

PS 2300: AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Instructor: Maryum Alam

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Office Hours: By appointment (email me)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines American Foreign Policy – its history, sources, content, and consequences. This class explores America’s role in world politics, aiming to teach students about the main theoretical perspectives in international relations, and connecting them to the dynamics of American Foreign Policy in the contemporary era. Because understanding policy choices always requires considering long-term consequences, we’ll explore these questions by looking at both historical US foreign policy, and at the most pressing contemporary challenges facing the United States today. What would happen if the United States stopped trying to play such a big role in world politics? Is China rising, and what does this mean for the United States? Is the US engaged in a new “Cold War” with Russia? Do nuclear weapons make us safer? Should the United States keep alliance commitments? What is the role of public opinion on foreign policy? How can we understand Donald Trump and Joe Biden’s foreign policy agendas? Why was Biden the one to withdraw from Afghanistan? What caused the war in Ukraine, and what are the implications of this conflict for American foreign policy makers? This course will help you critically answer these questions through a theoretical lens.

Although this is not a class about the history of American foreign relations, we will be discussing major historical events in US foreign policy. Instead of learning all the details about history, I want you instead to focus on developing your critical thinking skills.

While this course is focused on the topic of US foreign policy, it is really intended to be a skills course. It is designed to teach you how to engage with difficult policy issues, to tell a good argument from an argument that merely sounds good, and to reflect on the faults in your own political reasoning. But it will ask you to think in ways you are probably not used to (about the world, and about your own thought process). We will spend a considerable amount of time doing class discussion and I will ask you to formulate your own thoughts in a coherent manner in all assignments. These critical thinking skills will be so incredibly useful to you as you complete your classes in college, but I hope much beyond that as well, as informed and thoughtful citizens.

COURSE GOALS

Students will gain in-depth knowledge of the scholarly literature on foreign policy and international politics generally, with a strong emphasis on American foreign policy.

- Developing an understanding of how and why politicians, policy experts, and the general public learned what they did from various episodes of foreign policy history, and how these lessons shaped future decisions.

- Building the capacity to use counterfactual reasoning to examine both history and policy. We will focus on the causal logic behind key decisions and outcomes in foreign policy history and learn how to consider difficult questions of policy in the context of the real world – a context that is often lost in the “sound bites” that tend to dominate most discussions.
- Breaking down the narratives and assumptions we (and others) bring into discussions of foreign policy. This is an inherently personal exercise: You will need to explore what narratives you have about the way the world works and examine the tendencies in evaluation and judgement that you are most prone to. Success in this course is therefore not just about mastery of the material, but also introspection.

TECHNOLOGY

I will post lecture slides after every class meeting on our course Carmen website.

UNIVERSITY GEN-ED GOALS

GEC/GENED category: Social Science: Organizations and Politics

Goal: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

GEC/GENED category: Diversity -- Global Studies

Goal: Students understand the systematic study of human behavior; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics.
2. Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
3. Students comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities, or who are facing significant barriers to fulfill course requirements should inform the instructor at the **beginning of the course** or at the **outset of the concern**.

Let me be clear here: **I want you to succeed in this course.** If you're struggling with something – a health issue, job difficulties, family responsibilities, etc. – let me know, and I will make every effort to work something out with you.

Notably, I wish to reaffirm that *mental health issues are every bit as legitimate as physical health issues*. I encourage anyone dealing with depression, anxiety, or other mental health challenges to make use of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting <http://ccs.osu.edu> or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Note that academic misconduct not only includes acts of plagiarism and cheating, but also attempts to intimidate, put down, or in other ways distract, insult, or threaten students before, during, and after class discussions. If students engage in any of these acts, they may be asked to leave the class for the day.

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the University's academic regulations. **You may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.**

GRADED MATERIALS

This class will be graded as follows. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due on Carmen on the day posted by class time.

5% SYLLABUS QUIZ

- Carmen quiz that will ensure you have thoroughly read and understood the guidelines and expectations set forth in the syllabus.

20% CLASS PARTICIPATION

- In class participation for synchronous students
- Carmen discussion posts for asynchronous students

40% RESPONSE PAPERS

You will be asked to produce response papers. These papers are intended to help you write and communicate your thoughts: “writing is thinking.” I ask you to watch documentaries, especially during the class times we do not meet. The response papers are a space for you to reflect on the documentary, if you found anything interesting, if you like or dislike them, and critically examine why they are or are not useful to understand American foreign policy issues. I also want you to connect the documentary to the readings we have already done to explain how theories of IR or foreign policy explain problem(s) or issues posed by the documentary. You must connect your response to the documentary to 2 or more readings and explain their relevance to understanding an important issue for American foreign policy.

Response papers should be 3-5 pages in length, double spaced.

- Four response papers, at 10% each
 - o Response paper 1 (10%)
 - o Response paper 2 (10%)
 - o Response paper 3 (10%)
 - o Response paper 4 (10%)

10% Final project proposal

- 2–3-page double spaced proposal that will give me a sense of what you will do for the final project, whether it is a creative project or a traditional research paper.
- Students that want to choose the creative or traditional final project route, please have your proposal in to me by the indicated deadline.

