

Gov 388: Seminar on American Foreign Policy  
Fall 2010

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Course description and requirements

This year the seminar will focus on competing approaches to the study of American foreign policy. Drawing on historical and contemporary cases of US statecraft, we will consider how international and domestic politics have shaped America's geopolitical priorities. In this connection, we will assess the relevance of the American experience for theorizing about foreign policy and the implications of alternative theories for thinking critically about foreign policy issues facing the United States today.

The course is run as a seminar, which makes participation absolutely essential. You are expected to complete all the readings before the due date and actively engage in discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss each reading on its own terms (e.g., what's the author's basic argument, how does the author develop and support his/her claims, etc.) as well as how the readings for the week relate to one another. Discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard several days before seminar meets. Seminar will be organized around these questions. Everyone should be prepared to respond to all the questions. Class participation will account for 40 percent of your final grade.

Written work for this seminar will count for the remaining 60 percent of your grade and can take one of three forms: (1) a seminar paper (approximately 20 double-spaced pages) on some aspect of US grand strategy; (2) three prelim-style essays (approximately 7 double-spaced pages each) in response to questions posed by the instructor; or (3) a critical book review essay analyzing five books (approximately 20 double-spaced pages). Two of these books must be works that do not appear on the syllabus (approval of the instructor is required).

You should choose the writing form that best serves your needs. Each assignment serves a different goal and there is no advantage in terms of grading. The seminar paper is well suited to those of you interested in pursuing some larger theoretical question about foreign policy/grand strategy or tackling some empirical or policy-related question. The essays provide an opportunity to gain experience in writing answers to prelim-style questions. The book review is suitable for looking for an opportunity to hone your critical skills. The relevant requirements and deadlines for each are listed below:

- Seminar paper
  - September 30: 3 page proposal/bibliography due
  - December 7: final 20 page paper due
- Short essays
  - September 30: first essay due
  - November 1: second essay due
  - December 7: third essay due
- Critical review
  - September 30: 3 page proposal/bibliography due
  - December 7: final 20 page paper due

All of the books listed below are required and may be purchased at the University Coop. Additional readings are available on-line at [www.courses.utexas.edu](http://www.courses.utexas.edu).

Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, second edition (Longman 1999)  
 Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries* (Princeton 1996)  
 Michael Cox, John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, *American Democracy Promotion* (Oxford 2000)  
 Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders* (Princeton 2006)  
 George Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, expanded edition (Chicago 1984)  
 Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest* (Princeton 1978)  
 Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think* (Public Affairs 2008)  
 Kevin Narziny, *Political Economy of Grand Strategy* (Cornell 2007)  
 Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Cornell 1991)  
 Fareed Zakeria, *The Post-American World* (Norton 2008)

### Topics and Readings

August 26      Introduction and overview

September 2    No class – APSA meetings

September 9    Theory building and foreign policy

- Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton 1976), 13-31
- John Ikenberry, David A. Lake, and Michael Mastanduno, “Approaches to Explaining American Foreign Economic Policy,” *International Organization* 42 (Winter 1988): 1-14
- James Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (June 1998): 289-313

September 16   Power politics and foreign policy

- Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest*, chapters 1-3, 5-6, 8-9
- Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review* (June/July 2002), 3-28
- David Lake, “*International Economic Structures and American Foreign Economic Policy, 1887-1934*,” 35 (July 1983): 517-43

September 23   Democracy and foreign policy

- George Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, parts 1 and 3
- Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, chapters 1, 2, and 7
- John Schuessler, “The Deception Dividend: FDR’s Undeclared War,” *International Security* 34 (Spring 2010): 133-65

September 30   State strength and foreign policy

- Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, chapters, 1-4, 7
- Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 51 (October 1998): 144-72

- Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” *International Security* 24 (Fall 1999): 5-55

October 7      Interest groups and foreign policy

- Kevin Narziny, *Political Economy of Grand Strategy*, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6
- Jeffrey Frieden, “Sectoral Conflicts and US Foreign Economic Policy,” *International Organization* (Winter 1988), 59-90
- Lynn Eden, “Capitalist Conflict and the State: The Making of United States Military Policy in 1948,” in Bright and Harding, *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Michigan 1984), 233-61

October 14     Political culture and foreign policy

- Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, chapters 1-2, 4-5
- Samuel Huntington, “American Ideals Versus American Institutions,” *Political Science Quarterly* 97 (Spring 1982): 1-37
- Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Harvard 2002), 79-116

