

U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II
IR 343
Fall Semester, 2008

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:00-12:00 or by appointment.

INTRODUCTION

This ambitious course will provide a substantive, extensive overview of U.S. foreign policy highlights and historic events during the period between the conclusion of the Second World War and the present day. The course will be divided into four segments designed to consider theoretical, chronological, and geographical focal points of American foreign policy during the past 60 years. The first segment will establish important theoretical contexts from which students will be able to use to analyze and assess the ebbs and flows of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.

The second segment covers historical highlights of the Cold War using a regional focus (Europe and Asia), highlighting key conflicts (Korea and Vietnam), and important crises (Berlin and Cuba). The story of the Cold War, of course, cannot be told without devoting attention to nuclear weapons strategy and the unfolding strategic nuclear balance between East and West. This segment will, therefore, highlight the evolution of U.S. strategic nuclear thinking and will summarize developments in the arms race and arms control initiatives that took place during the decades of the Cold War. The segment concludes with a look at the collapse of the Soviet Union and its impact on post-Cold War U.S. security policy.

Segment three will address today's most significant foreign policy issues. Should the U.S. be the world's "police man"? Should the United States apply a unilateral approach to solving foreign policy programs; would the U.S. be better advised to rely on a "coalition of the willing", or would a multilateral internationalist approach be more effective? How can the U.S. and the international community control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in today's world? Can the U.S. defend the homeland effectively? Can the U.S. afford it?

Knowledge of the historic events and themes of U.S. foreign policy during the post-World War II period is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for understanding why we do what we do. The process by which foreign policy is formulated and conducted will enrich students' understanding of the events and foreign policy issues reviewed during the first three segments of the course. In

the fourth and final segment of the course, students will be required to participate in a foreign policy simulation exercise based on role playing of key foreign policy officials in the U.S. and foreign governments. Students must conduct independent research to obtain insight into roles for which they have volunteered, and will be required to perform oral and submit written presentations in conjunction with the exercise.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize students with key theoretical perspectives on the conduct of U.S. national security foreign policy, and to encourage the application of those perspectives in analyzing and discussing key historical and current events and issues included in the course curriculum.

2. To provide students with historical information about key events and issues of the Cold War period, including important conflicts, crises, and unfolding national security strategies.

3. To outline critical national security issues of today, to encourage creative alternative solutions to those problems, and to foster balanced analytical assessments of alternative options. (The course requires two "Option Papers" of approximately five pages each.)

4. To provide students with insights into basic elements of the process and dynamics of foreign policy formulation within current U.S. foreign policy bureaucratic structures.

5. To improve students' written and oral skills.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Bruce Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: the Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century*, WW Norton, 2007. 3rd Edition

Steven Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, CQ Press, 17th Edition, 2007

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Please read the attached "Guidelines" which summarize my grading criteria. By articulating my grading standards, I hope to minimize the ambiguity inherent in the grading process to our mutual advantage. Students should be able to know exactly what is required to achieve different grade levels. I hope that these guidelines will help reduce any ambiguities and clarify standards of accountability.

Overall grading segments will be weighted according to the following formula:

Written papers and homework assignments: 50%

Attendance and participation in classroom exercises: 30%
(includes written work required for exercises. Please see paragraph 4 of Grading Guidelines regarding "attendance".)

Final Examination: 20% (NOTE: No Midterm Exam)

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Except for the first week, readings should be completed PRIOR TO Tuesday's class for each week. Note: some reading assignments are repetitive and should be reviewed as directed after the initial reading assignment. Reviewing the reading can be very useful.)

Week of August 26-28

Course Introduction: Basic Themes in American Foreign Policy. Read Jentleson, pp. 61-91, 176-184, and 259-267; Hook and Spanier, Chapter 1. Debate on Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism on Thursday, August 28. Essay due on Morgenthau and Claude due on Tuesday, September 2.

Week of September 2-4

Origins of the Cold War: East vs. West. Yalta. Read Jentleson pp. 92-127 and 237-240. Hook and Spanier, Chapter 2. Debate on Thursday, September 4: "Was Yalta the right thing to do?" Essay due on Yalta on Tuesday, September 9.

Week of September 9-11

Phase I of the Cold War: 1945-1949. Postwar Europe and Berlin. Read Hook and Spanier, pp. 50-64. Reread Jentleson, pp. 92-105.

Week of September 16-18

Phase II: the Cold War in Asia, the Middle East, and the Developing World. Read Hook and Spanier, pp. 64-103. Jentleson, pp. 105-107.

Week of September 23-25

The Coldest Moment: Cuba. Read Hook and Spanier pp. 103-109. Google and read, "John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis" by Ernest May. Jentleson, pp. 199-200

Week of September 30-October 2

Vietnam. Read Jentleson, pp. 128-138, 241-244. Read Hook and Spanier, Chapter 5. Class debate: Was Intervention in Vietnam the Right Thing to Do?

Week of October 7-9

Detente, Strategic Nuclear Policy, and the Arms Race. Jentleson, pp. 138-164, pp. 231-236, 245-250. Hook and Spanier, Chapters 6-7. (*FIRST OPTION PAPER DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14)

Week of October 14-16

The Fall of the Soviet Union and End of the Cold War. Jentleson, pp. 155-173, 251-256. Hook and Spanier, Chapter 8.

Week of October 21-23

US and Global Intervention. Hook and Spanier, Chapter 10. Jentleson, pp. 363-460, 573-578, 582-592. Class Panel: Under What Conditions Should the U.S. Intervene in Another Country?

Week of October 28-30

The War on Terrorism. Read Jentleson, pp. 363-374, 397-407, 573-581. Hook and Spanier, Chapters 12-13.

Week of November 4-6

Nonproliferation, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Homeland Security. Read Jentleson, 339-352, 404-407, 409-410. (*SECOND OPTION PAPER DUE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11)

Week of November 11-13

Foreign Policy Issues for the 21st Century. Read Jentleson, Chapters 10-11. Hook and Spanier, Chapter 14.

Week of November 18-20-25

U.S. Foreign Policy Simulation. No class on November 27. Thanksgiving.

Week of December 2-4

U.S. Foreign Policy Simulation Exercise. Final exam distributed in class December 4.

Final Exam: Take home exam. Guidance and deadline to be announced.