



Sample Course Syllabus

PS 451 American Foreign Policy 4 credits-

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OVERVIEW

This course is designed to provide students the tools with which to understand how and why the United States acts as it does in the world. To do so we will need to explore arguments about what drives state's foreign policy in general as well as the specific "traditions" of U.S. foreign policy. Every state exhibits certain patterns in its behavior in foreign affairs. Those patterns are generated by the interplay of domestic factors with the geopolitical conditions in which the state finds itself. This will lead us to examine whether the "exceptionalism" that many cite about the U.S. role in the world is product of the inherent character of the United States or if we can more simply explain these issues with reference to the international environment.

There are three main questions we ask when studying American foreign policy:

- **WHAT** policies has the U.S. pursued? Answering this question requires historical knowledge of the actions of U.S. and their major consequences.
- **HOW** is foreign policy made? Answering this question requires looking at the major actors involved in the formulation of policy and the process by which decisions are made.
- **WHY** is foreign policy enacted? Answering this question attempts to get at the motive behind policy. Does the U.S. act out of security concerns? A desire for wealth? On behalf of its values? This question is the most difficult to answer, the most contentious, but ultimately the most important.

A full understanding of foreign policy requires all three. We will cover the basics of all three but you should see this class as beginning your exploration of foreign policy, not its end point.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify and understand the major policies, periods, and events of American foreign policy.
- Compare different arguments about the guiding principles or "traditions" that explain the major continuities and changes in US foreign policy.
- Identify and evaluate the significance of various domestic actors on the making of US foreign policy.
- Understand and critically evaluate several decision-making models through the examination of important case studies of foreign policy decision-making.
- Critically analyze important current U.S. foreign policy debates.
- Produce a strategic plan for the future of U.S. foreign policy (A Grand Strategy) drawing upon the insights from the class.

LEARNING RESOURCES

NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website

(<http://www.osubeaverstore.com/>). Sample syllabi may not have the most up to date textbook information!

The following textbooks are required for the course:

- Papp, Johnson, and Endicott, *American Foreign Policy: History Politics and Policy* (Pearson Higher Education, 2005)
Note: While the current topics for this text are slightly out of date, it has the best single-book treatment of the history of US foreign policy and the actors that influence US foreign policy.
- Gary Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)

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All other readings will be found on the course Blackboard site.

Note: If you would like a recommendation for a general history text on U.S. foreign policy please let me know and I will be glad to provide suggestions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(More detailed explanations of each assignment can be found on in the "Assignments" folder on Blackboard)

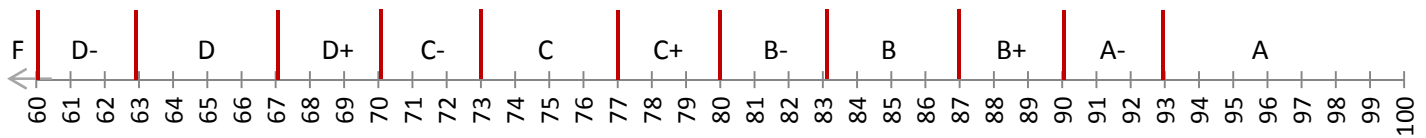
Assignment/Weight	Description
Reading Journal 20%	<p>Drawing on the week's readings, you will write entries on questions I will pose for that week in the reading guide and submit them on Blackboard no later than the last day of the course week. This is an informal writing assignment and you will not get a letter grade rather you will get full credit if you make a good attempt at engaging the material.</p> <p>The purpose of this assignment is to have you engage the readings, critically evaluate them, and put them into the context of that week's topic, all without the pressure of formal writing. I do not expect you to get it "right." I only expect you to meaningfully grapple with the material and ideas.</p> <p>Due date: Every week by Wednesday at 11:59 pm</p>
Participation/ Discussion Boards 20%	<p>To make the course more interactive and to allow you to get to know your class members, you will engage in discussions of course material and ideas in the bulletin boards on the Blackboard course site. You will be expected to initiate <u>at least</u> two threads and respond to at least five postings each week. I expect that your posts will be thoughtful and engage important ideas. You must be prepared to engage in this assignment throughout the second half of each week. It will do no good if everyone waits until Saturday to start posting.</p> <p>Due date: Every week</p>
Midterm Exams 15% each	<p>You will take two midterm exams, one after each of the first two units of the course. The exams will consist of two parts. The objective portion will consist of identifications and short answers and will be taken on Blackboard in a timed test. The second part will be an essay that you will submit on Blackboard, but it will not be timed. Please be prepared to block out at least one hour to take the exam. Once you start the exam you will NOT be able to pause it and return.</p>
<i>Objective – 5%</i> <i>Essay - 10%</i>	
Final Essay: <i>National Security Strategy</i> 30%	<p>Your final assignment will be to write a 3000 word (maximum) "National Security Strategy" (NSS) for the United States. The NSS is a document that every presidential administration drafts to explain what they see as the most important goals of US foreign policy, the biggest threats/challenges/ opportunities in achieving these goals, and the major policies they seek to implement in order to achieve these goals. You will find a handout on Blackboard explaining this assignment and the expectations in greater detail. You will also find a folder on Blackboard with the past five NSS documents, covering the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations.</p> <p>Due Date: 12/7, 5pm PST (I hope you know the significance of this date in history!)</p>

