

GOV 344 (38722)
11F American Foreign Relations

University of Texas, Fall 2011

MWF 9-10a, MEZ B0.306

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Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the theory and practice of American foreign policy, with a particular focus on the post-1945 era. We focus on systematic, scientific explanations for the why and the how of decisions over war and peace, alliances, trade, and foreign aid, and we will discuss both the international and domestic sources of these policies. The goal is to build a useful, practical base of knowledge for understanding both ongoing and future issues in American foreign relations. So this is *not* a history class, or even one about current events—though students will walk away from this course with a broad set of tools for thinking, speaking, and acting intelligently about foreign policy in the future. Specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to

- use the framework of preferences, incentives, and strategy to understand policy outcomes
- think critically about policy alternatives and assess them with rigorous thought and evidence
- be able to change someone else's mind about foreign policy
- be *willing* to change your own mind about foreign policy
- perhaps most importantly, hold your own arguments to the same standards of logical thinking to which we hold the materials in the course.

The course begins with a brief primer in theories of war, international trade, and the international system. We then look at specific features of the American political system—institutions, public opinion, intra-branch politics—to explore how they shape the decisions of policymakers who seek to gain and retain elected office. We then follow a more or less historical path from the Cold War to the present, considering specific applications of the theories of war and trade. We conclude by addressing the question of what, if anything, the past and present of American foreign relations can tell us about the future.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, though students are likely to perform better with some basic courses in political science as a background.

Grading

The following components make up the course grade:

- 20% **midterm exam 1**, September 30
- 25% **midterm exam 2**, November 4
- 35% **final exam**, December 10, 7-10p
- 20% **short assignments and quizzes**, given randomly

I assign letter grades on a distribution rather than against an absolute numerical scale. Therefore, numerical grades may not reflect your ultimate letter grade.

Quizzes are brief and are designed to evaluate whether students are keeping up with the readings, while assignments are typically short (1-2 pages) and designed to get students to apply the logic of arguments used in class to current issues in American foreign policy. As such, I recommend that you keep up with current events by paying particular attention to the World or International News sections of major news sources like the New York Times, the BBC, or the Economist. Current events *as they relate to the substantive material of the course* will be a frequent topic of discussion when useful.

Course Policies

While I have no attendance policy *per se*, missing information in the lectures will be a serious problem for your ability to perform well in the course, because (1) some of the readings are demanding on their own and may need to be clarified in class and (2) lectures will *very often* contain important information not found in the readings. Additionally, I will post neither lecture notes nor slides online: getting that information through attendance and participation is your responsibility. Obviously, missing class will also prevent you from earning a decent participation grade, because quizzes are part of that grade. Finally, I usually give quizzes by asking questions at the beginning of class, and I won't re-ask a question (or re-give the quiz) if you're late.

Missed exams will be excused and made-up after the fact in cases of illness and personal emergency *only with proper documentation*. Exams missed due to a university sponsored event or religious holiday may also be excused, provided that the student informs me of the absence *at least two weeks in advance*. Vacation (e.g. leaving early for fall or semester break) and social engagements will *not* be excused. Check the exam schedule before making travel plans as well, as I will *not* give makeup exams in advance. There will be no exceptions.

Should you wish to challenge a grade you received on a specific question on an exam, you must (a) write a memo detailing why you deserve more points (i.e. why you came closer to getting the right answer than points reflect) and (b) turn that memo in to me within two weeks of the class receiving the grades. Otherwise, I won't consider challenges to your grade.

Finally, the readings and schedule of the syllabus are subject to change, but any such changes will be noted with an announcement either in class and/or via email, as well as an updated copy of the syllabus posted online at the course website and/or Blackboard.

University and Campus Policies

1. Students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

2. Accommodations for religious holidays.

By university policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

3. Academic dishonesty.

“*Scholastic dishonesty* . . . includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act” (Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*).

If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and the following website: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/academicintegrity.html>. Any student that violates this policy will fail this course and have the details of the violation reported to Student Judicial Services.

4. Emergency evacuation policy.

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with “Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley” written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Readings

Many course readings will be available online through the library's e-journals system, unless otherwise noted, in which case the readings are linked as noted in the syllabus. There is also one required text:

- Ray, James Lee. 2008. *American Foreign Policy and Political Ambition, 1st Ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Further, students are expected to have completed readings by the day for which they are assigned.

