

Spring 2010
SUNY Geneseo
PLSC 246
T Th 8:30-9:45 am
Welles 140

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PLSC 246 US FOREIGN POLICY

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course is designed to introduce students to American foreign policy. As the “only remaining superpower” since the end of the Cold War, the US continues to exercise great influence in international relations. Yet American policymakers have met with mixed results in their attempts to exercise power, especially since Vietnam. American preeminence has affected its domestic politics and society, which in turn inform America’s approach to the world. The end of the Cold War seemed to reduce the security dilemma for the US, but the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 suggest that it has changed form and perhaps increased as a result of globalization. Efforts to apply force in Afghanistan and Iraq have revived comparisons with containment and the Vietnam quagmire. Is the US now hegemonic, or vulnerable as never before? Should the US pursue a policy of unilateralism and self-reliance, or one of multilateralism and cooperation? Should the US national vision be guided by idealism or by realpolitik?

The course is divided into three sections. After reviewing the international context and exploring the traditions in US foreign policy, we will sketch the historical development of American policy in the post-World War II era. Much of the historical context for current issues, as well as the actors and domestic constraints in making policy, derive from US initiatives during this post-1945 period. Then we will analyze the process of making foreign policy, looking at the key institutional/bureaucratic actors and domestic forces that affect outcomes. Finally, we shall discuss various contemporary issues confronting the Obama administration. The study of international and domestic context will provide students with the tools to analyze the content and direction of US foreign policy.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES: The course will provide a foundation in the historical context for US foreign policy, acquaint students with contemporary debates in US foreign policy, and familiarize them with the actors influencing the policy process. The goal of the paper is to enable students to research an issue in greater depth and develop skills of critical policy analysis and verbal presentation in memo format. Class discussion, particularly using the New York Times, will hone skills of argumentation and debate.

REQUIRED TEXTS: The following books are available at the Sun Dance Bookstore.

James M. McCormick, [American Foreign Policy and Process](#) (2010 Fifth edition)
Foreign Policy Association, [Great Decisions 2010](#)
[New York Times](#). Alternatives include electronic subscription or Milne Library’s copy.
Selected articles are on the Mycourses site.

OFFICE HOURS: Tues. and Thurs. 9:45-10:30 am and 3:45-4:30 pm or by appointment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Final grades will be assigned on the following basis:

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%
10-12 page policy memo	20%
NYT quizzes	15%
Attendance	10%
Participation	10%

Quizzes on the New York Times will be given on Thursdays, based on the international section and world business section for Wednesday-Friday and Monday preceding the quiz. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped in calculating the quiz average for each student. No make-up quizzes will be permitted. Attendance will be taken each class period and incorporated into the participation component.

It is difficult to participate if you do not attend class. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading for the particular class. Participation includes raising questions, expressing opinions, and answering questions about class material and US foreign policy generally. This may occur during the class or outside the formal classroom setting. Extra credit may be given in the exceptional circumstances of a noteworthy and relevant speaker or event on campus.

Students will write a policy memo to the President on an issue of current US foreign policy. The assignment will permit students to explore in more depth a particular issue and analyze the constraints, risks, and options for the US. Paper topics must be approved by the professor. Papers submitted late will be penalized ½ grade per day; late papers must be submitted electronically to goeckel@geneseo.edu in order to receive proper credit.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated; students found plagiarizing will have their grade lowered and the case may be submitted for disciplinary action by the College. Pursuant to this, the instructor will employ technology available to the Department in evaluating student papers. In order to obtain credit for the assignment, students must submit papers electronically to turnitin.com for analysis of originality.

Make-up exams and incompletes will be given only for convincingly documented medical or personal reasons. Make-up exams will take the form of oral exams. The fact that your ride leaves Geneseo before class does not constitute sufficient grounds for a make-up exam. Protocol issues - Students who are recognized by the Office of Disability Services should present this documentation and speak with the professor to ascertain the necessary accommodation well before an examination or assignment. Students are expected to turn off their cell phones before class, to arrive at class on time, to avoid leaving class early unless there is an emergency, and to show due respect to fellow students during discussion. Websurfing during class is frowned upon by the instructor unless connected with the Defense Department's cyberwarfare initiative and may result in massive retaliation by the instructor!

OUTLINE: McCormick=M Great Decisions=GD New York Times=NYT

1/19-1/21 I. Introduction, M Ch. 1

The International System and National Interest
The Historical Legacy, 1789-1945
National Culture and US Style in Foreign Policy

1/28 FIRST NYT QUIZ

2/4 SECOND NYT QUIZ (including Geography items)

1/26-3/2 **II. The Historical Development of US Foreign Policy since 1945**
FDR and the Origins of the Postwar System, M Ch. 2, pp. 35-40
Truman and Containment, M Ch. 2
Eisenhower's New Look and Rollback, M Ch. 3
Kennedy: Crises and Camelot, M Ch. 3
Johnson: Vietnam, Alliance Erosion and Non-Alignment, M Ch. 3
Nixon/Ford: Détente and its Discontents, M Ch. 4, pp. 101-112
Carter's New World Order, M Ch. 4, pp. 112-127
Reagan and the New Cold War, M Ch. 4, pp. 127-151
Bush and the End of the Cold War, M Ch. 5, pp. 153-176
Clinton: Globalization and Engagement, M Ch. 5, pp. 176-199
George W. Bush: 9/11, Primacy and Preemption, M Ch. 6

2/9 Memo Topic Selection

3/4 MIDTERM EXAM

3/4-4/13 **III. Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy,**
The President, M Ch. 7
Congress, M Ch. 8
State Dept., M Ch. 9 (pp. 359-377); NYT "Military Role in US Embassies
Creates Tensions"
National Security Council, M Ch. 9 (pp. 377-385)
Foreign Economic Policy Agencies, M Ch. 9 (385-410)
Defense Dept., M Ch. 10 (pp. 411-425)
CIA and Intelligence Community, M Ch. 10 (425-253)
Homeland Security, M Ch. 10 (pp. 453-472)
Interest Groups and Parties, M Ch. 11
Public Opinion, Media and Election, M Ch. 12; NYT "For Pentagon and News
Media, Relations Improve with Shift in War Coverage"

4/15-5/4 **IV. Contemporary Problems in US Foreign Policy**
Obama's Dilemmas, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "From Hope to Audacity"
Special Envoys and International Architecture, GD 1; Stephen Brooks and
William Wohlforth, "Reshaping the World Order"
Kenya, Genocide and R2P, GD 2
Global Crime, GD 3

China, GD 4
Global Financial Crisis, GD 5
Russia and its Neighbors, GD 6
The Persian Gulf, GD 7
Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution, GD 8
Global Poverty
Energy

4/22 and 4/29 NO NYT QUIZ

4/27 PAPERS DUE

FINAL EXAM FRIDAY MAY 7 8:00-11:00 AM

Students – not the professor – are responsible for avoiding multiple exams on the same exam day by use of prudent scheduling of courses during registration and drop/add periods. The final exam date is arranged by the Dean and will not be rescheduled on a case-by-case basis.