

INR 6305: American Foreign Policy

Prof. Zachary Selden

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:45-1:00 Anderson 003

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This course is designed to familiarize students with the major schools of thought in American foreign policy as well as the different theoretical approaches to its study. Although the majority of the course will focus on the Post-WWII period, we will also examine the 18th and 19th century traditions in American foreign policy because those traditions set the parameters of debate that ensued in later years. We will spend the last few sessions considering current issues in American foreign policy.

Readings

Most of the readings are available through the UF library website and a simple search on the title will bring the article up in PDF format. Some readings are from books that will be on reserve at the library. You should, however, purchase the following books as we will be using significant portions of them. All of them are available on Amazon in paperback.

- Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997).
- Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's Role in the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).
- John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can American and China escape the Thucydides trap?* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2018).

Evaluation

This seminar is heavily dependent on class discussion. Therefore, a considerable weight of a student's overall performance grade is placed on participation. Each class meeting will include a presentation by one on the week's reading and your preparedness and participation in the ensuing discussion is critical. Participation involves active discussion throughout the semester, not just the week you are presenting. You cannot participate unless you are here, so please make every effort to be present for each class meeting. If you are ill or otherwise unable to attend, please let me know as soon as possible. More than one absence per semester will reflect on your participation grade (with the exception of a valid medical reason).

Each student will be responsible for leading the class discussion for two weeks. This will involve a short presentation on the main points of the week's reading **as well as some analysis or critique**. It is also part of the assignment to prepare several questions to start a class discussion on the readings and these should be posted as an announcement on canvas on the Monday before class. This can be in the form of questions regarding specific readings or overarching questions that cover the week's theme.

Each student will also write a response paper (1500-2000 words) on one week's reading. **This should be a week that you did not present.** Your response paper should be more than a summary of the material and should show some critical engagement with the material.

In addition, each student is responsible for a research paper (approximately 8000 words). This can revolve around any topic as long as it relates to the themes of the course. This paper could go in a variety of directions and I am willing to work with you to make it valuable for your particular interests. Ideally, this would be a research paper that contains the core of what could be a publishable article. If your interest is primarily in policy rather than the academic study of foreign policy, you might consider writing a policy proposal, but please see me to discuss the parameters of this. A good policy proposal makes a strong case for a particular course of action but does not ignore evidence that counters the proposal. It should account for the weaknesses in the proposed course of action. This path is mainly for those in the MA program, or those planning on non-academic careers.

The breakdown of your final grade will be as follows:

Participation: 20%

Discussion lead: 20%

Response paper: 20%

Research paper: 40% (Due April 29)

I reserve the right to alter this syllabus, although I will give at least one week of notice before doing so.

For each assignment/exam, you will receive a numerical score, not a letter grade. Your final cumulative score will be translated into a letter grade according to the following schedule:

93.5+ A

90-93 A-

87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 -	F

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

Other policies: Individual extra-credit work is not allowed.

Deadline extensions may be granted under special circumstances, but you must request them prior to the deadline. Retroactive extensions will not be granted under any circumstances.

The class will not be recorded and you will not be able to access the lectures outside of normal class hours. There is no on-line option, this is an in person course.

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#)

[Links to an external site](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/) (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/> [Links to an external site..](#))

Course Schedule

January 14: Introduction

- Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest*, chp. 1 (Reserve)
- Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy*, chp.1 (Reserve)
- Eliot Cohen, "The Historical Mind and Military Strategy," *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No.4 Fall 2005, pp. 575-588.
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January 21: Context of American Foreign Policy: Realist and Liberal Traditions

- Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997) Chapters 1-2
- Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence*, Chp. 1
- David Houghton (2007) "Reinvigorating the study of foreign policy decision making: Toward a constructivist approach," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3:24-45.
- Walter Russell Mead, "The Jacksonian Revolt," *Foreign Affairs* 96 (March 2017)
- The National Security Strategy 2025. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>
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January 28: Schools of American Foreign Policy and Grand Strategy

- Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy" *International Security*, Vol 21, No.3, Winter 1996-97, pp. 5-53.
- Hal Brands "The Promise and Pitfalls of Grand Strategy" Strategic Studies Institute 2012 pages 1-15 <https://pubs-repository.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/2194.pdf>
- Andrew Bacevitch, *American Empire*, Chp. 1 (Reserve)
- Patrick Porter, "Why America's grand strategy has not changed," *International Security*, 42:4 (2018) 9-46.
- Daniel Drezner, et al. "The End of Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2020.
- Robert Kagan, "The Price of Hegemony: Can America learn to use its Power?" *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.

