

## Calvert Award Reflective Essay, Emerging Scholar Category

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The thought of formulating a policy briefing regarding the unfolding conflict between Russia and Ukraine led me to realize the confluence of opportunities I had to manage. I knew the situation's severity meant that a vast amount of content would be constantly updating itself, with various categories from news outlets, scholarly articles and even classical texts. The opportunity of an assignment focusing upon a situation persisting even during the time of this reflection led me to collect a variety of sources, but still, the strenuous side of the task was to successfully distinguish and align credible sources from those that were not.

I formulated a research process that consisted of me first analyzing my gathered sources to verify they were indeed non-partisan. I also purposely sought various articles that would go against my own perspectives, as I believed finding sources which offered contrasting suggestions than mine would eventually help me grasp a fair scope of the situation.

I often felt distant from the library during my freshman year at UNLV since I constantly worried that my visits and questions could possibly serve as an obstruction or be considered unimportant. However, after deciding to finally schedule an appointment with UNLV Scholarly Communications Librarian Christina Miskey, I received various levels of kindhearted assistance, which not only allowed me to expand the potential impact my policy briefing would have on the international scale, but I also felt an enhanced level of comfort and reliance towards the UNLV Library. Throughout my research process, I furthered my understanding of how realist and liberal thought in international relations theory explained the events unfolding in Ukraine and what explanations they might provide for causal effects within Ukraine.

I came across the UNLV URST 101 library guide created by librarian Suzie Skarl, which provided over 50 resources. One of the shortcomings faced within my research process was not finding enough content explaining how the United States would react. Since an aspect of my policy briefing was to explain what the United States might focus upon regarding the Russia and Ukraine crisis, I used the advanced search strategies found on the UNLV Library's website to browse country-specific resources. Using keywords in the advanced search options led me to peer-reviewed research and, eventually, the Operational Data Portal which allowed me to obtain data to compile to show the flow of migration from Ukraine in the current year.

Using my keyword search, I also discovered an entire book dedicated to American National Security Policy. This book deepened my knowledge and allowed me to analyze how each paradigm might plan to respond towards Ukraine's current conflict. The pinnacle moment within my research process was coming to the revelation that although the realist theory would advise self interested actions (such as worrying about the stability of their state) and the liberal theory would emphasize cooperation and reaching a consensus with foreign states, when it comes to tensions in Ukraine, there seems to occur this phenomena where the theories switch sides in this debate. I noticed that a realist theory suggested that Russia and NATO could form a consensus, whereas the liberal perspective would actually encourage a military-based strategy to spread national interests, or what Scholar Michael Boyle labels as illiberal liberalism. I was shocked at how the actions of these paradigms could completely flip from their historical intentions. Still, I also learned from my research just how quickly states are willing to go against their democratic principles when faced with a sudden international crisis.

The task of formulating a policy brief of no more than five pages regarding an ongoing conflict was intense. The purpose of the assignment, a policy brief about how theory could be

applied in Ukraine, was to understand what it would be like to serve as an intern to a politician. I practiced real job skills and conducted professional-level research within this assignment. The library's resources proved invaluable to the research process I utilized throughout my policy briefing, and I will continue to carry the advanced search methodologies, care with the meticulous nature of a work cited page, and direct use of data-sets throughout my academic throughout my career. As I continue my journey here at UNLV as a political science major, I hope to encounter more public policy content within the U.S. while continuing to utilize resources from the UNLV library. I hope one day my work will be able to influence legislative decisions and educate those in political power.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.