

IR211: America as a Global Power: FDR to Biden

Lecturer: Professor Peter Trubowitz

Class instructor: Ms. Sophie Kaldor

Summer school programme area: International Relations, Government and Society

LSE teaching department: International Relations

Prerequisites: At least one introductory course in social science, history, or law.

Course Content:

This course examines the evolution of American statecraft since World War II, with special emphasis on the president's role in defining the nation's interests. Drawing on historical and contemporary cases, we consider how international power and domestic politics shape the president's geopolitical priorities and how those priorities have changed over time.

The course is designed to increase students' knowledge of why America's leaders pursue the grand strategies they do and what the American experience can tell us more generally about the international and domestic sources of grand strategy and statecraft.

Teaching format

There are 36 hours of lectures and 18 hours of classes. Students are expected to attend all lecture and class meetings and actively engage in class discussion.

Formative coursework

Students must prepare a short 1-2-page essay outline (to be submitted on Friday of week one) and one in-class presentation in consultation with the class teacher.

Course assessment

Assessment is based on one 1500-word written essay and one written examination. The essay will be based on a prompt provided by the course instructor and count for 50% of the final mark. It will be due on Thursday of week two, with results reported on Monday of week three. The two-hour exam will be held at the end of the programme (Friday of week three). The exam will count for 50% of the final mark, and the precise time and location of the exam will be circulated during the programme.

Course readings

Required readings can be purchased from good book sellers. Electronic copies are also on reserve at the LSE Library. Most of the additional readings are in John Ikenberry and Peter Trubowitz, *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (Oxford 2014), which is on reserve at the library. Other additional readings are on electronic reserve at the library. For those who want to review US foreign policy and diplomatic history, a copy of George Herring's,

From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776 (Oxford 2008) is on reserve at the library.

Required readings:

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford 2005) – Also available from the LSE Library as an ebook

Timothy Lynch, *In the Shadow of Cold War* (Cambridge, 2020) – Also available from the LSE Library as an ebook

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy* (Princeton 2011) – Also available from LSE Library as an ebook

LECTURE SCHEDULE:

Part 1. Competing approaches to American statecraft

June 19: The problem of explanation

Required reading

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapter 1

Additional reading

Nina Silove, 'Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of "Grand Strategy,"' *Security Studies* 27 (August 2017): 1-31

Introduction and readings by Ole Holsti and James Kurth in *American Foreign Policy*

June 20: Presidents, politics, and strategy

Required reading

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapter 2

Additional reading

Readings by Michael Mastanduno and William Howell & Jon Pevehouse in *American Foreign Policy*

Part 2. American statecraft in action

June 21: Roosevelt, Truman, and the Pax Americana

Required reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapters 1-2

Additional reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapters 3-4

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapter 3

Readings by Melvyn Leffler, John Ikenberry, and Fred Block in *American Foreign Policy*

June 22: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Soviet power

Required reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapters 5 and 7

Additional reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapter 6

Readings by Graham Allison, Stephen Krasner, and Elizabeth Saunders in *American Foreign Policy*

June 23: Johnson and the Vietnam War

Required reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapter 8

Additional reading

Leslie Gelb, 'Vietnam: The System Worked,' *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1971): 140-167

Reading by Yuen Foong Khong in *American Foreign Policy*

June 26: Nixon, Ford, Carter, and strategic adjustment

Required reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapter 9

Additional reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapter 10

Reading by Samuel Huntington in *American Foreign Policy*

June 27: Reagan, Bush, and the reassertion of US power

Required reading

John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chapters 11-12

Additional reading

Timothy Lynch, *In the Shadow of Cold War*, chapter 1

Reading by Trubowitz in *American Foreign Policy*

June 28: Clinton, George W. Bush, and unipolarity

Required reading

Timothy Lynch, *In the Shadow of Cold War*, chapter 2-5

Additional reading

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapters 4-5

Melvyn Leffler, 'What Really Took America to War in Iraq,' *The Atlantic*, January 23, 2023

Readings by Samantha Power, Dina Badie, John Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, and John Western in *American Foreign Policy*

June 29: Obama, Trump, and retrenchment

Required reading

Timothy Lynch, *In the Shadow of Cold War*, chapters 6-7, conclusion

Additional reading

Jeffrey Goldberg, 'The Obama Doctrine,' *The Atlantic* (April 2016)

Nadia Shadlow, 'The End of American Illusion: Trump and the World as It Is,' *Foreign Affairs*, 99 (September/October 2020): 35-45

Jonathan Kirshner, 'Gone but Not Forgotten: Trump's Long Shadow and the End of American Credibility,' *Foreign Affairs* 100 (March/April 2021): 18-27

Part 3: End of the 'American Century'?

July 03: Coping with China's rise

Required reading

Fareed Zakaria, 'The New China Scare: Why America Shouldn't Panic About its Latest Challenger,' *Foreign Affairs* 99 (January/February 2020): 52-69.

Additional reading

Graham Allison, 'China vs. America: Managing the Next Clash of Civilizations,' *Foreign Affairs* 96 (September/October 2017): 80-89.

Wang Jisi, 'The Plot Against China? How Beijing Sees the New Washington Consensus,' *Foreign Affairs* 100 (July/August 2021): 48-57

July 04: The Populist Backlash

Required reading

Stefanie Walter, 'The Backlash Against Globalization,' *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24 (2021): 421-442

Additional reading

Walter Russell Mead, 'The Jacksonian Revolt, American Populism, and the Liberal Order,' *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2017):

Peter Trubowitz and Brian Burgoon, 'Make the Center Vital Again,' *Foreign Affairs* May 3, 2023: 1-9

July 05: Biden's strategy of renewal

Required reading

Jake Sullivan, 'Renewing American Economic Leadership,' The White House, April 27, 2023

Additional reading

Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, 'The Myth of Multipolarity: America's Staying Power,' *Foreign Affairs* 102 (May/June 2023): 76-91

Peter Trubowitz and Peter Harris 'The end of the American century? Slow erosion of the domestic sources of usable power,' *International Affairs* 93 (2019): 619-639