United States Foreign Intervention
PLSC 486P

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00-11:30am, and by appointment

Course Description and Purpose

This seminar will focus on U.S. efforts to control political outcomes in other states. American policymakers have employed a wide range of military, economic, and diplomatic means to do this. Some efforts have been secret while others have been highly visible. Some of these interventions have achieved their goals, but others have failed. Nearly all have had unforeseen consequences. The course will examine a range of interventions in depth, as well as considering broader explanations for intervention decisions, the range of policy tools used, and the long-term consequences of these efforts.

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.

This course helps fulfill the N (Social Science) and W (Writing) general education requirements. 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)
- Helps fulfill the requirement for 2 senior seminars (400-level)

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will acquire a deeper knowledge of the history of United States foreign intervention since 1945. They will understand several alternative explanations for intervention decisions, the policy instruments used, and the consequences of these actions. They will be able to construct and evaluate explanations for specific foreign interventions.

Course Materials

This course will use a variety of text, video, and other sources, many of which are available free of charge through Brightspace. Students will have to get access to several items which I am not able to post online. First, we will read the following three books in their entirety. I have ordered them from the campus bookstore but you can obtain them from other sources as well.

- Draper, Robert. 2020. *To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America into Iraq*. New York: Penguin Press.

- Rabe, Stephen G. 2005. *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. (This book is available as an e-book from the library.)

- Taffett, Jeffrey F. 2007. *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America*. New York: Routledge.

We will also watch all 10 episodes of the PBS documentary series "The Vietnam War" by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. This is currently available for streaming from PBS. While we will not discuss it until late October, you should start watching it much sooner.

Course Requirements and Grading

Discussion posts. Before each class meeting, I will post one or more discussion questions about the day's topic on Brightspace. You should post an answer to at least one of these questions no later than 10:00am on the day of the class meeting. In class, I may ask you to talk about this answer. No discussion questions will be posted for the last four meetings when class presentations are scheduled. You may miss two discussion posts without penalty during the semester. Your average grade over the remaining posts will be worth 30% of your final grade for the semester.

Class attendance and participation. Because this class is a seminar, your participation is vital to its success. You should come prepared to discuss the assigned material for the day, and to share your broader thoughts about the day's topic. I will not accept excuses for missing class, but you can be absent twice during the semester without penalty. Additional absences will result in a 5-point reduction in your participation grade for the semester. The overall quality of your participation during the semester will be worth 30% of your grade for the course.

Class Presentation and Final Paper. Each student will give a presentation during the final two weeks of the semester and write a research paper on the same topic. The paper will focus on a single case of U.S. foreign intervention. It should be roughly 20 pages in length and answer the following sets of questions.

> **1. Motives.** Why did U.S. policymakers regard the events in which they intervened as important? Did they have any reason to conceal or misrepresent the reasons for the intervention to the American public?
>
> **2. Policy instruments.** What policy instruments did they use for the intervention? Why did they select these instruments? Were there any they considered--or should have considered--but did not use?
>
> **3. Consequences.** Did the intervention achieve the results U.S. policymakers intended? What were its long-term consequences for the United States, its broader foreign policy, and for the target country?

You may select any case of U.S. intervention you find interesting except those we are discussing in detail in class. If you are unsure what case might best fit your interests, I can help you find one.

A prospectus for the paper and presentation is due no later than our October 17th class meeting. The prospectus will be worth 5% of your final grade for the course. It should do the following:

1. State the intervention you have chosen, including the time period you will examine.
2. Explain why you find this case interesting.

3. Explain what sources of information you will use to learn about the case. You should include at least four different sources.

The prospectus can be very brief, perhaps just a page or two, though it can be longer if you need the space. Its purpose is to let me provide you with some guidance and feedback before you do most of your research and writing.

Your presentation should provide a preliminary version of what you will cover in your paper. You will be allotted 20 minutes in one of the final four class meetings. Reserve at least five minutes of this time for questions. You should briefly address the three sets of questions as best you can. If you have had trouble answering any of them, you should say so. The rest of the class may be able to give you some suggestions that will be useful in writing the paper. The presentation will constitute 5% of your grade for the semester. The final paper is due December 13th, and will be worth 30%.