25% Final Project

More instructions on the final project will follow.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments **will not** be accepted. Assignments not received by the assigned due date will receive a 0% grade. Unless there is an emergency or other issue that you have communicated to me, I will not grant extensions or incompletes in the class.

READINGS AND CLASS SCHEDULE

No textbooks are required for this class. All readings will be posted on Carmen.

I reserve the right to modify or adjust readings. If I do so, I will inform you prior to those class meetings.

Introduction to the class, syllabus review (no required readings)

Part I: IR Theory and American Grand Strategy

Introduction to IR Theory

1. Snyder, Jack. "One world, rival theories." *Foreign policy* (2004): 52-62.
2. Mearsheimer, John. "The false promise of international institutions." *International Security* (1994): 5-49.
3. Keohane, Robert O., and Lisa L. Martin. "The promise of institutionalist theory." *International security* 20.1 (1995): 39-51.
4. Wendt, Alexander. "Constructing international politics." *International security* 20.1 (1995): 71-81.
5. Zenko, Micah, and Michael A. Cohen. "Clear and Present Safety: The United States Is More Secure Than Washington Thinks." *Foreign Affairs* (2012): 79-93

Syllabus Quiz due

Continuity and Change in US Foreign Policy

1. Mead, Walter Russell. *Special providence: American foreign policy and how it changed the world*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 3-29, 79-98
2. Wright, Thomas. "The Folly of Retrenchment: Why American Can't Withdraw from the World." *Foreign Affairs*. 99 (2020): 10-18.
3. Posen, Barry R. *Restraint: A new foundation for US grand strategy*. Cornell University Press, 2014. pp. 24-68
4. Brands, Hal. "The Emerging Biden Doctrine." *Foreign Affairs* 29 (2021).

Response Paper #1 Due

Part II: Sources of American foreign policy

Leaders and Foreign Policy Decision-making

1. Hermann, Margaret G. "How decision units shape foreign policy: A theoretical framework." *International Studies Review* 3.2 (2001): 47-81.
2. Saunders, Elizabeth N. "Transformative choices: Leaders and the origins of intervention strategy." *International Security* 34.2 (2009): 119-161.

3. Horowitz, Michael C. "Leaders, Leadership, and International Security." *The Oxford Handbook of International Security* (2018): 246.

Response Paper #2 Due on June 23.

Bureaucratic Politics and Interest Groups

1. Marsh, Kevin. "Obama's surge: a bureaucratic politics analysis of the decision to order a troop surge in the Afghanistan war." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.3 (2014): 265-288.
2. Avant, Deborah D. "Are the reluctant warriors out of control? Why the US military is averse to responding to post-cold war low-level threats." *Security Studies* 6.2 (1996): 51-90.
3. Rovner, Joshua. *Fixing the facts: national security and the politics of intelligence*. Cornell University Press, 2011. pp. 1-35
4. Drezner, Daniel W. "Present at the destruction: The Trump administration and the foreign policy bureaucracy." *The Journal of Politics* 81.2 (2019): 723-730.
5. Milner, Helen V., and Dustin Tingley. "Sailing the water's edge." *Sailing the Water's Edge*. Princeton University Press, 2015. pp. 33-51

Final Project Proposal Due

Public Opinion

1. Mueller, John E. "Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Vietnam." *American Political Science Review* 65.2 (1971): 358-375.
2. Jentleson, Bruce W. "The pretty prudent public: Post post-Vietnam American opinion on the use of military force." *International studies quarterly* 36.1 (1992): 49-74.
3. Gelpi, Christopher, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler. "Success matters: Casualty sensitivity and the war in Iraq." *International security* 30.3 (2005): 7-46.
4. Gelpi, Christopher. "Performing on cue? The formation of public opinion toward war." *Journal of conflict resolution* 54.1 (2010): 88-116.
5. Kertzer, Joshua D. "Making sense of isolationism: Foreign policy mood as a multilevel phenomenon." *The Journal of Politics* 75.1 (2013): 225-240.

Response Paper #3 Due

Part III: Contemporary Issues in US Foreign Policy

Hegemony and the Liberal International Order

1. Kindleberger, Charles P. "Dominance and leadership in the international economy: Exploitation, public goods, and free rides." *International studies quarterly* 25.2 (1981): 242-254.

2. Ikenberry, G. John. "The end of liberal international order?." *International Affairs* 94.1 (2018): 7-23.
3. Mearsheimer, John J. "Bound to fail: The rise and fall of the liberal international order." *International security* 43.4 (2019): 7-50.
4. O'Hanlon, Michael. "Can America Still Protect Its Allies?." *Foreign affairs* 98.5 (2019): 193-202.

