INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TERM PAPER PROJECT

General Instructions: Research question

Research is done to answer questions, not to repeat information available elsewhere. I am interested in reading your papers because I am interested in seeing how you analyze your question and your ability to derive individual answers from your research. I am already familiar with the political systems of the countries that you will research and can easily find more information on them from books available in the library.

Therefore, the most important part of your project is to find a question that you find interesting and then to do sufficient initial research to make sure that there is enough information on it to write a research paper.

As you can see from the following examples, your question must include lessons for Turkey.

Examples of questions:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of presidential vs. parliamentary systems? Should Turkey adopt the presidential system?
2. How does economic development affect political development and democracy? Can we expect Turkey’s democracy to improve alongside its economic development?
3. What is the relationship between party systems and political cleavages? Is Turkey’s party system compatible with its major political cleavages?
4. How do civil-military relations affect democracy in a country? Which lessons can be derived for Turkey?
5. How did different countries resolve the thorny question of religion’s public role, and which ones fared better? Which lessons can be derived for Turkey?
6. Which political systems are better able to cope with ethnic cleavages? Which lessons can be derived for Turkey?
7. How does a country’s position in the international system affect its domestic politics, and vice versa? How does information on Turkey’s international position improve our understanding of its domestic politics?
8. How does political culture affect a country’s political system? In which ways does Turkish political culture affect its political system?

These are general questions. You can get more specific if you want to.
Comparison

Describe the problem underlying your question and develop a hypothesis: What do you expect is the answer to your question? Why?

Choose two countries that can help you to test your hypothesis. These two countries should exclude Turkey and the countries included in the syllabus.

Compare and contrast the two countries you have chosen in order to analyze your question.

Example:

• Take the question (1) about the presidential and parliamentary systems, above.
• Develop a hypothesis.
• Pick two countries that are as similar to each other as possible, except that one has the presidential system and the other has the parliamentary system.
• Compare and contrast the political systems and the problems of the two countries in order to test your initial hypothesis.

Conclusions

Discuss whether your comparisons suggested that your hypothesis is likely to be true or false. Then, discuss what lessons are derived for Turkey from your analysis.

Suggested Format

I. INTRODUCTION (about 1-2 pages):

Clearly state your research question. Explain why you think your question is important. Explain which countries you chose to research and why. Based on what you know on the comparative method, explain why your choice of countries is relevant to your research question: how will they help you to answer your question?

II. MAIN PART OF THE PAPER (about 5-7 pages)

Compare and contrast the two countries in terms of your question. For example, if your question is presidential vs parliamentary democracy, discuss how the systems in both countries resemble and differ from each other, which historical factors led the two countries to choose their systems, and which past and current problems they face.

III. CONCLUSIONS (about 3-4 pages)

Answer your question based on your research. Explain what you learned from your comparisons and derive lessons for Turkey.