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Please note that 40% of your grade comes from reading, responding to that reading and participating based on the reading on a weekly basis. The weekly assignments are the key to success in this class

Grading Scale:



ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

OSU COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES

PS 451 AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY - 4 credits

Overview of the role of the United States in the world since World War II and of the factors influencing the formation of our foreign policy. PREREQS: PS 201 or PS 205

COURSE DELIVERY

Blackboard

This course will be delivered via Blackboard, a course management software environment. Within the course Blackboard site you will access the syllabus, assignments, learning materials, discussion boards. You will also be submitting all your assignments and essays, and taking your exams on Blackboard. To preview how an online course works, visit the Ecampus Course Demo

Prior to Beginning the Course

- Ensure you have access to Blackboard and the files contained there.
- Thoroughly review the syllabus.
 - (if you ask me a question that is clearly answered on the syllabus, I will redirect you back to the syllabus)
- Familiarize yourself with the assignments.

Weekly Process

Each week of the course will consist of a regular cycle of activities

1. Read the "Weekly Reading Guide."
2. Read the assigned articles or chapters.
3. Write up and submit your reading journal (the lecture slides will not be accessible until you do).
4. Read the slides and listen to any audio commentary I provide within the slides.
5. Reflect on what you have learned and participate in the bulletin boards.
6. In weeks 3 and 6, prepare and submit the midterm assignments

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty, defined as: *An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work.* For further information, visit [Avoiding Academic Dishonesty](#), or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the [university's regulations regarding civility](#). Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or

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disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules [Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations](#).

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Contacting the instructor — You should post questions on the course material on the discussion boards. For issues relating to your individual status in the class please e-mail me.

Technical Assistance — If you experience computer difficulties, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the [OSU Computer Helpdesk](#) online.

Tutoring — OSU provides access to - [NetTutor](#) to meet the needs of Ecampus students. NetTutor is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours.

CLASS TOPICS AND SCHEDULE

I. *The History and Traditions of U.S. Foreign Policy*

Week 1 **Overview; History of U.S. Foreign Policy in the 19th Century: From Colony to Major Power**

80 pages

Henry R. Nau, "Why We Fight Over Foreign Policy," *Policy Review*, no. 142, (April/May2007).
<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/5978>

Norman A. Graebner, "The Pursuit of Interests and a Balance of Power"
in Merrill and Paterson, eds., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy*, vol. 1, *To 1920*, 5th ed.
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), pp. 23-26.

Washington's Farewell Address (focus on pages 22-32)

Papp. Johnson, and Endicott, *American Foreign Policy: History Politics and Policy*

- o Chapter 3: Finding A Place in the World: 1756-1865
- o Chapter 4: Building an Empire: 1865-1914

Week 2 **History of US Foreign Policy in the 20th Century: Major Power to Superpower**

74 pages

Papp. Johnson, and Endicott, *American Foreign Policy: History Politics and Policy*

- o Chapter 5: Becoming a Global Power: 1914-1945
- o Chapter 6: Fighting the Cold War: 1945-1989

John Lewis Gaddis, "Hanging Tough Paid Off," *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations Vol. II: Since 1914*
fifth edition (Houghton Mifflin, 2000) pp. 618-622.

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Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "Engagement and Anti-Nuclearism, Not Containment Brought an End to the Cold War" *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations Volume II: Since 1914* fifth edition (Houghton Mifflin, 2000) pp. 622-628.

