

PSC 342
American Foreign Policy

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Course Information:

Class: Graham 308, 2:00pm to 3:15pm: Tuesday and Thursday.
Prerequisite: PSC 240: International System (Basic IR) or its equivalent

Contact Information

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Office Hours:

Tuesday 3:15pm-4:00 pm
Thursday 3:15pm-4:00pm
and by appointment.

Course Objectives: This course is designed to provide an introduction to American Foreign Policy. After completing this course, students should have:

- an understanding of current U.S. foreign policy;
- an understanding of the decision-making process in the American foreign affairs establishment;
- an appreciation for the historical and philosophical origins of American foreign policy;
- well developed research and writing skills in the field; and
- knowledge of the critical primary and secondary literature on American foreign policy.

Course Overview:

-The course begins with a historical introduction to the theoretical and experiential foundations of US Foreign Policy. We will learn about the progression of the United States' approach to dealing with other nations and defending our interests through the years, focusing on key events and turning points.

-The Second part of the course focuses on the recent developments in American Foreign Policy and the challenges we face in the future. The past two decades have witnessed extraordinary vacillation, indecision and redirection in American foreign policy. The growing complexities of the modern era have imposed new challenges on the international behavior of the United States. This course is intended to develop an understanding of U.S. foreign policy and of the decision-making process in the American foreign affairs establishment. In addition to emphasizing the historical trends of American foreign relations, the course will analyze Washington's current political, military, and economic policies and assess the Clinton and G. W. Bush Administrations' strategy and tactics. We are lucky enough to be taking this course as President-Elect/President Obama begins to cultivate his own foreign policy and I encourage you all to play arm chair quarterback on his decisions and make your own recommendations for the United States.

Readings:

Required Books:

Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, 8th edition, revised (New York: Penguin Books, 1997)

Other Readings: Available on Blackboard or can be found online. If a reading in electronic format will not open it is the responsibility of the student to find the reading. Citations are provided and the readings can be found through the university libraries.

All Readings for the week should be read by Tuesday of each week so that we can discuss any of the issues as they arise in class. It is imperative that each of us are familiar with the readings as this is a discussion class and not simply a lecture. Your participation grade relies on your having done the readings each week.

Honor Code:

Grading

Final grades will be compiled from five separate sources.

Quiz Grades	20%
Discussion	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Research Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%

Notes on Quiz Policy:

The quizzes will be based on the lectures, the readings and should be quite easy if you have done the assigned readings. Quiz grades will be accumulated at the rate of approximately one unannounced quiz per week (but sometimes more than one) at *the beginning of class*. Students arriving late will *not be allowed extra time*. Please be punctual.

If every quiz is taken then the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. If a quiz is missed due to an absence then, in lieu of a make-up, that quiz grade will be dropped. After the first missed quiz further makeup quizzes will be penalized 20 points out of 100 per quiz.

Exam Make-up Policy: The exam dates are clearly marked and are planned in advance so that you can work around them. Exam days take priority over any other activities you might prefer. If you miss an exam because of an unavoidable catastrophe a make-up oral exam may be scheduled with permission of the instructor.

Research Paper: Each student will be required to choose an issue related to contemporary American Foreign Policy, then prepare and present an 8-10 page “white paper” to the class. Any issue area will be fine, as long as you have cleared it with me first. We will discuss the technical

requirements at length in class. The primary requirement is to choose a topic that interests you—that always makes it easier to write. I would encourage all of you to take advantage of the free resources at the University writing center <http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/> for this or any other project.

Attendance: Each student will be allowed two absences without penalty. These absences may be used for any reason but *only* two absences are allowed. After that point each absence will cost students 1.5 pts off their final grade.

Other Policies: Please try to observe three additional policies:

- **Phones:** Turn them off before class.
- **Email:** For the purposes of this class email will be used for administrative purposes. Questions about the content of class are best addressed during office hours. Please come by and I will be happy to talk with you about the ideas we discuss in class.
- **Laptops:** Due to the cramped quarters and the amount of non-class activities available through the internet, you will not be permitted to use laptop computers during class.

Course Outline

Week One

20 January Introduction

[Joseph J. Ellis, "A promise of unpredictability," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 2008](#)

22 January Three Perspectives on American Foreign Policy

Realism

["The Melian Dialogue," in *The Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides](#)

Idealism

Immanuel Kant, [Perpetual Peace](#), Sections I and II

Jeffersonian

[Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, Washington, D.C., Wednesday, March 4, 1801](#)

Week Two

1/27 Levels of Analysis—Where is Foreign Policy Made and where should it be made?

1/29 The Idea of American Exceptionalism--The American Enlightenment

Readings on Blackboard Week Two

Week Three

2/3 Manifest Destiny: American Perceptions of Its Place in the World

2/5 The War with Spain: American Colonialism and the Open Door

Week Four

2/10 World War I: Wilson, Self-Determination, and the League

2/12 Interwar Period: Economic and Political Intersections

Week Five

2/17 World War II: United States and Collective Security

Ambrose and Brinkley, Chapters 1-3

Additional Readings on Blackboard

2/19 Bretton Woods and the American System—Lessons from WWI

Week Six

2/24 The Cold War: 1945-1950

Ambrose and Brinkley, Chapters 4-7

Additional Readings on Blackboard

2/26 The Beginnings of American Middle Eastern Policy

Week Seven

3/3 Midterm Examination—No readings

3/5-Cuban Missile Crisis

Spring Break

Week Eight

3/17 -3/19The Cold War: The Cuban Missile Crisis, Proxy War, Nuclear Weapons

Ambrose and Brinkley, Chapters 9 and 10

Additional Readings on Blackboard

Week Nine

3/24-3/26 The Cold War: Vietnam

Ambrose and Brinkley, Chapters 11 and 12

Additional Readings on Blackboard

Week Ten

3/31 -4/2 Who won the cold war? (We Did.) The End of the Cold War and its Legacy.

Ambrose and Brinkley, Chapters 14-16
Additional Readings on Blackboard

Week Eleven

4/7 The New World Order? Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention

4/9 Security and the War on Terror

Week Twelve

4/14- 4/16 April The War in Iraq

Week Thirteen

4/21 The Future of American Foreign Policy: Is America an Imperial Power?

4/23 Permanent Entangling alliances Economic Crises and Foreign Involvement

Week Fourteen

4/28-4/30 Paper Presentations and Wrap up

Week Fifteen

May 5 last day of classes. Study Day, no class.

Thursday May 7th 3-6 pm Final Exam