American Foreign Policy
PLSC 327
Monday and Wednesday, 9:25-10:50, DC226

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Office hours: Thursday, 8:00-10:00, and by appointment

Course Description and Purpose

This course will examine the formulation of American foreign policy, considering both contemporary issues and important historical questions. It will cover not only the content of United States foreign policy at various points in time but also the sources of political conflict over it. The course will pay special attention to the formulation of grand strategy and the role of the United States in establishing and maintaining the contemporary world order. We will use a simulation of the Eisenhower administration's Project Solarium to gain a better understanding of the policymaking process and about the future of U.S. relations with China.

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that students are expected to do at least 12.5 hours of course-related work or activity each week during the semester. This includes scheduled class lecture/discussion meeting times as well as time spent completing assigned readings, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.

Within the political science major this course:

- Helps fulfill the requirement for 10 PLSC courses for political science majors.
- Fulfills the requirement of at least 1 course in international relations
- Helps fulfill the requirement for 6 upper-level courses (300- or 400-level)

Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will learn about the individuals, institutions, and broader social and political forces that have shaped the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy. They will also use and develop their writing, critical thinking, and group collaboration skills.

Course Materials

This course will use a variety of books, articles, and other material. With the exception of three books that we will read in their entirety, all of the materials are available through Brightspace. Please note that some of the PDFs are quite large. The three books we will read are:

- Bergsten, C. Fred. 2022. *The United States vs. China*. Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press.
- Friedberg, Aaron. 2022. *Getting China Wrong*. Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press.
- Ikenberry, G. John. 2012. *Liberal Leviathan.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

All three are available for purchase at the campus bookstore and through other retailers.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class Discussion. Over the course of the semester, there are 10 scheduled discussions of assigned readings. The dates of these discussions are noted in the course schedule below. Each discussion will begin with a question posted in the online discussion board in Brightspace, setting the stage for conversation in class. The discussion questions in the syllabus may change, or I may add additional questions, as the semester goes along. The discussion board will present the final version of each question. You should post an answer by 11:59 p.m. on the day before the scheduled class discussion. Late answers will not receive credit. After you post your answer, you will be able to see other students' posts. In class, I may ask you to summarize or elaborate on your answer. You must be present for the class discussion to receive full credit.

Each student is permitted to miss two class discussions during the semester without penalty, but no other missed discussions will be excused. If you miss one or no class discussions, I will drop your lowest grade(s). Your average grade on the remaining discussion posts will count for 25% of your final grade.

Midterm Exam. There will be a midterm exam on April 3rd, covering all the class material to that point in the semester. The exam will consist partly of multiple-choice questions, and partly of short-answer questions. It will count for 35% of your overall grade of the semester.

Project Solarium simulation. Details about the simulation are contained in a separate document posted on the Brightspace. It contains two separately graded parts and one extra credit opportunity. The first part is participation, which will consist mainly in performing the duties and completing the assignment associated with your role. If you complete these duties and assignments adequately and on time, you can expect an "A" for this part of the course. This will be worth 10% of your semester grade.

The second part is the work product associated with your role. This varies depending on the role, but there is more than one part to every role. The longer and more demanding part will be weighted more heavily. Please see the document explaining the simulation for specific details about this aspect of grading for each role. Overall, it will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Students will receive two points of extra credit on their final grade for the semester if they submit a memo evaluating the simulation and their participation in it. Details on the issues this memo should address are included in the document explaining the simulation. This memo is due by 5:00pm on May 13th, two days after our final class meeting.

Grading Scale. Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 94-100 = A; 91-93 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 = D; 0-64 = F.

Course Policies

Technology. We will still use Brightspace, the University's learning management system, for some purposes, including the distribution of course materials and the reporting of grades. If you

have difficulty using it, I encourage you to turn to the technical support the system provides: https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport.

E-mail. I will use your university e-mail address for course announcements and other official purposes. Check this account at least once a day. I recommend setting your university e-mail account to forward messages to whatever e-mail address you use most often. I will respond to student messages in a timely manner but do not count on receiving an answer in less than 24 hours.

***Grade Appeals*.** All grade appeals must be made in writing. If you believe a grade I assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief memo explaining your concerns. I will review your concerns and respond to you in writing.

Cheating and Plagiarism. All work submitted as part of this course, including comments posted on discussion boards, must be original, with your sources cited. It is fine for you to introduce and use outside material that you think is relevant to the course but you should credit the original authors. You may use any citation system you like for this purpose. Violations of this rule will result in a failing grade for the course and will be submitted to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for further disciplinary action.

***Decorum*.** I encourage you to express your views on the course material both in class and on the discussion boards. You are free to disagree with me or with your fellow students, just as others are free to disagree with you. In doing so, however, please refrain from personal insults or inflammatory rhetoric. Be respectful of one another and always remember that there is a real person on the other end of your comments.

Course Schedule and Assigned Materials

The reading should be done prior to class on the class meeting. The semester will be divided into three parts: (1) strategic and foreign policy choices in U.S. history; (2) foreign policy organizations and instruments; (3) the Project Solarium simulation. There is a book associated with each part. Not every class meeting has an assigned reading.

Part 1. Strategic and Foreign Policy Choices in U.S. History

22 January: Foreign Policy, Grand Strategy, and the Early Republic

Brands, Hal. 2014. *What Good is Grand Strategy?* Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Introduction.

George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796

Excerpt from John Quincy Adams' Fourth of July Speech, 1821

The Monroe Doctrine, 1823

24 January: The Emergence of the United States as a World Power

Irwin, Douglas A. 2017. *Clashing over Commerce*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-27.