Course Outline and Schedule

Session 1 (24 August). *politics, science, and Newton's Second Law*

- Ray, Chapter 1

Foundations

Session 2 (26 August). *the theory of war*

Session 3 (29 August). *the theory of trade*

Session 4 (31 August). *a brief history of American foreign relations*

- Ray, Chapter 2

Session 5 (2 September). *politicians as politicians*

- Ray, Chapter 3

The United States as Superpower

Session 6 (7 September). *power in an era of globalization*

- Ray, Chapter 4

Session 7 (9 September). *hegemony and strategic restraint*

- Ikenberry, G. John. 1998/1999. "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order." *International Security* 23.3:43-78. [[Link](#)]

Session 8 (12 September). *great powers and international institutions*

- Voeten, Erik. 2005. "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59.3:527-557 [Link]

Session 9 (14 September). *public opinion and parties*

- Ray, Chapter 5

Session 10 (16 September). *presidents, succession, and military conflict*

- Bak, Daehee and Glenn Palmer. 2010. "Testing the Biden Hypotheses: Leader Tenure, Age, and International Conflict." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6.3:257-273. [e-journals]

Session 11 (19 September). *The democratic peace*

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson and Alastair Smith. 1999. "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 93.4:791-807. [Link]

Session 12 (21 September). *"diversionary" war*

Session 13 (23 September). *foreign policy institutions*

- Ray, Chapter 6

Session 14 (26 September). *the president and congress*

- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2005. "Presidents, Congress, and the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59.1:209-232. [Link]

Session 15 (28 September). *declared and undeclared wars*

Session 16 (30 September). *First midterm.*

The Cold War

Session 17 (3 October). *the beginning of the Cold War*

- Ray, Chapter 7

Session 18 (5 October). *building world order*

Session 19 (7 October). *the world war that never happened*

- Gaddis, John L. 1986. "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System." *International Security* 10.4:99-142 [Link]

Session 20 (10 October). *nuclear weapons and strategy I*

Session 21 (12 October). *nuclear weapons and strategy II*

- Powell, Robert. 2003. "Nuclear Deterrence Theory, Nuclear Proliferation, and National Missile Defense." *International Security* 27.4:86-118 [[Link](#)]

Session 22 (14 October). *political competition and international rivalry*

- Colaresi, Michael P. 2004. "When Doves Cry: International Rivalry, Unreciprocated Cooperation, and Leadership Turnover." *American Journal of Political Science* 48.3:555-570. [[Link](#)]

Session 23 (17 October). *the Vietnam war and containment I*

- Ray, Chapter 8

Session 24 (19 October). *the Vietnam war and containment II*

The United States in the World

Session 25 (21 October). *the United States in Europe*

- Ray, Chapter 9

Session 26 (24 October). *alliance politics I*

- Olson, Mancur, Jr., and Richard Zeckhauser. 1966. "An Economic Theory of Alliances." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 48.3:266-279. [[Link](#)]

Session 27 (26 October). *alliance politics II*

- Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science* 47.3:427-440. [[Link](#)]

Session 28 (28 October). *the Western hemisphere*

- Ray, Chapter 10

Session 29 (31 October). *Africa*

- Ray, Chapter 11

Session 30 (2 November). *foreign aid and human rights*

- Gibler, Douglas M. 2008. "United States Economic Aid and Repression: The Opportunity Cost Argument." *The Journal of Politics* 70.2:513-526 [[Link](#)]

Session 31 (4 November). *Second midterm exam*

Session 32 (7 November). *Asia and the rise of China*

- Ray, Chapter 12

Session 33 (9 November). *power transitions and international institutions*

Session 34 (11 November). *the Middle East*

- Ray, Chapter 13

Session 35 (14 November). *the Iraq War*

- Bennett, D. Scott and Allan C. Stam. 2006. "Predicting the Length of the 2003 U.S.-Iraq War." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2:101-116. [[Link](#)]

Session 36 (16 November). *Iran and regional power politics*

Session 37 (18 November). *counterterrorism and Homeland Security*

The Future of World Order

Session 38 (21 November). *into the 21st Century*

- Ray, Chapter 14

Session 39 (23 November). *intervention and democracy promotion*

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and George M. Downs. 2006. "Intervention and Democracy." *International Organization* 60:627-649. [[Link](#)]

Session 40 (28 November). *separatism and ethnic conflict*

- Fearon, James D. 2004. "Separatist Wars, Partition, and World Order." *Security Studies* 13.4:394-415. [[Link](#)]

Session 41 (30 November). *reforming the United Nations*

Session 42 (2 December). *"peer competitors," demographics, and national power*

- Haas, Mark L. 2007. "A Geriatric Peace? The Future of U.S. Power in a World of Aging Populations." *International Security* 32.1:112-147. [[e-journals](#)]

Final Exam (10 December). *7-10p*