Ronald Reagan, Speech to the British Parliament, 1982.

Week 3

US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Superpower to Hyperpower; U.S. Foreign Policy Traditions and the "Long War"

86 pages

Papp. Johnson, and Endicott, *American Foreign Policy: History Politics and Policy*
o Chapter 7: Shaping the Post-Cold War World (pp. 192-225 only)

Walter McDougall, "Back to Bedrock: The Eight Traditions of U.S. Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, v.76 n.2 (March/April 1997).

Handout on Walter Russell Mead's Four Traditions of US Foreign Policy

Philip Bobbitt, "The Long War of the Nation-State," *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (New York: Knopf, 2002): 24-64.

Prepare for midterm

II. The Policy Process: Actors and Decision-making

Week 4

Actors and Decision-making Models: Who Decides and How?

82 pages

Papp. Johnson, and Endicott, *American Foreign Policy: History Politics and Policy*
o Chapter 8: The Presidency and the Executive branch in American Foreign Policy
o Chapter 9: Congress, the Courts, and the Public in American Foreign Policy

Paul D'Anieri, *International Politics: Power and Purpose in Global Affairs* (Wadsworth, 2010), pp. 157-179 (but feel free to skip the side boxes, just read the main text).

Week 5

Decision-making: Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War

113 pages

Gary Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)

- o Harry S. Truman and the Korean Crisis, pp. 8-40.
- o Lyndon B. Johnson and the Vietnam Crisis, pp. 75-112.
- o George H.W. Bush and the Persian Gulf Crisis, pp. 153-198.

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Week 6 **Iraq 2003: Decision-making and Debate**

72+ pages

Documents and Statements on the US Threat Perception and Iraq.

Gary Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq*

- o George W. Bush and the Second Crisis with Iraq, pp. 221-248.

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy* (Jan/Feb 2003).

Frank Harvey, "President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War," Canadian Defense & Foreign Affairs Institute (November 2008).

Prepare for Midterm

III. Current Topics in U.S. Foreign Policy

Week 7 **Exiting Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Future of War on Terror**

Michael O'Hanlon, "Exit from Afghanistan & Iraq: Right Time, Right Pace?" *Great Decisions Briefing Book* (Foreign Policy Association, 2011) pp. 59-69.

Additional current articles TBA

Week 8 **The US in Asia: The Rise of China**

51 pages

Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2005).

Kerry Brown, "How China is Weaker Than it Looks," *The Diplomat*, 10/12/2010.

John Lee, "China's America Obsession," *Foreign Policy*, 05/06/2011.

"China's Military Rise: The New Dragon's Teeth," *The Economist*, 04/07/2012.

Drew Thompson, "China's Military: It's Not Time to Panic...Yet," *Foreign Policy*, (March/April 2010).

Ross Terrill, "What if China Fails?" *The Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 2010).

Robert Kaplan, "How We Would Fight China," *The Atlantic* (June, 2005).

James Traub, "Over the Horizon: Is Worrying About War with China a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?" *Foreign Policy* (September, 2001).

Additional current articles TBA

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Week 9 **Iran and Nuclear Proliferation**

John M. Owen, "The Iran Debate," Miller Center of Public Affairs National Discussion and Debate Series White Paper, March 2009.

Additional current articles TBA

** Note: The reading load is reduced this week due to the Thanksgiving holiday. This topic, however, is very important. Remember that the final essay for this class will require you to define and address the national security challenges the US faces, and this is one of the critical topics.*

Week 10 **Conclusion: The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Primacy**

96 pages

Michael Mastanduno, System Maker and Privilege Taker: "US Power and the International Political Economy," *World Politics* (Jan 2009) 127-154 only.

Walter Russell Mead, "America's Sticky Power," *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2004).

Barry Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundations of US Hegemony," *International Security*, v. 28, n. 1 (Summer 2003), pp. 8-46 only

Christopher Layne, "This Time It's For Real: The End of Unipolarity and the Pax Americana," *International Studies Quarterly* (March 2012).

Robert Kaplan and Stephen Kaplan, "America Primed," *The National Interest* (March/April 2011)

Background Reading (optional):

Chapters 10 and 11 of your textbook provide a good background on the tools of foreign policy. It covers the basics of military force, diplomacy, trade, aid, reputation, and the various aspects of intelligence & covert action.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to "Student Online Services" to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

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