

Formulating US Security Policy
How "The System" Works (or Doesn't)
IR 443
Spring Semester, 2008
University of Southern California

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INTRODUCTION

U.S. defense and foreign policies and programs reflect the complex nature of our democratic system and defy simplistic explanations. Most of us know about foreign and defense policies only AFTER they have become public information. In the absence of knowing how the policy making process works and the identity of those who make recommendations and decisions, we are often only able to hypothesize about the sources and intent of U.S. foreign and defense policy. Knowing HOW such policies are formulated, debated, and decided, however, can offer scholars important insights into why our policies take the shape they do and which goals they might be intended to serve. This course seeks to look behind the headlines and to describe key decision making structures and processes that underlie the nation's national security foreign policy.

The course will focus on the major governmental contributors to formulating our national security foreign policy, including key agencies of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. Classes and readings will provide information regarding the structure, key personnel, and decision making processes within the Department of Defense, the State Department, the intelligence community, and the Executive Office of the President. The curriculum will also cover the key committees of the Congress which have oversight responsibilities regarding national security and foreign policy. Classroom exercises will demonstrate legislative procedures and practices that can affect important security policies and programs.

The course will incorporate a variety of pedagogical approaches to classroom learning, including lectures, classroom discussions, videos, guest speakers, and simulation exercises intended to represent important dynamics which underlie the policy formulation process. The course will require a number of short written assignments relating to class exercises and readings and a final examination. Class attendance and participation are particularly important since class exercises constitute such a prominent element of the course. All students

will be responsible for classroom information and exercises in the event of absence.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To identify and describe key organizations and their components which have significant roles, obligations, and authorities in formulating defense and foreign policy;

2. To describe and assess the standard program, budget, and international security-related decision making processes within agencies of the Executive Branch, and to familiarize students with related concepts and terminology;

3. To describe and assess the Congressional program budget review process for authorizing and appropriating funds for defense and international security foreign policies. To enhance understanding of the roles and practices of congressional staff, lobbying organizations, and the media which affect policy formulation and implementation;

4. To provide an understanding of how defense and foreign policies can be altered subsequent to decisions made by the Executive and Legislative branches of government.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

1. Jerel A. Rosati, "The Politics of United States Foreign Policy". Wadsworth Thomson Learning. Fourth Edition

2. Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (eds), "The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy", Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004. Fourth Edition.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: Please read the attached grading guidelines which discuss quality standards for different grades. The success of this course relies heavily on student participation in exercises. Those who volunteer for roles in simulations will be recognized for their contributions. Those who choose not to participate will not receive the benefit of the doubt for borderline grades. Beyond the specifics of my grading guidelines, performance will be weighted approximately as follows:

Written assignments:	50%
Classroom attendance and participation	30%
Final examination	20% (Note: No midterm exam)

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 4-6 pm and Fridays 10-12 am. Room B42E VKC.
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CLASS SCHEDULE:

January 15-24 Course overview. Theoretical context and today's national security agenda. The threat; "national Interest"; competing priorities.
Introduction/Overview of the Executive Branch.

Rosati: pp. 2-12 and 514-532

Wittkopf: pp. 55-66 and 303-333.

Due January 17 Threat Matrix and National Interest
Priorities

January 29-31 DoD Organizational Overview. DoD Budget Simulation
Exercise.

Rosati: pp. 166-202

Due February 5: DoD Budget simulation assessment.

February 5-14 DoD Budget and Acquisition Processes. Foreign Military Sales
and Export Controls. Policy Making by "Issue Paper".

Wittkopf: pp. 207-218 and pp. 283-301

Due Feb. 19 DoD Program/Policy Issue Paper

Feb. 19-28 State Department. Organization. Policy Making through Speech
Writing: US Policy Toward Russia.

Rosati: pp. 140-165

Wittkopf: pp. 197-206

Team exercise: Drafting Speech for Secretary of State.

Team drafts due February 26.

March 4-13 Intelligence Community. Organization, players, process, reform.
National Intelligence Estimates.

Rosati: pp. 203-246

Wittkopf: pp. 219-226

March. 18-20 Spring Recess

March 25-April 3 Executive Office of the President: National Security Council:
history, structure and function. Simulation NSC Meeting: PDD on Nuclear
Weapons and Nonproliferation Policy.

Rosati: pp. 103-139

Wittkopf: pp. 145-182 and 353-380

April 8-10 Policy Making by Commission: Presidential and Congressional
Commissions: 9/11 Commission

Read class handouts and website assignments.

April 15-24 Legislative Branch: Organization, players, legislative budget review
process. Legislative simulation exercise.

Rosati: pp. 306-348

Wittkopf: pp. 183-195

Due April 29: Assessment of Legislative Simulation

Exercise

April 29-May 1 Other ways to affect policymaking: Lobbying simulations.

Rosati: pp. 434-469 and 470-512

Wittkopf: pp. 43-54 and 97-116 and 117-127

Distribute Final Exam

May 8 Final Examination due by 4pm.

May 16 Graduation!