October 21     Bureaucracies and foreign policy

- Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, chapters 1-2, 5-6
- Stephen Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important (or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy* 7 (Summer 1972): 159-79
- Seymour Hersh, “The Stovepipe,” *The New Yorker* (October 2003): 1-9

October 28     Presidents, parties, and statecraft

- Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Statecraft: Partisan Ambition and Grand Strategy*, (Princeton, forthcoming 2011), entire
- Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two- Level Games,” *International Organization* 42 (Summer 1988): 427-60
- Aaron Wildavsky, “The Two Presidencies,” in Wildavsky, *Perspectives on the Presidency* (Little Brown 1975), 448-61

November 4     Democracy promotion as foreign policy

- Michael McFaul, “Democracy Promotion as a World Value,” *Washington Quarterly* 28 (Winter 2004/05), 147-63
- Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi, *American Democracy Promotion*, Introduction, chapters 1-4
- Robert Hunter Wade, “The Invisible Hand of the American Empire,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 17 (November 2003): 77-88

November 11    No class

November 18   China’s rise and US foreign policy

- Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think*, entire

- Aaron Friedberg, “The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?,” *International Security* 30 (Fall 2005), 7-45
- Elizabeth Economy and Adam Segal, “The G-2 Mirage: Why the United States and China are not Ready to Upgrade Ties,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2009), 14-23

November 25 No class – Thanksgiving break

Dec 02 A Post-American World?

- Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, entire
- John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth, “Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences,” *World Politics* 61 (January 2009): 1-27
- Martha Finnemore, “Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity,” *World Politics* 61 (January 2009): 58-85

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Seminar discussion questions

Seminar discussion will address the questions below. Class participants will be called on weekly. In preparing responses, you should consider how the week's various authors might respond to these questions. More generally, how do scholars in different schools of thought think about these questions and the issues they raise about foreign policy and world politics.

September 9 Theory building and foreign policy

Is theorizing about foreign policy possible? What are some of the main theoretical approaches to foreign policy today? Does the U.S. case raise special issues for theorizing about foreign policy? Should knowledge accumulation or "policy-relevance" guide our assessment of foreign policy theories?

September 16 Power politics and foreign policy

What characteristics of the international system are most relevant to understanding foreign policy? How does a state's "relative power" affect its foreign policy behavior? To what extent should the American "case" be considered unique or "exceptional," and with what consequences for its foreign policy?

September 23 Democracy and foreign policy

Are democracies "decidedly inferior" (Tocqueville) in the conduct of foreign affairs? Do democratic institutions inhibit purposeful and effective foreign policy? Does public opinion matter in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy? What lessons can we draw from this week's readings about the conduct of American statecraft?

September 30 State strength and foreign policy

Why do states exaggerate foreign threats? How does Christensen's approach compare to Snyder's approach from last week? Is the United States more susceptible to threat inflation (i.e. "failure in the marketplace of ideas") than other states? Why or why not?

October 7 Interest groups and foreign policy

Many international relations scholars treat "interest groups," "classes," or "sectors" as the unit of analysis in explaining the foreign policy behavior of the U.S. and other states. How does this general approach differ from realist approaches (e.g., neoclassical realism)? What are its strengths and limitations?

October 14 Political culture and foreign policy

How do American values influence its foreign policy? Why, according to Huntington, does the promotion of liberty abroad inevitably result in conflict at home? How does Dueck explain America's propensity to overreach (and underperform) in foreign policy?

October 21 Bureaucracies and foreign policy

Graham Allison once said that “where policy makers stand depends on where they sit.” What did he mean by this? How useful is the bureaucratic politics approach for understanding foreign policy? What does the bureaucratic politics approach imply about the role and importance of presidents in making US foreign policy?

October 28 Presidents, parties, and statecraft

How do presidents select or choose their foreign policies? Why do some presidents pursue ambitious, costly foreign policies, whereas others presents adopt narrower, cheaper ones? What role, if any, do party and electoral politics play in presidential decision-making about foreign policy?

November 4 Democracy promotion as foreign policy

Why did democracy promotion assume greater importance in U.S. foreign policy after the end of the Cold War? Can the spread of democracy ameliorate some of the causes of war? Is it possible to export democracy?

November 18 China’s rise and US foreign policy

Does China’s rise as a great power pose a threat to the United States? Can China be encouraged to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international order? Should Washington rely on a strategy of “containment” or “engagement” in dealing with Beijing?

Dec 02 A Post-American World?

What foreign policy challenges are likely to face the United States in the next ten years? What does Zakaria think America’s main competitive strengths are? Is he too optimistic about U.S. power and influence? What, if anything, does his account of American power and standing going-forward leave out or downplay?