

Special Topics: U.S. Foreign Policy – PS 295
May 2023

Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Instructor: Dr. Andrew A. Szarejko (andrew.szarejko@wartburg.edu)

Office Location: CTC 306

Office Hours: Monday / Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:30, and any day by appointment

Classroom: MAIN FAC 213

Course Credit: 1 credit

Course Description and Goals

This course is an introduction to U.S. Foreign Policy from a perspective grounded in Political Science. We will consider how the United States interacts with other state and non-state actors, how these interactions have changed over time, who influences them, and what their future might look like. We will begin the class by considering what constitutes “foreign” policy and by examining different approaches one might take to the conduct thereof. We will then consider how domestic political actors shape U.S. foreign policy before turning to a brief overview of the history of U.S. foreign policy, during which we will frequently focus on the question of how changing international conditions shape U.S. foreign policy. We will then study the post-9/11 period and consider whether U.S. foreign policy since then represents a significant break with the past. We will conclude with ongoing debates about the appropriate direction for U.S. foreign policy to take given current conditions and likely future challenges.

Requirements and (Un)Grading

Requirements of this course include (1) reading assigned pieces, (2) contributing to in-class discussions, and (3) writing multiple papers. Our class sessions will generally take the form of a seminar in which we discuss assigned readings as a class; your engagement with class readings and participation in our discussions is essential to the class. I will only occasionally lecture, and some of our sessions may include a guest speaker or another activity.

The course structure reflects my goal of “ungrading,” which has been [defined](#) as “an umbrella term for any assessment that decenters the action of an instructor assigning a summary grade to student work”. In other words, I want you to be able to focus less on attaining a particular grade and more on your intellectual growth. Central to this effort will be (1) short papers that ask you to reflect on assigned readings and on your contributions to the class, (2) a longer analytic paper that I will ask you to revise and resubmit for your final paper, (3) pass/fail grading on all papers, and (4) end-of-term meetings in which you offer a self-assessment.

Attendance & Participation

This will primarily be a discussion-based class, so participation will constitute a large portion of your grade. Good participation in this course will entail regular attendance and making comments or asking questions that provide evidence of having done the reading and that move our discussion forward. It is less the quantity and more the quality of your in-class participation

that will determine your participation grade. We will primarily be reading scholarly articles, and you should be prepared to discuss the following questions on them: 1) What is the author's argument? 2) What kind of evidence does the author provide in support of their argument? 3) Does the evidence suffice to convince you of their argument? 4) If so, why? If not, what evidence would bolster their argument? 5) For sessions with multiple readings, how do the arguments relate to each other? For example, is one more convincing than the other? 6) As we progress through the course, consider also how the argument relates to earlier arguments you encounter.

I will occasionally provide lectures that may make use of PowerPoint slides, and when they do, I will post the slides on Canvas. Any sessions involving a guest speaker will generally take the form of a question-and-answer session, and while I will generally start with a question or two, I would ask you to come prepared to those sessions with questions for the speaker.

Please notify me as soon as possible if any documented medical, family/personal, or religious exceptions are likely to interfere with your regular participation in the course. Emergencies may not allow you time to e-mail in advance; in such cases, just notify me as soon as possible via email. Any given absence will not result in a set number of points being deducted from your participation grade; rather, I will consider your semester-long efforts when assigning a participation grade.

Note that class materials should not be disseminated to anyone outside the class.

Readings

Readings on this syllabus are subject to change, but most sessions in this course include at least one reading, and you should read the assigned article before coming to that day's class. In sessions with multiple readings, you should read them in the order of their listing. **I will make all materials freely available online through Canvas and/or through a link on the syllabus.** If I decide to modify any of the readings or assignments listed below, I will communicate any such changes in advance. If you have any trouble accessing any materials, please let me know. Likewise, we will discuss good reading and note-taking strategies in class, but if you are having any trouble with our readings, please see me at your earliest convenience.

Reading Reflection Paper

I will ask you to complete one reading reflection paper in the course. For this paper, (1) select two assigned readings from the course section on "A Brief History of U.S. Foreign Policy" (our second full week), (2) identify some way in which your two chosen pieces complement or contrast with each other in their view of U.S. foreign policy, and (3) conclude by briefly explaining which piece you think offers a better foundation for understanding U.S. foreign policy (past and present). This paper should be roughly 400 to 600 words. You should upload a PDF copy of this paper on our Canvas course site no later than midnight on Friday, May 12.

