

## CEIP-Gaither Junior Fellows Program Essay Topics

**Program Topic Essay:** Up to 3 pages, double-spaced, on one of the following topics (see below); your name must be included as a header on each page.

The topic essay is **the most critical component** of your application. The essay is intended to test your skills in analysis, logic, and written expression. The essay is an analytical “thought piece”, not a research paper. It is like the professional op-ed pieces you might find in the *NYT*, *Economist*, *Washington Post*, *WSJ*, or other relevant quality policy or international affairs publication.

Footnotes are not required; if you absolutely feel the need to include footnotes/references, keep them to the minimum. What is important is that the essay be clearly articulated and well argued. Try to avoid parroting what can be easily found elsewhere. They want to hear *your thoughts*, not what is commonly thought.

To get a better sense of what CEIP is looking for, you may want to “do research” on the [CEIP website](#) for models of short essays written by CEIP fellows. Sample essays from applicants are provided on Lafayette’s website at <https://externalscholarships.lafayette.edu/scholarships/ceip-junior-fellow-program/>

Select a topic (A-K) related to your *primary research program* interests.

Please note: CEIP may ultimately select an applicant for a program outside of his/her designated primary interest or have the Jr Fellow assigned to more than one program.

Additionally, please note that applicants for any of the Asia programs who have skills in at least 2 of the 3 skill sets designated (i.e., Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and/or economics) will have an advantage over other applicants for the Asia programs (G, H, I below), regardless of topic essay/program essay selection.

**The Programs/Essay Topics: Select and respond to just one.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Endowment’s website (<http://carnegieendowment.org/>) for more information on each program/project listed below.

- A. *Democracy, Conflict, & Governance Program:*** As democracy in the United States and Europe is experiencing more serious problems, the question of the relationship between those problems and the issues facing democracy in the rest of the world is gaining attention. Are the problems that democracy is facing in the United States and Europe largely similar to or fundamentally different from those plaguing democracy in other regions such as Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East?
- B. *American Statecraft Program:*** America’s role in the world is changing, whether it likes it or not. What are the 3-5 most important factors that will shape the context in which America conducts its foreign policy in the next two decades? **(Background in history, international relations theory, or international economics is essential, along with an interest in military issues and US foreign policy process.)**
- C. *Nuclear Policy Program:*** Which state without nuclear weapons do you believe is most likely to acquire them?
- D. *Technology & International Affairs Program:*** **Respond to just ONE of the two following questions:** (1) What technology issue will have the greatest impact on international stability in the coming decade, and why? **OR** (2) What factors explain why the cybersecurity environment has continued to deteriorate in recent years? **(Strong writing skills (ability to write well and assimilate feedback in a timely manner), diverse research skills (e.g., ability to find and distill content from scholarly and gray literature, ability to use Excel to organize and analyze information), attention to detail, and ability to communicate effectively with a diverse team are essential.)**
- E. *Middle East Program:*** The Middle East region is going through a huge, agonizing and protracted transformation characterized by dwindling oil revenues, rising populations, failing governance structures and government services, rising extremism and sectarianism, and high youth unemployment. The current situation has enabled regional powers to intervene in each other’s affairs as well as non-state actors such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State to emerge and spread new toxic ideologies. What do you see as one of the most difficult threats facing the region today and the underlying drivers of turmoil? Discuss the impact this has had on two countries in the region and strategies that will help move these countries toward a better future. **(Strong reading fluency & the ability to perform academic as well as on-line research in Arabic essential; strong background in Middle East politics**

**and/or history is a huge plus.)**

- F. *International Security & Political Economy* [to work with the *International Security & South Asia Programs*]*South Asia Program*: Respond to just ONE of the two following questions: (1) What factors explain why, in many democracies, poor people continue to receive poor public services, despite accounting for a large share of the population? **OR** (2) Should the United States end its ambiguity over defending Taiwan? **(A strong mathematical background is a plus. Ideal candidates will have a strong academic background in international relations theory, political theory, or international political economy along with an interest in military issues.)****
- G. *Asia Program (China)***: Many observers argue that the long-standing US policy of engagement and hedging toward China has failed. As proof, they point to Beijing's failure to significantly liberalize politically, to open up its markets sufficiently to foreign competition, and to promote the norms that the United States and its democratic partners prefer in its approach to international order. Instead, these observers argue, China has only become more oppressive domestically, pursuing predatory economic policies overseas, failing to move on needed economic reforms at home, threatening its neighbors, establishing competitor international institutions, and trying to undermine the US and push it out of Asia. Has US policy failed, and what are the right yardsticks for assessing Chinese conduct in international relations? **(Mandarin Chinese reading skills required.)**
- H. *Asia Program (Japan)***: Japan is watching the emerging US-China strategic competition carefully, clearly supporting its ally on various fronts in order to balance against China and bolster its own standing as efficiently and effectively as possible. However, as US policy towards China becomes more aggressive (in terms of protectionist measures, stricter export controls, and trying to form coalitions to isolate China and its companies), Japan is placed in the uncomfortable position of trying to balance its own desire to pressure China and promote more open rules-based economic and diplomatic behavior on the one hand, while on the other hand wanting to maximize economic opportunity for Japanese firms with China and avoid being dragged into the middle of a more intense US-China competition. Provide your own brief assessment of what is at stake for Japan amid growing US-China friction and how you evaluate the steps it is taking to maximize Japan's national interest. What are the near-term prospects for Japan and for the US-Japan alliance? **(Japanese reading skills required.)**
- I. *Asia Program (Economics)***: China's economic rise has created tensions with the US. America is accusing China of unfair trade and foreign investment practices. But China sees its actions as necessary to become more technologically advanced to escape the middle income trap. What are merits of the respective arguments? **(Mandarin Chinese reading skills a huge plus; strong background in economics essential.)**
- J. *Russia & Eurasia Program***: The US-Russia relationship has plummeted to unprecedented post-Cold War lows. Can this downward trajectory be arrested? What are the key dangers in the current situation and how might the White House seek to prevent things from getting out of hand? **(Excellent Russian reading skills required.)**
- K. *Africa Program***: Narratives about Sub-Saharan Africa's future often oscillate between unrealistic optimism and blanket pessimism. Clearly the truth lies in a more nuanced middle. Compare and contrast the recent trajectories of two African countries—including both their economic and political dimensions—to help illuminate a nuanced picture of Africa's current direction. **(The program examines the economic, social, political, and external factors shaping Africa today, with the aim of helping regional and international policy actors strengthen their contributions to a prosperous and stable African future.)**