the media influence perception of the policy)?
4. What U.S. policies concerning this issue are currently in place? Are there new proposals? New doctrines, if so what are they?

There could easily be many more items than those that I have listed above on this subject. As it is, the few items listed above could easily be overwhelming. We now need to simplify this and make our topic more narrow and focused. Looking at the above ideas, we decide to do the following:

- We decide to only look at the historical legacy (the founding) of President Obama's nuclear policy concerning North Korea.
- Since this is about presidential action, we focus only on the executive branch and the presidency directly. The other actors and institutions above are not our main focus and are only examined now as they may relate to President Obama's policy. Building on part one, this section will look at the institution and powers of the presidency and the executive branch as it relates to nuclear proliferation policy and North Korea by President Obama.
- We have recently had an election, one in which a new party controls the executive branch. As a result, the group is interested in how this issue was used in the most recent presidential election. This section therefore focuses on how the issue of North Korean nuclear proliferation was viewed by the media in the 2016 presidential election.
- Due to the presidential election outcome a new president controls the executive branch. Our group is therefore interested in how President Trump's policies, or planned policies concerning North Korea, match up with those of President Obama?
- The conclusion ties everything together.

The above should give you a sense of how to narrow your own topics. The more work you put into this early stage the easier your group's efforts will be later. If you do not go through this process you will end up doing a great deal more work and may have a project that gets beyond you.

## Grading

This **Group Project** is worth (250) points, or (25%) percent of your course grade. In order to earn points for this assignment each student must: (a) contribute to their group's presentation, and (b) contribute to their group's paper as outlined above.

### Group Presentation Grading Rubric (100 Points):

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Content of Presentation (50 points)</b>	Addresses requirements of the assignment (50 points)	Addresses some requirements of the assignment (40 points)	Does not address any requirements of the assignment (20 points)
<b>Question Responses (15 points)</b>	Responses were thorough authoritative and detailed (15 points)	Responses were somewhat unclear, lacked details or support (12 points)	Responses were brief, vague, unsupported, or poorly thought out (8 points)
<b>Attire and Delivery (15 points)</b>	Student is dressed professionally and delivers a strong presentation delivery (15 points)	Presentation lacks preparation and(or) proper attire (12 points)	Presentation is performed poorly, student is wearing inappropriate attire (8 points)
<b>Citations and Sources (10 points)</b>	Citations are included and well organized (10 points)	Citations are missing and unorganized (7 points)	No citations included (0 points)
<b>Length of Presentation (10 points)</b>	Meets the required length (10 points)	Remains close to the required minimum/maximum length (7 point)	Significantly over or under the required post length (5 points)

### Group Paper Grading Rubric (150 Points):

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Content of Paper (95 points)</b>	Addresses requirements of the assignment (95 points)	Addresses some requirements of the assignment (75 points)	Does not address any requirements of the assignment (45 points)
<b>Grammar, Syntax, Spelling (25 points)</b>	Paper is free from grammar, spelling, and syntax errors (25 points)	Paper contains several grammar, spelling, and/or syntax errors (20 points)	Paper is full of grammar, spelling, and/or syntax errors (10 points)
<b>Citations and Sources (15 points)</b>	Citations are included and well organized (15 points)	Citations are missing and unorganized (12 points)	No citations included (0 points)
<b>Length of Paper (15 points)</b>	Meets the required length (15 points)	Remains close to the required minimum/maximum length (12 point)	Significantly over or under the required post length (8 points)

## Late Submissions

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Late submissions will not be accepted unless students are able to provide a reason and documentation in line with the course **Makeup Policy** outlined in the syllabus. In all other cases a late assignment earns a score of zero.

## How to Submit Your Assignment

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### To submit your paper:

1. Log in to WebCampus (<https://webcampus.unlv.edu>)
2. Click the "Paper Submissions" link in the menu
3. Submit your paper to the Turnitin link called "Group Project Paper"
4. Make sure you receive a confirmation message stating that you submitted your paper successfully. You should also make sure that you receive an email from turnitin confirming your submission. If you do not receive an email it means that you did not properly submit your paper.