Discussion Reflection Paper

Alongside the reading reflection paper, I will ask you to evaluate your contributions to in-class discussions with one discussion reflection paper. In roughly 200-400 words, you should (1) describe how you would grade your participation so far, (2) explain why you would grade it that

way, (3) identify a point you are especially proud to have raised (or one that you wish you had raised), and (4) explain why that was a valuable point to raise in class (or why it would have been a valuable point to raise). As with the reading reflection paper, you should upload a PDF copy of this paper on our Canvas course site no later than midnight on Friday, May 12.

U.S. Foreign Policy Study: Part I

This is the first of three related assignments in which you will examine how the United States conducts foreign policy. For Part I, in no more than 750 words, (1) identify one foreign policy issue about which you want to learn more. (This could be, e.g., U.S. relations with a specific country or U.S. policy on a particular issue such as climate change.) (2) Explain why you are interested in that issue, and (3) briefly describe the state of public opinion on your issue (e.g., does opinion polling indicate more or less support to take policy in a certain direction? Does opinion polling suggest that the public has intense or apathetic views on this issue?) We will discuss appropriate sources of polling data in class. You should submit this paper by midnight on Friday, May 5.

U.S. Foreign Policy Study: Part II

Consider the same issue you examined in Part I of this assignment. In no more than 1,000 words, (1) Explain what current U.S. policy on your issue is, (2) explain how current U.S. policy compares to past U.S. policy on your issue, and (3) drawing on your discussion of the state of public opinion in Part I, explain why current U.S. policy takes the form that it does. To what extent is current U.S. policy on your issue shaped by the public or, on the other hand, by governmental actors, by non-governmental actors, or perhaps even by the international environment itself? This paper should cite at least two assigned scholarly articles and at least three external peer-reviewed sources (e.g., journal articles or university press books). Additional citations to other sources are welcome but not required. You should submit this paper by midnight on Friday, May 19.

U.S. Foreign Policy Study: Part III

After you submit Part II of this assignment, I will provide feedback on your papers. For Part III, you should revise the paper you submitted for Part II in line with my feedback, and you may take up to 1,250 words to do so. You should submit the revised paper (with tracked changes) by midnight on Wednesday, May 24.

We will discuss all of these assignments further in class, but if anything remains unclear, I encourage you to contact me via email or in office hours.

You should submit all of the written assignments on Canvas as PDF files. Documents should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with standard spacing, 1-inch margins, and page numbers in the upper right-hand corner. Please include your name, the date of your submission, and the course number in the upper-left hand corner as well as a centered title. I would suggest using parenthetical author-date citations and a works cited page for references, but proper attribution and consistency are the most important things when citing other works. Please note that I will not include headers, titles, page numbers, or references in the word count for your papers.

(Un)Grading

While ungrading will guide this course, you will still need a letter grade for this course on your transcript. The letter grade will be determined primarily by your participation and by writing assignments that will be graded on a pass/fail basis. (Papers that receive a “fail” can be revised and resubmitted once each in an effort to receive a “pass”; late papers will be accepted but cannot be resubmitted. Papers that receive a “fail” due to plagiarism cannot be resubmitted.)

When assigning a final letter grade, I will take the quality of those papers as well as demonstrated intellectual growth into consideration. At the end of the term, we will have one-on-one meetings in which I will ask each of you to detail the reason you should receive a given grade. This is meant to be a collaborative process in which you bring the critical thinking that we will be practicing all semester to bear on your own work. In short, you will have a say in your own grade, and our conversation will be based on the following allocation of points and grading scale:

Participation	30%
Reading Reflection Paper	10%
Discussion Reflection Paper	10%
U.S. Foreign Policy Study, Part I	10%
U.S. Foreign Policy Study, Part II	20%
U.S. Foreign Policy Study, Part III	20%

Grade	Percent
A	94-100%
A-	90-93.99%
B+	88-89.99%
B	84-87.99%
B-	80-83.99%
C+	78-79.99%
C	74-77.99%
C-	70-73.99%
D+	68-69.99%
D	64-66.99%
D-	60-63.99%
F	0-59%

Office Hours and E-mail Etiquette

I will hold office hours twice a week, during which you are free to come discuss any relevant academic matters with me. I encourage you to come for substantive questions about readings, lectures, and assignments (especially for the sort of questions that might be difficult to answer briefly via email), but I am also happy to discuss related academic matters such as post-graduate plans, internship ideas, and the like. If my posted office hours do not work for you, just talk to me before or after class or send me an email to schedule an appointment outside of those hours. You are also welcome to stop by my office (CTC 306) to see if I am available at any time.

I also encourage you to send me questions by email. When doing so, please include PS 295 in the subject line. If you send me an email and do not receive a reply within 24 hours, please follow up to remind me of your question. If it is a time-sensitive matter, you may follow up sooner as well, but keep in mind that I might not reply immediately to emails sent at odd hours.

