

MASARYK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES

Fall 2009
Syllabus for United States Foreign Policy

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11 am

Course Outline:

America's foreign policy is an expression of its goals in the world and how it proposes to achieve these goals. Thus, US Foreign Policy reflects the mix of preferences among institutions, actors, and processes which influences the shape and dimensions of foreign policy.

The complexity of foreign policymaking has greatly increased with the blurring of the distinction between foreign and domestic issues. Economics (especially trade issues and issues around globalization) is just one of the areas where foreign and domestic concerns intersect. In addition, while the end of the Cold War initially created opportunities for a more cooperative approach to peace and security, it also created an era of uncertainty. Issues related to nationalism, regional conflicts, nuclear proliferation, human rights, trade, the realities of globalization and international chaos are all challenges for United States foreign policy today. Of course, the 'The Long War,' also known as the 'Global War on Terrorism' (GWOT) also evokes many questions about the direction of US foreign policy.

What are United States' interests in this international arena? What are the appropriate uses of U.S. military force? What is the role of 'unilateralism' in United States foreign policy or a policy of pre-emption? What can the United States expect of its allies? What are the relevant "domestic" factors guiding United States foreign policy today (including elections). What are the ethical issues arising from superpower status? These and other issues are analyzed in this course.

This course begins by examining the theories in international relations, the institutions, and actors that determine U.S. foreign policy. U.S. foreign policy process can be complex indeed and, as we shall learn, involves struggles within the bureaucracies and between the branches of government. After a very brief historical review of U.S. foreign policy leading up to WWII, a special emphasis will then be placed upon the development and carrying out of a Cold War foreign policy. While the Cold War may have prevented a direct confrontation with the former USSR, the consequences for other regions of the world (Indochina, Central America, the Middle East, Africa) were not insignificant. Next, we will analyze the issues confronting the United States today in different regions of the world, with a focus on security issues, geopolitical objectives, economic objectives, human rights, and more. Finally, our conclusions will analyze some of those "transnational" issues confronting US foreign policy today.

Required & Recommended Texts:

To maintain lower costs for students, the Instructor will provide weekly readings available via online sources from the electronic resources of Masaryk University.

Most of these documents will be in PDF or HTML format. In addition, a number of articles will be provided by the Instructor for students to access via online course reserves managed

by the Instructor.

There are several key texts however that are helpful and can serve as broader references for your studies. These include among many others:

Hook, Steven. U.S. Foreign Policy: The Paradox of World Power (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000; 2005).

Spanier, John and Steven W. Hook. American Foreign Policy Since World War II (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2007; 2009).

Bruce Jentleson, American Foreign Policy (Norton, 2000).

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to stay abreast of current events related to United States foreign policy. Time will be taken during each class to discuss and analyze the relevance of the week's major events. Since class discussions will be an integral part of the course design, attendance is important. Students will want to update themselves with major online news outlets and sources in order to supplement this component of the course.

It is essential that the participants read the required literature as preparation for the course and come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the themes of the weekly topics. Since we are having a midterm exam with materials drawn from the readings and lectures (scheduled sometime during late October, early November), it is imperative to attend class and do the course readings. **YOU CAN ANTICIPATE 40-80 pages of reading per week.**

The instructor also will take every effort to screen out cases of plagiarism. These will be dealt with according to university regulations. Plagiarism has been understood as any usage of text of other author(s) without proper referencing in your work.

The final grade for this course is a composite of the following values:

In-class attendance: 10%

In-class participation: 15%

Midterm Exam: 30%

Final Exam, January 2010: 45 %

For the midterm examination, you will be provided through electronic means a "Review Sheet" about one week before the exam. Typically, there is an objective section of either matching or true/false or multiple-choice format, based on assigned readings and lectures.

For the Final Exam, there will be essay format questions based on readings and lectures (that is, covering material and ideas not necessarily found in the readings). Thus, attendance at lectures is extremely important if not essential to doing well on exams. Other than the essays on exams, there is no separate "paper" required for the course. There is no prerequisite for the course, but background and intellectual curiosity in modern history and/or IR will help.

Lecture Schedule & Topical Outline:

- Part I Introduction, “Foreign Policy Goals of the U.S.”
- Readings
Required: None
Recommended: Spanier, ch.1; Hook, chs. 1&2; Spanier Chapter 2 is also recommended for discussion of Prelude to the Cold War: Marxism, & the Russian Revolution
- Policymaking: Theories of Decisionmaking in US Foreign Policy
Recommended: Hook, ch.3
- Institutions: Presidential Powers & Congressional Powers & the Bureaucracy
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Hook, chs.4, 5, & 6
- “Grand Strategy for a Divided America”: The Culture War in Foreign Policy
Required: Assigned by the Instructor
- Sources of Foreign Policy:
Public Opinion and Interest Groups
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Hook, chs. 7&8
- Intergovernmental Organizations
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Hook, ch. 9
- Policy Domains: National Security/Defense; Economic Policy; Globalization & Transnational Challenges
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Hook, chs. 10, 11, &12
- Part II The Cold War & Containment
- The Truman Doctrine, & NSC 68: Implementation of Containment
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Spanier, ch.3
- Eisenhower Doctrine: The Third World (focus on the Middle East)
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Spanier, ch.4
- Nixon Doctrine: Asia: Korea\China\Indochina
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: chs.5&6
- Carter’s Idealism: North-South Debate, etc.
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Spanier, ch. 7
- Reagan Doctrine: East/West Tensions
Required: As assigned by Instructor online

Recommended: Spanier, ch.8
New World (Dis)order: Bush & Clinton & Bush II
Required: As assigned by Instructor online
Recommended: Spanier, chs.9-11

Part III Regional/Bilateral Issues of Today & Guideposts for the Future: Critical Themes of US Foreign Policy

The New US Foreign Policy Regime Under Obama - “Global Threats” versus Relations to Specific Policy: Disconnects of USFP
“Realists” & Ideological Extremists as Policy Makers
Violation of International Law as the Norm
Was the Election of 2008 a Foreign Policy ‘Norm’ or ‘Aberration?’

Recommended: Spanier, chs.13&14; others as assigned by Instructor