

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-L) related to your *primary research program* interests.

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

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

- A. Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program.** Choose any two countries in the world, from two different regions, including at least one from the Global South. Explain how political developments in those countries in the past five to ten years embody what you believe are some of the most important elements of the global democratic recession. Be sure to give some indication why you have chosen the countries you focus on.
- 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?
- C. Nuclear Policy Program.** Which state without nuclear weapons do you believe is most likely to acquire them?
- D. Technology and International Affairs Program (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** When you read or hear discussions about ‘risks of AI’ what questions do you have that you do not think are being answered well? **OR** What technology issue will have the greatest impact on international stability in the coming decade, and why? (*Strong writing & research skills 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 and the ability to perform academic as well as on-line research in Arabic is essential. A strong background in Middle East politics and/or history is a huge plus.*)
- F. International Security and Political Economy [to work with the International Security and South Asia Programs] (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** Many scholars argue that the world is experiencing a worrying period of democratic backsliding, while skeptical voices suggest that

backsliding concerns are overblown. With reference to existing data sources and democracy ratings, which position do you find more compelling and why? **OR** Should the United States end its ambiguity over defending Taiwan? *(Quantitative data analysis and GIS skills are required. A strong mathematical background is a plus. An academic background in international relations theory or international political economy along with an interest in military issues is essential.)*

- G. Asia Program.** To what extent are states in Asia “forced to choose” between the US and China? Consider political, economic, security, and other factors to substantiate your analysis. *(Mandarin Chinese language skills are essential. Proficiency in another Asian language is a plus.)*
- H. Russia and Eurasia Program.** The US-Russia relationship has plummeted to unprecedented post-Cold War lows amid the war in Ukraine. 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? *(Requires excellent Russian and/or Ukrainian reading skills.)*
- I. Africa Program.** The African continent is critical to the future of the global economy in this century. Africa has the world’s youngest and fastest growing population. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement now encompasses the world’s largest free trade area, by number of participating countries (54 signatories compared to the European Union’s 27). With the world’s largest number of mobile money accounts, digital innovations are providing new solutions to some legacy challenges on the continent, around financial inclusion for instance. And Africa’s abundant natural resources endowments, including minerals and metals as well as forests in the Congo basin, will be crucial to the global clean energy transition to combat climate change. Yet, the continent is increasingly becoming the epicenter of global poverty—with 33 of the 45 countries designated by the United Nations as “least developed” situated in Africa. Nearly two dozen countries are at risk of debt distress and around 600 million people lack access to affordable and reliable electricity. What domestic/or global factors will shape the specific role that African countries play in the global economy? Illustrate your points with examples from two African countries.
- J. Global Order and Institutions Program.** The UN Secretary-General has depicted the world as “gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction.” What accounts for the failures of many multilateral institutions, and what—if anything—can be done to improve international cooperation in addressing major global challenges?
- K. Sustainability, Climate and Geopolitics Program.** Imagine it is the year 2040 and you are working for a major international organization. Your teenage niece, who is about to begin studying for a bachelor’s degree in Climate & Geopolitics, asks you to summarize how the climate crisis and the responses to it have transformed international affairs since you were a student. In the interest of time, she asks you to focus on 2-3 of the most important developments. What do you tell her? *(Basic data skills, such as helping create graphs or tables for Carnegie publications, are a plus. Applicants should have completed coursework related to sustainability and climate issues. A foreign language or regional expertise is a plus—the program seeks to build an international perspective into US debates on climate change.)*
- L. Europe Program (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** Should Europeans attempt to build a “European Pillar” in NATO? What could this look like? **OR** What challenges do Europeans face when considering their response to China’s support for Russia in Ukraine? *(Fluency and the ability to perform research in a European language other than English are a plus. A background knowledge on European politics is essential.)*