POSC 231 American Foreign Policy

Preliminary Syllabus - Fall 2000

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Course Description & Objectives:

This course will be devoted to a detailed investigation of American foreign policy. Specifically, we will examine some of the contemporary foreign policy issues facing the US and how the participants in the foreign policy process handle current policy challenges. To do so, we will first discuss some key concepts of US foreign policymaking. These fundamentals include the structure of the international system of nation-states, national power and interests, the historical context of American foreign policy, relevant actors in US foreign affairs, models of foreign policy decision making, and the tools of foreign policymaking. We will then focus on how US foreign policy varies by region of the world as well as on some "new" issue areas that are of great concern to US policymakers—the challenge of collective security, the global economy and world trade, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human rights, humanitarian interventionism, international terrorism, and the international narcotics trade. The objective of this course is to confer upon you an understanding of how knowledge of the past, the global policy environment, the actors and processes of foreign policy decision making, and the specifics of the particular issue under consideration all come together to help determine US foreign policy in the modern world. In the process of accomplishing this course objective, I hope to also confer upon you an understanding of how American foreign policy affects you, the individual citizen.

Course Requirements, Policies, & Grading:

The course has been divided into five sections. For each of sections two through five, each student will select one of the sub-topics of that section and write a short essay on that topic (each of about 5 pages of text excluding endnotes and references; typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1" page margins; with within-text citations, endnotes, and a list of all references; generally following the standards established in commonly accepted style manuals). To receive any grade above a B-, a student must produce a thoughtful, comprehensive, and well-written essay that borrows ideas and arguments from the assigned readings as well as from "outside" source material to critically analyze the subject.

The course will also include a comprehensive final exam. This exam will be a take-home exam, and will consist of several short-essay-answer questions. To facilitate preparation for this exam (as well as to generate some debate), the class period following the completion of each of sections two through five has been set aside for a comprehensive discussion of the preceding section of course material. A list of questions drawn from that section's course material will be provided a few days ahead of time so that students may prepare themselves for a lively class period of discussion and debate. Active student participation in these "review" sessions is expected, and will be the basis upon which the "class participation" grade is decided. In addition to active class participation, a good class attendance record is also expected through the entire course.

Grades will be based on the following distribution scheme:

Short essay #1: 15 %
Short essay #2: 15 %
Short essay #3: 15 %
Short essay #4: 15 %
Class participation: 10 %
Comprehensive final exam: 30 %
98 -100 % A+
94 - 97 % A
91 - 93 % A-
88 - 90 % B+
83 - 87 % B
79 - 82 % B-
76 - 78 % C+
72 - 75 % C
68 - 71 % C-
51 - 67 % D
0 - 50 % F

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see Carleton College's Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers and the section on "academic honesty" in Academic Regulations and Procedures, 2000-01. Both are available in Laird 140.

Special needs: Students requiring access to learning tools or special schedules approved by Student Support Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

Reading Assignments:

You are expected to keep up with the reading assignments as we go through the term, which means that you are supposed to read each assignment before the corresponding class period. The class lectures and discussions are meant to build upon the assigned reading material.

The following four required texts are available at the bookstore:


Section I: Basic Concepts of Foreign Policy

W 9/13 - The international systemic context: AZR 1; GPH 1; RWB 1.


F 9/15 - National power, national interests, and foreign policy: AZR 2 & 3; AE 2 & 5.


M 9/18 - The historical context of the Cold War: RWB 2; GPH 4 & 5.

Section II: The US Foreign Affairs Establishment

F 9/22 - The Constitution and American foreign policy: GPH 7; AE 18.


Congress and foreign policy: GPH 9.

W 9/27 - The foreign affairs bureaucracy: GPH 10; AE 21 & 22.

F 9/29 - [Review session for Section II-discussion and debate.]

Section III: Foreign Policy Making

M 10/2 - Models of foreign policy decision making: GPH 11 & 12.

[Short essay #1 due by 4 PM.]

W 10/4 - Instruments of foreign policy-diplomacy: GPH 13; AE 25 & 27.


F 10/6 - Instruments of foreign policy-covert action: GPH 14.


W 10/11 - Instruments of foreign policy-military power: GPH 16; AE 32 & 33.


F 10/13 - [Review session for Section III-discussion and debate.]

M 10/16 - [Midterm break.]

T 10/17 - [Short essay #2 due by 4 PM.]

Section IV: The "New" Foreign Policy Agenda

W 10/18 - National character, values, and American foreign policy: GPH 3; AE 3, 4, & 17.


Human rights and American foreign policy: AZR 4.


https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/Posc231/F00/index.html
F 10/20 - Humanitarian interventionism: AZR 5; AE 9, 13, & 34.


The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: AZR 12; AE 36.

The international narcotics trade: AZR 6.


W 10/25 - The global economy and world trade: AZR 8; AE 28.


F 10/27 - [Review session for Section IV-discussion and debate.]

Section V: Regional Foreign Policy Concerns

M 10/30 - Western Europe and the European Union: AZR 9:177-89; RWB 3; AE 7 & 8.


[Short essay #3 due by 4 PM.]

W 11/1 - Eastern Europe and Russia: AZR 10; RWB 4; AE 6 & 10.


F 11/3 - Africa: RWB 9; AE 14.

Latin America: RWB 7.


M 11/6 - The Middle East: AZR 11; RWB 8; AE 12.

TBA.

W 11/8 - East Asia: AZR 9:189-99; RWB 5; AE 11.


F 11/10 - South Asia: RWB 6.


M 11/13 - [Review session for Section V-discussion and debate.]

T 11/14 - [Short essay #4 due by 4 PM.]


[Final exam to be handed out.]

M 11/20 - [Final exam due by 4 PM.]