Course Policies

Office Hours. I will be available from 10:00-11:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays when we have class in my office, LNG-58. (I will not be there on days when class does not meet.) You need not make an appointment to see me during my regular office hours. If you would prefer another meeting time, let me know and we will set it up.

Technology. We will use Brightspace, the university's learning management system, for some purposes, including the distribution of course materials and the submission discussion posts and other assignments. I may not be able to resolve the technical issues you encounter. 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 writing submitted as part of this course, including comments posted on discussion boards, must be your own work, not something produced by other people or AI tools. You may introduce and use outside material that you think is relevant but you should credit the original authors when you do so. You need not do so through a formal citation system in a discussion board post, but you should say where you originally discovered the ideas you are using. On the research paper, you may use any citation system you like.

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.

Tentative Schedule

The dates and reading assignments may change during the semester. If so, I will make an announcement by email.

Part 1. Motives for Intervention

August 22: National Security

Leffler, Melvyn P. 2017. "National Security." In Melvyn P. Leffler, ed., *Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism: U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security, 1920-2015* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 317-36.

Drezner, Daniel W. 2024. "How Everything Became National Security, and National Security Became Everything." *Foreign Affairs* 103(5): 1-17.

August 27: Liberalism and Democracy

Ikenberry, G. John. 2000. "America's Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-War Era." In Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *American Democracy Promotion* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 103-26.

Monten, Jonathan. 2005. " The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy." *International Security* 29(4): 112-56.

August 29: Racial Hierarchy

Enrique Medenica, Vladimir, and David Ebner. 2021. "Racial bias makes white Americans more likely to support wars in nonwhite foreign countries – new study." *The Conversation*, 16 June 2021. https://theconversation.com/racial-bias-makes-white-americans-more-likely-to-support-wars-in-nonwhite-foreign-countries-new-study-157638

Freeman, Bianca, D.G. Kim, and David A. Lake. 2022. "Race in International Relations: Beyond the 'Norm Against Noticing.'" *Annual Review of Political Science* 25: 175-96.

Poast, Paul. 2023. Twitter Thread on Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. https://x.com/ProfPaulPoast/status/1616785576874725383; also available at this link: https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1616785576874725383.html

September 3: Economic Interests

Rosenberg, Emily S. 1994. "Economic Interest and United States Foreign Policy." In Gordon Martel, ed., *American Foreign Relations Reconsidered, 1890-1993* (New York: Taylor & Francis), 37-51.

Fordham, Benjamin O. 2008. "Power or Plenty? Economic Interests, Security Concerns, and American Intervention." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 737-58.

September 5: Domestic Politics

Ellsberg, Daniel. 1972. "The Quagmire Myth and the Stalemate Machine." In Daniel Ellsberg, *Papers on the War* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster). 42-135.

September 10: Non-Intervention in China, 1945-49, and Vietnam, 1954

May, Ernest R. 2002. "1947-48: When Marshall Kept the U.S. Out of War in China." *The Journal of Military History* 66(4): 1001-10.

Herring, George, and Richard Immerman. 1984. "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: 'The Day We Didn't Go to War' Revisited." *The Journal of American History* 71(2): 343-363.

September 12: Intervention in Iraq, 2003

Draper, Robert. 2020. *To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America into Iraq*. New York: Penguin Press.

Part 2. Instruments of Intervention

September 17: Foreign Aid, Part 1

Taffett, Jeffrey F. 2007. *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America*. New York: Routledge. pp. 1-93.

September 19: Foreign Aid, Part 2

Taffett, Jeffrey F. 2007. *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America*. New York: Routledge. pp. 95-197.

September 24: Sanctions

Crawford, Neta C., and Audie Klotz. 1999. *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa.* New York: St. Martin's Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 14.

Drezner, Daniel W. 2021. "The United States of Sanctions." *Foreign Affairs* 100(5): 142-154. See also the response by Justyna Gudzowska and John Prendergast in subsequent issue, as well as Drezner's rejoinder.

