

**AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY  
PLSC 327**

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 8:30-9:55, UU102

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This course will examine the formulation of American foreign policy, considering both contemporary issues and important historical questions. The primary goal of the course is to provide students with a general understanding of the individuals, institutions, and broader social and political forces that have shaped the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy. Although we will discuss the pros and cons of some current policy alternatives, especially near the end of the course, we will focus primarily on understanding how policy has been made rather than on the normative issue of what United States policy should be (or should have been.) A secondary goal of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to use and develop their writing and critical thinking skills, as well as to expose them to the theories, methods, and data social scientists use to address topics like those covered in the class.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Four books are required for this course. We will devote a day to discussing each of them in class. They are all available at the campus bookstore, though you can also obtain them from other sources. The required books are:

Burke, John P., and Fred I. Greenstein. 1989. *How Presidents Test Reality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lundestad, Geir. 2012. *The Rise and Decline of the American "Empire."* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mann, James. 2004. *Rise of the Vulcans*. New York: Penguin Books.

Trubowitz, Peter. 1998. *Defining the National Interest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

I have not ordered a general textbook for this class. For reasons I will explain as the course progresses, I am not a big fan of the many American foreign policy textbooks, and they are dreadfully expensive. Those of you who are unfamiliar with the basic outlines of American diplomatic history, and with the institutions of the U.S. government, might consider buying a textbook of your choice to use as a reference, though most of the information available in them can easily be found on the internet.

In addition to the books, I have assigned several articles and book chapters, as well as two movies, each of which is listed in the course outline below. You can obtain all of the readings either through the J-STOR database, which can be reached through the library's website, or on the Blackboard page for this course, as indicated below. The movies are available at the reserve desk. Unlike the textbook, these readings and the movies are not optional. I will refer to them in class and you will be held responsible for them on the exam and reading quizzes.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

**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. You will receive a letter grade on each essay. These correspond to numeric grades as follows: A = 100; A- = 93; B+ = 89; B = 85; B- = 82; C+ = 79; C = 75; C- = 72; D = 67; F = 50. You will receive a numeric grade on the exams and quizzes.

**In-Class Assignments.** There will be several (6-10) brief in-class assignments on the readings and the movies. These assignments could include writing a paragraph in answer to a question I pose in class, or a multiple-choice quiz. These assignments will cover the works assigned for that day's class session on the course outline below. (Note that the assigned readings for a given date may be changed as the semester goes on. I will inform you by email and in class if and when this happens.) The dates of the in-class assignments will not be announced in advance and no makeup quizzes will be given for any reason. Instead, I will drop your lowest grade. Your remaining grades on these assignments will count for 30 percent of your final grade for the semester.

**Final Exam.** There will be a take-home final exam due on Friday, December 18th at noon. The format will be exactly like the essay assignments discussed below. The question will be sent out by email on December 15th, but should only take you a few hours to complete. It will require you to integrate both readings and lecture from several different parts of the class. This exam will count for 30 percent of your final grade. You should submit your final exam through turnitin.com at the link provided on the Blackboard page. Exams posted after the due date will be penalized one letter grade. Those posted after noon on December 20th will not be accepted.

**Essays.** Each student will write a 4-8 page essay in response to two of the four questions given below. Each essay is written to correspond to one of the four books we will read this semester, and are due at the class meeting at which we will discuss each book. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day. These essays are "optional" in the sense that you do not have to do any particular one. It is your responsibility to make sure you have completed two of them by the end of the course, however. The papers will each count for 20 percent of your final grade for the course. The questions and the due dates are as follows:

**October 1.** Between 1890 and 1945, the United States went from being a reluctant and marginal participant in international politics to the leading world power, with interests all over the globe. Did circumstances make it inevitable that the United States would eventually assume this role? If so, explain why. If not, explain how at least one likely alternative outcome might have taken place.

**October 29.** How important was the background of the major decisionmakers in the Bush administration in shaping their choices about the Iraq and the response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks? Compare their background to that of McGeorge Bundy, discussed in the excerpt from David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*. If people like McGeorge Bundy had been in charge after 2001, would they have made different decisions?

**November 17.** The Bush administration's decision-making process in the period leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq has often been compared to decision making in the Johnson administration leading up to the 1965 commitment of American combat forces in Vietnam. Is such a comparison useful in understanding the decision to go to war in Iraq? If the decisionmaking process had been set up differently, might the Bush administration have made a different choice?

**December 10.** What can we learn about the future of the United States by comparing it to other major powers or "empires"? If you think the United States is a fundamentally different kind of political actor, explain why. If you think the United States shares of important weaknesses of these actors, identify and explain these weaknesses.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance.** I do not keep track of attendance, but students are responsible for all material covered and all announcements made in class. Attendance will also play a role in determining your final grade through the unannounced reading quizzes, as well as through your exposure to lecture and discussion, which will be covered on the final exam.

**E-mail.** I will make course announcements by e-mail through the Blackboard system. Check your university e-mail account for these messages at least once a day. I recommend setting your university e-mail account to forward your mail to the account you regularly use.