The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904

29 January: World War I

Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, 1918

Discussion question: What are the most important differences between the foreign policy outlined in Wilson's 14 Points and the policy that Republican presidents had pursued during the 1890-1914 period?

31 January: World War II

Preston, Andrew. 2014. "Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security." *Diplomatic History* 38(3): 477-500.

5 February: The Cold War

X [George F. Kennan]. 1947. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs* 25(4): 566-82.

7 February: The Cold War, continued

Block, Fred. 1980. "Economic Instability and Military Strength: The Paradoxes of the 1950 Rearmament Decision." *Politics and Society* 10(1): 35-58.

Discussion question: Some observers, including George Kennan himself, worried that the Truman administration went too far in stressing the role of military force during the early Cold War era. Is this critique correct? Could the administration have done things differently?

12 February: Hegemony after the Cold War

Staniland, Paul. 2018. Misreading the "Liberal Order": Why We Need New Thinking in American Foreign Policy. Lawfare blog post.

Porter, Patrick. 2020. Wrestling with Fog: On the Elusiveness of the Liberal Order. War on the Rocks blog post.

14 February: Discussion of Ikenberry book

Ikenberry, G. John. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Discussion questions:

1. How much does the fact that some elements of the U.S.-led international order involve "rule by relationships" rather than rules undercut the claim that it is a "liberal" order.

2. How important is it that participants in the liberal international order be democracies?

3. Should upholding the liberal international order, as described in Ikenberry's book, be a priority for American foreign policy?

Part 2. Foreign Policy Organizations and Instruments

19 February: The President and Congress

21 February: The State Department

Pope, Laurence. 2014. *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy: Two Cheers for Striped Pants*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 2.

26 February: Diplomacy and Foreign Aid

Lancaster, Carol. 2007. *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3.

Discussion question: Should the weakness of the State Department be taken into consideration when planning American foreign policy, as we are about to do in the simulation? Are there policies we should not rely upon because of it?

28 February: The Defense Department

Dwight Eisenhower's Farewell Address, 1961

Gates, Robert M. 2020. "The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy: The United States Must Recover the Full Range of Its Power." *Foreign Affairs* July/Aug 2020.

4 March: No Class -- Spring Break

6 March: No Class -- Spring Break

11 March: Discussion of Bergsten Book, review of roles and schedule for simulation

Bergsten, C. Fred. 2022. *The United States vs. China*. Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press.

Discussion questions:

1. Bergsten's focus on economic leadership implicitly assumes that political-military issues between the U.S. and China can be handled separately. Is this possible?

2. In chapters 4 and 8, Bergsten discusses China's likely goals and preferences as a leader of the global economic system. How much of a threat do these goals pose to the United States?

3. Bergsten recommends that the United States adopt a policy of conditional competitive cooperation with China. If you agree with him, what do you see as the strongest part of his proposed policy. If you disagree, what do you see as its biggest weakness?

13 March: The Use of Military Force

Fallows, James. 2004. "Blind into Baghdad." *The Atlantic* January/February 2004.

Discussion question: What if anything should the United States do about the "overmilitarization" of its foreign policy?

18 March: The Intelligence Community

Miscik, Jami. 2017. "Intelligence and the Presidency." *Foreign Affairs* 96(3): 57-64.

20 March: Covert Operations

Bevins, Vincent. 2017. "What the United States did in Indonesia. " *The Atlantic*, 20 October 2017.

Brands, Hal. 2020. "The Dark Art of Political Warfare: A Primer." American Enterprise Institute.

Discussion question: If the Biden administration actually conducted a policymaking exercise like the one in our simulation, should its results be kept secret?

25 March: The National Security Council and the Policymaking Process

Walt, Stephen M. 2018. *The Hell of Good Intentions*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Chapter 3.

Gavin, Francis J. 2020. "Blame It on the Blob: How to Evaluate American Grand Strategy." War on the Rocks blog.

Discussion question: Stephen Walt is quite critical of the foreign policy community. Francis Gavin argues that Walt is unfair to these people. Whom do you agree with more?

27 March: Discussion of Friedberg Book

Friedberg, Aaron. 2022. *Getting China Wrong*. Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press.

Discussion questions:

1. Friedberg argues that the character and interests of the Chinese Communist Party are the main reasons for its recent, more assertive foreign policy. Is the nature of the CCP as important as he claims?

2. Is it possible for the CCP to continue its rapid economic growth while maintaining political control over economic actors, as Friedberg says they are trying to do?

3. In the final chapter of the book, Friedberg proposes a new policy for dealing with China that contains four main elements. Which if any of these elements do you think would be dangerous or misguided?

1 April: No class (University holiday)

3 April: Midterm Exam

Part 3. Project Solarium Simulation

8 April: No class meeting

10 April: Class work session on initial reports for simulation

Initial reports due by noon on 16 April

15 April: Class work session on initial reports for simulation

17 April: Class work session to coordinate final Task Force memos

Task Force memos and Decision Group initial memos due 20 April

22 April: Task Force Presentations and Questions

25 April: No class meeting (University Holiday)

26 April: Class work session to discuss final written responses to questions and final policy

Note that this is a Thursday, but Monday classes are meeting instead

Written responses to questions due by end of day, 26 April

Final Policy Statement from President due 27 April, 5:00pm

29 April: Responses to the President's Final Policy Statement

Written version of responses from Decision Group due at end of day

1 May: Class discussion of simulation

Discussion questions:

What was the most important thing the simulation revealed about formal policymaking exercises like Project Solarium?

What aspect of the simulation seemed most unrealistic?