February 4: Foreign Policy in the Early Years of the Republic

- Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997) Chapters 3, 5, 6
- Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy*, chp.3 (Reserve)
- Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence*, Chp. 2. (Reserve)

- Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's Role in the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) Chapters 1-4

February 11: Creating the Cold War System

- John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) Chapters 2, 8, 10
- George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, XXV (July 1947) pp.566- 582
- John Ikenberry, "Rethinking the Origins of American Hegemony," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.104, No.3 (1989).
- Aaron Friedberg, "Why didn't the United States become a garrison state?" *International Security* 16 (Spring 1992) 109-42.
- Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War teaches us about great power rivalry today* (Yale Univ. Press, 2022) pages **236-253 on reserve**.

February 18: The Individual Level in American Foreign Policy

- Fred Greenstein and John Burke, "The Dynamics of Presidential Reality Testing: Evidence from Two Vietnam Decisions," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 104, No.4 (Winter 1989-1990) pp. 557-580.
- Herbert Simon, "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79 (June 1985) pp. 293-304.
- Jack Levy. "Prospect Theory and International Relations," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13 no. 2, (June 1992).
- Franz Eder, "Making concurrence-seeking visible: Groupthink, discourse networks and the 2003 Iraq war," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 15 (2019) 21-42.
- Aroop Mukharji, "The Meddler's Trap," *International Security* 48:2 (2023) pp. 49-90.
- Deborah Larson, "The Origins of Commitment," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol 13:1. Winter 2011.
- Jeffrey Friedman and Richard Zeckhauser, "Strategy is only partly an illusion," *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 20, No.3 (2024)

February 25: Bureaucratic Politics and Lobbying in Foreign Policy

- Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis " *American Political Science Review*, Vol.63, No.3 (September 1969) pp. 689-718.
- Stephen D. Krasner. "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)" *Foreign Policy*, Vol.7 (Summer 1972) pp. 159-179.
- Andrew Payne. "Presidents, Politics and Military Strategy: Electoral Constraints during the Iraq War," *International Security*, 44:3 (Winter 2019/20), 163-203.
- M.E. Sarotte, "How to enlarge NATO: The debate inside the Clinton Administration 1993-95, *International Security*, 44:1 (Summer 2019) 7-41.

- Trevor Rubenzer, “Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and US Foreign Policy Influence,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 4 (2008), pp. 169-185.
- Tevi Troy, “Devaluing the Think Tank,” *National Affairs* (Winter 2012) pp. 75-90.
- David McCourt and Garrett Ruley, “How is the American Foreign Policy Establishment Structured?” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 19:2 (2023).

March 4: Geopolitics and Foreign Policy

- Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 34, No.3 (Winter 2009-10).
- Lawrence Kaplan, “The United States and the Origins of NATO 1946-1949,” *The Review of Politics* 31:2 (1969): 210-222.
- Beckley, Michael. "The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of US Defense Pacts." *International Security* 39, no. 4 (2015): 7-48.
- Elbridge Colby, “Allied Interests,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2021.
- Eliot Cohen, “The Return of Statecraft: Back to Basics in the Post-American World,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.
- Stacie Goddard, “The Rise and Fall of Great Power Competition,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (2025).
- Julianne Smith, “The New Eurasian Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.104, No.6 (2025).
- Ely Ratner, “The Case for a Pacific Defense Pact,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (2025).

March 11: Economics and Foreign Policy

- Carla Norrlof, *America's Global Advantage* (Cambridge: 2010) Chapters 1,2,6 (Reserve)
- Kimberly Ann Elliot, “The Sanctions Glass: Half Full or Completely Empty?” *International Security*, Vol. 23, No.1 (Summer 1998).
- Robert Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions Still Do Not Work,” *International Security* 23, No.1 (Summer 1998).
- Christopher Sabatini, “America’s Love of Sanctions will be its Downfall,” *Foreign Policy*, Fall 2023, pp.29-31.
- Jeff Frieden, “Sectoral Conflict and U.S. Foreign Economic Policy, 1914-1940,” *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No.1 (Winter 1988).
- Oren Cass, “A Grand Strategy of Reciprocity,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol.104, No.6 (2025).

NO CLASS MARCH 25

April 1: Intelligence and its Effects on Foreign Policy

- Jonathan House, *Intelligence and the State: Analysts and Decision Makers*, (Naval Institute Press, 2022). Chapter 2.

