

IR211: America as a Global Power: FDR to Trump

Lecturer: Professor Peter Trubowitz

Class instructors: Mr. Thomas Wilkinson and Mr. Jonny Hall

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 description

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. You 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 in class on Friday 21 June) and one in-class presentation in consultation with 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 is due in class on Thursday 27 June. The two-hour exam will be held at the end of the programme. The exam will count for 50% of the final mark.

Course readings

Required readings can be purchased at Waterstone's Books on campus. 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 also available for purchase at Waterstone's and on reserve at the library. Additional readings are on 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)

Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back* (Knopf, 2018)

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy* (Princeton 2011)

Lecture schedule:

Part 1. Competing approaches to American statecraft

June 17: Overview and introduction

Required reading

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapter 1

Additional reading

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

June 18: 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 19: 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 20: 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*, chapters 6

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

June 21: Johnson and the Vietnam War

Required reading

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

Additional reading

Reading by Yuen Foong Khong in *American Foreign Policy*

June 24: 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 25: Reagan, Bush, and the reassertion of US power

Required reading

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

Additional reading

Reading by Trubowitz in *American Foreign Policy*

June 26: Clinton, George W. Bush, and unipolarity

Required reading

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

Additional reading

Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* (1990/1991)

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

June 27: Obama, economic crisis, and retrenchmentRequired reading

Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, chapter 6

Additional reading

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

Hal Brands, 'Barack Obama and the Dilemmas of American Grand Strategy,' *The Washington Quarterly* 39 (Winter 2016): 101-25.

Part 3: End of the 'American Century'?**July 1: Coping with China's rise**Required reading

Graham Allison, 'The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?,' *The Atlantic* (September 2015).

Additional reading

Reading by Aaron Friedberg in *American Foreign Policy*

Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century,' *International Security* 40 (Winter 2015/16):7-53.

July 2: Trump, America and the WorldRequired reading

Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back*, pp. 3-105

Additional reading

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

Randall Schweller, 'Three Cheers for Trump's Foreign Policy: What the Establishment Misses,' *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2018)

July 3: Retrenchment or renewal?Required reading

Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back*, pp. 105-163

Additional reading

Fareed Zakaria, 'The Self-Destruction of American Power' *Foreign Affairs* 98 (2019): 10-16.

Peter Trubowitz and Peter Harris, 'The End of the American Century?' *International Affairs* 95 (2019):619-639.