**Grade Appeals.** If you believe a grade I assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief memo explaining your concerns. Submit this memo to me along with the graded assignment. I will review your concerns, and respond to you in writing. **All grade appeals must be made in writing. They may not be made in person.**

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** All work submitted as part of this course must be original, with your sources properly cited. You may use any citation system you like for this purpose. You may not receive assistance of any sort during the exam or the quizzes, and you may not use notes or other materials to answer the questions on these tests. I take violations of these rules very seriously. Anyone found to be cheating on a quiz or exam, or who submits a plagiarized essay, will receive a failing grade for the course. These cases will also be submitted to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for possible further disciplinary action.

**Classroom Decorum.** I encourage you to express your views on the course material. 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 remarks that may disrupt the class. Those who do not follow this rule will be asked to leave the class.

**Laptop Computers.** Students may use laptop computers to take notes. Computers may not be used for other purposes during class time. I reserve the right to ban all laptops, or those of specific students, from the classroom if their use becomes a problem during the semester.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
(Dates are subject to change during the semester)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments to be completed on or before this date</b>
9/1	Introduction	
9/3	Making foreign policy	
9/8	U.S. foreign policy to 1914	Excerpts from George Washington's Farewell Address (1796) (Blackboard). The Monroe Doctrine (1823) <a href="http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=23">http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=23</a> Mahan, Alfred Thayer. 1897 [1890]. "The United States Looking Outward." In Mahan, ed., <i>The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future</i> . New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. 3-27. (Blackboard.)
9/10	World War I and its aftermath	Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points <a href="http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62">http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62</a> Beard, Charles A. 1936. <i>The Devil Theory of War</i> . New York: The Vanguard Press. (Blackboard.)
9/15	No class meeting	
9/17	Intervention in World War II	Frieden, Jeffrey A. 1988. "Sectoral conflict and United States foreign economic policy." <i>International Organization</i> 42(1): 59-90. (J-STOR database. Note that you must log into the library in order to access J-STOR.)
9/22	The Cold War, part one	X. 1947. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 25(4): 566-82. (J-STOR database.)
9/24	The Cold War, part two	Block, Fred. 1980. "Economic Instability and Military Strength: The Paradoxes of the 1950 Rearmament Decision." <i>Politics and Society</i> 10(1): 35-58.
9/29	Catch-up day	
10/1	Discussion of Trubowitz book	Trubowitz, Peter. 1998. <i>Defining the National Interest</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <b>First optional essay due</b>
10/6	Congress and the President	
10/8	The National Security State	
10/13	The State Department	
10/15	The Defense Department	Eisenhower's Farewell Address. <a href="http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=90">http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=90</a> or <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWiIYW_fBfY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWiIYW_fBfY</a> Fordham, Benjamin O. 2007. "Paying for Global Power: The Costs and Benefits of Cold War Military Spending," In <i>The Long War</i> , edited by Andrew J. Bacevich. New York: Columbia University Press. 371-404. (Blackboard.)
10/20	The Intelligence Community	

10/22	The Policymaking Process	Janis, Irving L., "Escalation of the Vietnam War: How Could It Happen?" in G. John Ikenberry, ed., <i>American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Longman. (Blackboard.) DeYoung, Karen, "How the Obama White House Runs Foreign Policy," <i>Washington Post</i> , August 4, 2015. (Blackboard.)
10/27	No class meeting	
10/29	Discussion of Mann book and Halberstam chapter	Mann, James. 2004. <i>Rise of the Vulcans</i> . New York: Penguin Books. Halberstam, David. 1992 [1972]. <i>The Best and the Brightest</i> . New York: Ballantine Books. Chapter 4. (Blackboard.) <b>Second optional essay due</b>
11/3	Nuclear Weapons	Powell, Robert. 1985. "The Theoretical Foundations of Strategic Nuclear Deterrence." <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 100(1): 75-96. (J-STOR database.)
11/5	Intervention and Limited War	
11/10	Public Opinion and War	Mueller, John. 1971. "Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Vietnam." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 65(2): 358-75. (J-STOR database.) Burk, James. 1999. "Public Support for Peacekeeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing the Casualties Hypothesis." <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 114(1): 53-78. (J-STOR database.)
11/12	No class meeting	
11/17	Discussion of Burke and Greenstein book	Burke, John P., and Fred I. Greenstein. 1989. <i>How Presidents Test Reality</i> . New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Movie: "Frontline: Rumsfeld's War" (Available online.) <b>Third optional essay due</b>
11/19	Domestic Politics and Trade Policy	Bailey, Michael, Judith Goldstein, and Barry R. Weingast. 1997. "The Institutional Roots of American Trade Policy: Politics, Coalitions, and International Trade." <i>World Politics</i> 49(3): 309-38. (J-STOR database.)
11/24	Trade, Aid, and Investment as Policy Instruments	
11/26	No class meeting	
12/1	Multilateral institutions	Ikenberry, G. John. 2003. "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 1(3): 533-50. (J-STOR database.)
12/3	Partisan Politics	Fordham, Benjamin O. 2007. "The Evolution of Republican and Democratic Positions on Cold War Military Spending: A Historical Puzzle." <i>Social Science History</i> , 31 (4): 603-35. (Blackboard.)

12/8	The Future of American Hegemony	
12/10	Discussion of Lundestad book	Lundestad, Geir. 2012. <i>The Rise and Decline of the American "Empire."</i> New York: Oxford University Press. <b>Fourth optional essay due</b>
12/15	Catch-up and review session	