- Keren Yarhi-Milo, “In the eye of the beholder: How leaders and intelligence communities assess the intentions of adversaries,” *International Security*, 38:1, 7-51 (Winter 2013)
- Jamie Miscik, “Intelligence and the Presidency,” *Foreign Affairs* 96 (May 2017)
- Amy Zegart, “September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of US Intelligence Agencies,” *International Security*, 29:4 (2005), pp. 78-111.
- Michael Rubin, “The Temptation of Intelligence Politicization to Support Diplomacy,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 29 (2016), pp. 1-25.
- Herman Cohen, “Policymaker: Know Thine (Intelligence) Analyst,” *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 26 (2004), 385-90.

April 8: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

- Ole Holsti, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.36, No.4 (Dec. 1992), pp.439-466.
- Richard Sobel, *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2001. Chapter 1 (Reserve)
- Adam Berlinsky, “Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites and American Public Support for Military Conflict,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Nov. 2007) pp. 975-997.
- Katja Kleinberg and B. Fordham, “Don’t know much about foreign policy” Assessing the impact of ‘don’t know’ and ‘no opinion’ responses or inferences about foreign policy attitudes,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 14 (2018) 429-448.
- Matthew Baum, “Sex, Lies and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (March 2002) pp. 91-109.
- Thomas Gift and Jonathan Monten (2021) “Who’s out of touch? Media misperception of public opinion on US foreign policy,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* doi: 10.1093/fpa/oraa015
- Jeffrey Friedman, “The Myth of a Bipartisan Golden Age for US Foreign Policy,” *International Security*, Vol. 49, No.2 (Fall 2024), pp.97-134.

April 15: Applied Foreign Policy: Navigating Current Dilemmas

- Anonymous, “The Return of Great Power Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.104, No.3 (2025)
- Joshua Shifrinson, “What is America’s interest in the Ukraine war?” *The National Interest*, Oct, 30, 2022 <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/what-americas-interest-ukraine-war-205555>
- Trita Parsi, “No, Weakening Russia is not “costing peanuts” for the US,” *New Republic*, January 20, 2023. <https://newrepublic.com/article/170088/cost-ukraine-war-weakening-russia>

- Editorial Board, “The Ukraine War, One Year Later,” *National Review*, February, 2023. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2023/02/the-ukraine-war-one-year-later/>
- Frederick Kagan, et al, “The High Price of Losing Ukraine,” Institute for the Study of War, December 14, 2023. <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/high-price-losing-ukraine>
- Liana Fix, “How to Benchmark Victory in Ukraine,” *Foreign Policy*, Summer 2023, pp. 24-5.
- Raymond Kuo, “Strategic Ambiguity has the US and Taiwan Trapped,” *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2023, pp. 22-4.
- Bonnie Glasser, et al, “Taiwan and the true source of deterrence,” *Foreign Affairs*, 103:1 (2024).
- Eric Heginbotham and Rajan Menon, “Taiwan’s Balancing Act,” *The National Interest*, March/April 2019, pp. 22-29.
- John Mearsheimer, “Taiwan’s Dire Straits,” *The National Interest*, March/April 2014, pp. 29-39.
- Gordon Chang, “Say Hello to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, Nov/Dec. 2016, pp. 37-44.

April 22: Rising Powers and American Foreign Policy

- Graham Allison , *Destined for War: Can American and China escape the Thucydides trap?* (Boston: Mariner Books) 2018. Chapter 8 and 9
- Lake, David A. "The Challenge: The Domestic Determinants of International Rivalry Between the United States and China." *International Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (2014):442-447.
- Michael Beckley, “Enemies of my Enemy: How Fear of China is Forging a New World Order” *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/April 2022.
- Ryan Hass, “What America Wants from China: A Strategy to Keep Beijing Entangled in the World Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, 102:6 (2023).
- Andrew Krepinevich, “The Big One: Preparing for a Long War with China,” *Foreign Affairs*, 103:1 (2024).
- David Kang, “What Does China Want?” *International Security*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Summer 2025), pp. 46-81.

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Joshua Rovner, *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 1-35.

Elizabeth N. Saunders, “No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisors and Information in Group Decision Making”, *International Organization*, 71:S1 (2017), pp. S219-S247.

Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, *Sailing the Water’s Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 33-51, 77-120.

William M. LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door? Ethnic Foreign Policy Lobbies and the Cuban American Case”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16:3 (July 2020), pp. 438-456.

Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 17-45.

Dursun Peksen, Timothy M. Peterson and A. Cooper Drury, “Media-driven Humanitarianism? News Media Coverage of Human Rights Abuses and the Use of Economic Sanctions”, *International Studies Quarterly* 58:4 (2014), pp. 855-866

Joshua Rovner, *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 1-35.

Elizabeth N. Saunders, “No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisors and Information in Group Decision Making”, *International Organization*, 71:S1 (2017), pp. S219-S247.