I. An Introduction to U.S. Foreign Policy

May 1

Thinking about U.S. Foreign Policy

- Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Primacy of the National Interest,” *The American Scholar* Vol. 18, No. 2 (1949), pp. 207-212.
- William T. R. Fox, “The Reconciliation of the Desirable and the Possible,” *The American Scholar*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1949), pp. 212-216
- **Recommended (if you have not read this before):** Amelia Hoover Green, “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps” ([2013](#)).
- **Recommended (before you start writing papers):** Forrest D. Colburn and Norman Uphoff, “Common Expository Problems in Students’ Papers and Theses,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2012): 291-297.

May 2

Conceptualizing “Foreign” Policy

- Halvard Leira, “The Emergence of Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 63, No. 1 (2019): 187-198.

II. Who Makes American Foreign Policy?

May 3

The President and the National Security State

- Louis Fisher, “Foreign Policy Powers of the President and Congress,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 499 (1988): 148-159.

May 4

The Public in U.S. Foreign Policy

- Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page, “Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?,” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 99, No. 1 (2005): 107-123.

May 5

Between the Public and the President

- David M. McCourt, “Knowledge Communities in US Foreign Policy Making: The American China Field and the End of Engagement with the PRC,” *Security Studies* Vol. 31, No. 4 (2022): 593-633.

III. A Brief History of U.S. Foreign Policy

May 8

Foreign Policy in the Early Republic

- Daniel Deudney, “The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-union, circa 1787–1861,” *International Organization* Vol. 49, No. 2 (1995): 191-228.

May 9

From Isolation(?) to Empire(?)

- Julian Go, “The Provinciality of American Empire: ‘Liberal Exceptionalism’ and U.S. Colonial Rule, 1898–1912,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 49, No. 1 (2007): 74-108.

May 10

The World Wars and American Internationalism

- Stephen Wertheim, “Instrumental Internationalism: The American Origins of the United Nations, 1940–3,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2019), 265–283.

May 11

The Cold War: Containment, Rollback, and “A Long Twilight Struggle”

- Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, “Defending the West: Occidentalism and the Formation of NATO,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol. 11, No. 3 (2003): 223-252.

May 12

The Post-Cold War Era: Dreams of the ‘90s

- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?,” *The National Interest* No. 16 (1989): 3-18.
- Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy* No. 80 (1990): 153-171.

IV. Foreign Policy after 9/11: Rupture or Continuity?

May 15

“This is civilization's fight”: Launching a Global War on Terror

- Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer K. Lobasz, “Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq,” *Security Studies* Vol. 16, No. 3 (2007): 409-451.

May 16

“These are tough issues”: Primacy Pre- and Post-9/11

- Patrick Porter, “Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment,” *International Security* Vol. 42, No. 4 (2018): 9–46.

May 17

“America is back”: U.S. Foreign Policy from Obama to Biden

- Georg Löffman, “From the Obama Doctrine to America First: The erosion of the Washington consensus on grand strategy,” *International Politics* Vol. 57 (2020): 588-605.

V. The Future of U.S. Foreign Policy

May 18

Whither the “liberal international order”?

- G. John Ikenberry, “The Next Liberal Order,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 99, No. 4 (July/August 2020): 133-142.

- Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, “How Hegemony Ends,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 99, No. 4 (July/August 2020): 143-156.

May 19

America's Finances: Strength or Weakness?

- Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, “The Twilight of America’s Financial Empire,” *Foreign Affairs* (January 24, 2020): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/twilight-americas-financial-empire>.
- Carla Norrlof, “The Dollar Still Dominates,” *Foreign Affairs* (February 21, 2023): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/dollar-still-dominates>.

May 22

Addressing Climate Change

- Andrew S. Erickson and Gabriel Collins, “Competition with China Can Save the Planet,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 100, No. 3 (May/June 2021): 136-149.
- Sam Geall, Rebecca Peters, and Byford Tsang (with a reply by Andrew Erickson and Gabriel Collins), “Can America Trust China to Fight Climate Change?,” *Foreign Affairs* (July 23, 2021): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-07-23/can-america-trust-china-fight-climate-change>.

May 23

Alternatives on the Left and Right

- Van Jackson et al., “Policy Roundtable: The Future of Progressive Foreign Policy,” *Texas National Security Review* (December 4, 2018): <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-the-future-of-progressive-foreign-policy/>.*
- Colin Dueck et al., “Policy Roundtable: The Future of Conservative Foreign Policy,” *Texas National Security Review* (November 30, 2018): <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-the-future-of-conservative-foreign-policy/>.*

*Read the introductory essay to each roundtable and one additional essay in each roundtable as assigned.

May 24

Conclusion

- No readings for this session.