The primary purpose of the first quarter of POL/IRE194H is to develop your research proposal. We will discuss the specific requirements and how to complete them in class. For now, here is a useful description of a research proposal.

Your proposal should frame the question(s) your [project] will answer and explain how you propose to answer them. It also should persuade readers that your questions are important, and your plan of action is practical. A proposal should answer five questions:

1. What question or questions do you address?

2. Why does this question arise? (From what scholarly debates or real-world events?) Why does it matter? Say a few words about the origins and significance of your project.

3. What previous literature has been written on the question? Describe the ‘state of the art’ on the subject. Explain and distinguish majority and minority views and describe how controversies have evolved.

4. What working hypotheses will you explore and what is the theoretical rationale for them? You can’t be sure of your answer until you complete your research, but readers want to know what hunches you plan to investigate.

5. How will you reach your answers? Write about the methodology and data you will use and your reasons for using them.