September 26: Diplomacy

Crawford, Neta C., and Audie Klotz. 1999. *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa.* New York: St. Martin's Press. Chapter 10.

Keohane, Robert O. 1971. "The Big Influence of Small Allies." *Foreign Policy* 2: 161-182.

October 1: No class (University holiday)

October 3: No class (University holiday)

October 8: No class (Friday classes meet instead)

October 10: Covert Action in British Guiana

Rabe, Stephen G. 2005. *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

October 15: Covert Action in Cuba

Schoultz, Lars. 2009. *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Chapters 4-6.

October 17: Assassination Programs

Schoultz, Lars. 2009. *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Chapter 7.

Swift, Christopher. 2012. "The Drone Blowback Fallacy." *Foreign Affairs*, 1 July 2012. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2012-07-01/drone-blowback-fallacy

Klay, Phil. 2022. "America Kills Its Enemies in Our Name. And Then Keeps It Secret." *New York Times* 27 May 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/27/opinion/us-military-targeted-killings.html

October 22: Counterinsurgency

U.S. Department of the Army. 2006. Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency. Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army. Introduction and Chapter 1. https://legacy.npr.org/documents/2008/may/counterinsurgency_manual.pdf

Hazleton, Jacqueline. 2021. "The Hearts-and-Minds Myth: How American Gets Counterinsurgency Wrong." *Foreign Affairs*, 15 July 2021.

Ahmed, Azam, and Mathieu Aikins. 2024. "America's Monster." *New York Times*, 22 May 2024. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/asia/afghanistan-abdul-raziq.html

Part 3. The Consequences of Intervention and Some Current Cases

October 24: "Blowback"

Hasan, Mehdi, and Dina Sayedahmed. 2018. "Blowback: How a CIA-Backed Coup Led to the Rise of Iran's Ayatollahs." *The Intercept*. https://theintercept.com/2018/02/05/iran-cia-coup-mossadegh-ayatollah/

The Ezra Klein Show, 10 August 2021. "We're Living in the World the War on Terror Built." https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/10/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-spencer-ackerman.html

October 29: The Vietnam War

Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, "The Vietnam War"

October 31: Humanitarian intervention

Power, Samantha. 2002. *A Problem From Hell*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 10.

Filkins, Dexter. 2019. "The Moral Logic of Humanitarian Intervention." *The New Yorker*, September 16, 2019. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/09/16/the-moral-logic-of-humanitarian-intervention.

Bali, Sali. 2022. " The Humanitarian Paradox: Why Human Rights Require Restraint." Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft Policy Brief no. 27. https://quincyinst.org/report/the-humanitarian-paradox-why-human-rights-require-restraint/

November 5: Assigning Responsibility: The Case of Chile

Devine, Jack. 2014. "What Really Happened in Chile." *Foreign Affairs* 93(4): 26-35.

Kornbluh, Peter and Jack Devine. 2014. "Showdown in Santiago: What Really Happened in Chile." *Foreign Affairs* 93(5): 168-74.

Movie: "Missing" (1982) Available at https://archive.org/details/missing-1982-costa-gavras

November 7: No class meeting. -- Peace Science Society annual meeting

November 12: The Syrian Civil War

Laub, Zachary. 2023. "Syria's Civil War: The Descent into Horror." Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war

Koblentz, Gregory. 2013. "America's Best Options in Syria." *The Atlantic*, 7 May 2013. https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/05/americas-best-options-in-syria/275618/

Alkhoury, Christopher. 2022. "An Exit Strategy for Syria." *Foreign Affairs* 10 October 2022. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/syria/exit-strategy-syria

November 14: The War in Ukraine

Applebaum, Ann. 2023. "The West Must Defeat Russia." *The Altantic*, 10 November 2023. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/11/us-ukraine-support-putin-defeat/675953/

Beebe, George, and Anatol Lieven. 2024. "The Diplomatic Path to a Secure Ukraine." Quincy Institute Paper #13. https://quincyinst.org/research/the-diplomatic-path-to-a-secure-ukraine/#

November 19 and 21: Student presentations

November 26: No class (Friday classes meet instead)

November 28: No class (University holiday)

December 3 and 5: Student presentations