International Trade, Finance, and Institutions

1. Krugman, Paul. "The Uncomfortable Truth About NAFTA-It's Foreign Policy, Stupid." *Foreign Aff.* 72 (1992): 13.
2. Milner, Helen V. "International political economy: beyond hegemonic stability." *Foreign Policy* (1998): 112-123.
3. Tooze, Adam. "Is the coronavirus crash worse than the 2008 financial crisis." *Foreign Policy* 18 (2020).
4. Altman, Roger C. "The fall and rise of the West: Why America and Europe will emerge stronger from the financial crisis." *Foreign Affairs* 92.1 (2013): 8-13.
5. Albright, Madeleine K. "United Nations." *Foreign Policy* (2003): 16-24

Rise of China

1. Friedberg, Aaron L. "The future of US-China relations: Is conflict inevitable?." *International security* 30.2 (2005): 7-45.
2. Beckley, Michael. "China's Century? Why America's Edge will Endure." *International Security* 36.3 (2011): 41-78
3. Shiffrinson, Joshua R. Itzkowitz, and Michael Beckley. "Debating China's rise and US decline." *International Security* 37.3 (2012): 172-181
4. Nathan, Andrew J., and Andrew Scobell. "How China sees America: The sum of Beijing's fears." *Foreign Aff.* 91 (2012): 32-47.
5. Schweller, Randall L., and Xiaoyu Pu. "After unipolarity: China's visions of international order in an era of US decline." *International security* 36.1 (2011): 41-72.

Russia and the "New Cold War"

1. McFaul, Michael. "Putin, Putinism, and the domestic determinants of Russian foreign policy." *International Security* 45.2 (2020): 95-139.
2. Brands, Hal, and John Lewis Gaddis. "The new cold war: America, China, and the echoes of history." *Foreign Aff.* 100 (2021): 10-20.
3. Lopate, Michael, and Bear Braumoeller. "Western Leaders Ought to Take Escalation over Ukraine Seriously." *War on the Rocks* (2022).
4. Beckley, M., & Brands, H. (2022). The return of pax Americana. *Foreign Affairs*.

Response Paper #4 Due

Counterinsurgency, and Asymmetric Conflict

1. Petraeus, David H. *Learning counterinsurgency: Observations from soldiering in Iraq*. ARMY COMBINED ARMS CENTER FORT LEAVENWORTH KS, 2006.
2. Lyall, Jason, and Isaiah Wilson. "Rage against the machines: Explaining outcomes in counterinsurgency wars." *International Organization* 63.1 (2009): 67-106.
3. Lyall, Jason. "Do Democracies Make Inferior Counterinsurgents? Reassessing Democracy's Impact on War Outcomes and Duration." *International Organization* 64.1 (2010): 167-192.
4. Stewart, Rory. "The last days of intervention: Afghanistan and the delusions of maximalism." *Foreign Aff.* 100 (2021): 59-73.

Terrorism

1. Mueller, John. "Six rather unusual propositions about terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17.4 (2005): 487-505.
2. Abrahms, Max. "What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy." *International Security* 32.4 (2008): 78-105
3. Kydd, Andrew H., and Barbara F. Walter. "The strategies of terrorism." *International security* 31.1 (2006): 49-80. fd

Final Project Due

Nuclear Weapons

1. Waltz, Kenneth N. "Why Iran should get the bomb: Nuclear balancing would mean stability." *Foreign Affairs* (2012): 2-5.
2. Tannenwald, Nina. "The nuclear taboo: The United States and the normative basis of nuclear Drnon-use." *International organization* 53.3 (1999): 433-468.
3. Bell, Mark S. "Beyond emboldenment: How acquiring nuclear weapons can change foreign policy." *International Security* 40.1 (2015): 87-119.

Drones and Emerging Technologies

1. Horowitz, Michael C., Sarah E. Kreps, and Matthew Fuhrmann. "Separating fact from fiction in the debate over drone proliferation." *International Security* 41.2 (2016): 7-42.
2. Schwartz, Joshua A., Matthew Fuhrmann, and Michael C. Horowitz. "Do Armed Drones Counter Terrorism, Or Are They Counterproductive? Evidence from Eighteen Countries." *International Studies Quarterly* 66.3 (2022)
3. Horowitz, Michael C. "Do emerging military technologies matter for international politics?." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23 (2020): 385-400.
4. Horowitz, Michael C., and Lauren Kahn. "The AI literacy gap hobbling American officialdom." *War on the Rocks* (2020).

The Future of American Foreign Policy

1. Biden Jr, Joseph R. "Why American Must Lead Again: Recusing US Foreign Policy after Trump." *Foreign Aff.* 99 (2020)
2. Kimmage, Michael. "Time for NATO to Close Its Door." *Foreign Affairs* (2022).
3. National Intelligence Council. *Global Trends Report: 2040*.
<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home>

Final project presentation

Non-exhaustive Documentary List for Response Papers

- America and the Taliban (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/america-and-the-taliban/>)
- Putin's Road to War (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/putins-road-to-war/>)
- In the Age of AI (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/in-the-age-of-ai/>)
- Bitter Rivals (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/bitter-rivals-iran-and-saudi-arabia/>)
- Secrets, Politics, and Torture (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/secrets-politics-and-torture/>)
- Nuclear Aftershocks (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/nuclear-aftershocks/>)
- America after 9/11 (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/america-after-9-11/>)
- Trump's Trade War (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/trumps-trade-war/>)