Of course, there is no straightforward answer to the question “is unipolarity peaceful.” Although it is to be expected that analyses vary in content, arguments, historical examples, and the like, top-level papers should:

- **Draw heavily on the course’s required readings.** Among these readings, Wohlforth (1999) and Monteiro (2011–2012) are natural points of departure considering that they both deal specifically with (U.S.) unipolarity, while Monteiro’s article focuses exclusively on peace as the dependent variable. We do not, however, seek a pure, long description of these two (differing) sets of arguments. Solid papers should go well beyond this and contribute with an independently-crafted analysis of the effects of unipolarity. Thus it becomes natural to draw on a variety of other articles and books. Cyclic theories of war and peace are perhaps such a natural supplement (e.g., Gilpin, Modelski, Levy & Thompson); they typically deal with the process of hegemonic decline and rivalry, which can be violent. (Historical examples may be used to illustrate this.) Other possible types of literature and arguments to draw on include realism, and in particular its focus on balancing power (e.g., Morgenthau); Gaddis’s argument about the Cold War’s U.S. “empire by invitation”; and Mueller’s argument about the ordering role of the hegemon. *What we do not want in any event are papers that fail to take the course’s required readings seriously.*

- **Go beyond the required readings.** Try, to some extent, to engage the post-Cold War academic debate about (the effects of) unipolarity.

- **Take the empirics seriously.** The world we (and Wohlforth and Monteiro) are talking about is a world where the United States can (but must not necessarily) be considered the unipole. How has that world worked in terms of peace and war? In the post-Cold War period, there has been peace between major powers. Is that mainly or partly a consequence of unipolarity, or are other factors more important (e.g., Mandelbaum’s “obsolescence-of-major-power-war” argument)? What about other wars in the last 20-or-so years? Do they signal that unipolarity fail to promote peace, or do we have (counterfactual) reasons for believing that the number and gravity of wars would have been higher under a different distribution of power? Is the U.S. a force for peace or not? Good papers will provide some information about actual conflicts – or information about potential wars that never materialized, whether or not this was due to unipolarity.

- **Make explicit the distinction between short-term and long-term peacefulness (or lack thereof).** Hegemonic stability theory (à-la Gilpin) predicts general peace for as long as unipolarity lasts, but predicts a higher level of conflict when unipolarity starts eroding.

- **Resemble the form of academic papers.** We do not expect a fully-fledged term paper, but we do except the text to be fairly well-structured. Importantly, students must follow basic guidelines as regards referencing. Note also that...
papers should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words. Papers that are substantially shorter or longer than this will receive a grade deduction.