

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Dr. Kai Hebel
Title of clinic:	Inside the 'Engine Room' of World Politics: An Archival-Based Study of Multilateral Diplomacy
Number of students:	1-3
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	World Politics
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	No academic prerequisites are required, but a genuine interest in diplomacy or modern history is essential; the same goes for superb Dutch reading skills.

Research context

The task of this research clinic is to assist in researching Dutch diplomacy during one of the most important multilateral processes of the 20th century: the negotiations of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which led to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. This process reduced Cold War tension, strengthened human rights norms, and created durable communication networks across the Iron Curtain, thereby paving the way for the peaceful ending of the division of Europe. The crowning achievement of East-West détente, the Final Act was the product of three years of tense bargaining between thirty-five states. All the states of Europe and the two superpowers negotiated core aspects of international relations, including the borders and division of the continent, its normative structure, the role of the Cold War alliances, and the future of European integration. In view of its inclusive membership, monumental agenda, and momentous legacy, the CSCE has been likened to epochal diplomatic milestones, such as the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the Versailles Peace Conference (1919). Presently, the Helsinki process is hailed as a template for fostering great power concerts in an increasingly multipolar age and for promoting reconciliation in volatile regions such as the Middle East.

Students' tasks and activities

Please specify the tasks and activities, timeline, the learning aims and how they are assessed, i.e. what the deliverables will be.

- Students will conduct research in the Dutch National Archives, which are located next doors to LUC. Specifically, they will read, analyze, and summarize formerly classified documents from the Dutch Foreign Ministry. These documents contain instructions from the Foreign Minister to the Dutch delegation to the CSCE and reports of the delegation in which the diplomats document their work. These documents provide a fascinating, unfiltered look into diplomacy and multilateral negotiations – the 'engine room' of world politics (Vincent Pouliot).
- Learning aims include: the ability to trace and analyze how diplomacy is conducted in practice and how foreign policy is made and implemented; historical knowledge about a key process in modern European and Cold War history; historical research skills, especially the identification and analysis of primary sources in the form of foreign policy documents.
- Estimated timeline: 2 months of archival research (Sep-Nov), 1 month of analysis and writing (Nov-Dec). The deliverable will be an extended essay based on the primary sources from the archives.