

## Political Science 245: The US in World Politics

Spring 2012  
Tu/Th 9:30AM – 11:18AM  
Denney Hall 0253  
The Ohio State University

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

### Course Description

The U.S. presently enjoys a position of great power and influence relative to other states in the world, making the question of its international role tremendously important. What *is* America's role in the world? Perhaps more importantly, what *should be* America's role? How should the U.S. respond to present and potential threats like terrorism, a rising China, and nuclear proliferation? What factors in the international system and within the state determine the content and direction of foreign policy? What role, if any, does public opinion play in the foreign policy process?

This introductory course in American foreign policy aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to answer questions such as those listed above. The course is divided into two main sections. Section I focuses on the many factors that determine how the U.S. conducts itself abroad. We will review major perspectives in international relations theory, as well as discuss the main actors and processes within the US. Concepts will be illustrated and discussed in the context of both historical and current events –though you need not be an expert on either coming into the course. In section II, we will critically analyze a selection of important issues in contemporary US foreign policy, using material from the first section as a foundation for understanding. Further, section II will feature weekly debates on a controversial foreign policy item.

### Course Goals

Generally, the goal of this course is to provide students with the tools necessary to become critical and informed citizens where it concerns American foreign policy. It will also provide a solid base for students who wish to pursue more advanced courses in international politics or foreign policy. Meeting these goals requires knowledge of both *how* and *why* policy choices have been made in the past and are likely to be made in the future. The sections of the course are structured for this purpose, by establishing which components influence the foreign policy process and critically examining the logic of multiple perspectives where it concerns actual policy.

**This course meets the GEC requirements of social science/organizations and politics.** The goals are that students learn about the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; of

the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and of the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources. The expected learning outcomes are as follows: (1) Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they are applied to the study of organizations and politics. (2) Students understand the formation and durability of political economic, and social organization principles and their differences and similarities across contexts. (3) Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

### **Required Text**

Students should purchase the following text:

**Steven W. Hook (2010). U.S. Foreign Policy: The Paradox of World Power. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1604266092**

This book is available at SBX or via online retailers such as amazon.com. All other readings will be provided on Carmen.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

The course grade will be composed of the following 7 items, to be detailed further below:

**5% Initial writing assignment**  
**15% Reading Quizzes**  
**20% In-class midterm**  
**25% Final exam**  
**15% Debate Presentation**  
**15% Debate Paper**  
**5% Participation**

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**100% Total**

**Extra Credit:** There will be an opportunity to participate in an experiment conducted in the political science department in exchange for 2% added to your final grade. I will provide more information about this later in the course.

**Initial Writing Assignment (5%):** This is a short (**1-2 page**) paper that addresses the question “What is the most important foreign policy issue that the U.S. faces today, and why?” This paper is due in class on the second Tuesday of the quarter, **April 3**.

**Reading Quizzes (15%):** You are expected to do the assigned reading before each class period in which it has been assigned, both for your own achievement and for the success of the course. I have attempted to assign reading that is interesting, informative, and of reasonable length. To help remind you to keep up with the material, there will be 6 short, **unannounced** reading quizzes throughout the quarter. These quizzes will be **open notes**, but not open book. Your lowest grade from the quizzes will be dropped. Thus, you can miss one quiz with no penalty, but any additional missed quizzes will be marked as a zero unless you have notified me in advance of your absence.

**Midterm (20%) and Final Examination (25%):** The midterm (**April 24**) will cover all material from section I of the course, and the final exam (**May 31**) will cover all material from section II. The format of the exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. They will cover material from the readings, lectures, and debates. Any student who needs to miss an exam should discuss it with me *prior* to the exam, and will be required to schedule a makeup exam within one week. If an emergency arises that makes prior notification of a missed exam impossible, please contact me as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation for an unexpected missed exam before scheduling the makeup.

**Debate Paper (15%):** The main writing assignment for this course is a short persuasive essay on a debate topic that will be assigned to you during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of class. This will be the same topic that you will use for your group debate presentation. The paper **must be submitted in hard copy during the class period in which you present**; late papers will be marked down one letter grade for each day late. In the paper, I expect that you will provide a thoughtful discussion of the issue that clearly demonstrates that you have considered both sides of the issue. The paper should consist of a discussion of the issue and sources of disagreement, a conclusion about your preferred position, and an explanation of the reasoning that led to your conclusion.

The maximum length for this paper is **4 pages**, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, with 12-pt Times New Roman font. You must include at least **two references** beyond those readings that I assign to the whole class in order to support your argument.

**Debate Presentation (15%):** During section II, we will have class debates each Tuesday about contemporary issues in foreign policy. You will be assigned to a topic during the second week of class, and will work with a group to present one side of a debate on that topic. While you will be able to express your preferences regarding the topic, I cannot promise to accommodate all requests. Further, I will randomly assign you to positions on the issue, such that you may find yourself arguing a position with which you disagree. This exercise will enhance your critical thinking skills, and you may as a consequence become a more informed advocate for your chosen position because you will have truly examined both sides.

Your grade will be composed of two elements. The first is based on an overall assessment of the group's performance on the debate presentation. The second will be an individual element based on confidential assessments by group members of each individual's contribution to the group. In other words, if each individual contributes equally to the group effort, the whole group will earn the same grade. The final grade will thus reflect the group's work along with a reward/penalty based on individual effort. You will receive more information on the format of the debates and a grading rubric later in the course.

**Participation (5%):** This course is designed around the expectation that we will engage in regular discussions about the course material, current events, and the debate issues. Thus, 5% of the final grade will be based on in-class participation. To earn full points for participation, students should attend class and be prepared to ask questions and react to material from the readings and lecture. Attendance is not mandatory (i.e. I will not take roll), but absences will certainly harm your participation grade as it is hard to discuss an issue when you are not present!

### **Required Statements**

#### **Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)). **I take this issue very seriously—if you are confused at all about what constitutes dishonest practice, please feel free to ask.**

#### **Disability Services**

**Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.**

## Lecture and Reading Schedule

Below is a schedule of lecture topics and readings for the course. Textbook chapters are indicated as "Hook chapter X". All other readings can be found on the course website. This reading schedule is subject to change, though at least one week's notice will be provided for any alterations, with the possible exception of relevant current events pieces.

### Section I: Where does foreign policy come from?

**Tuesday, March 27:** Syllabus Distribution and Introduction to the Course

*No readings; discussion and description of first assignment*

**Thursday, March 29:** Introduction to Theories of International Relations

Hook chapter 3 (pp. 67-80; 90-99)

Walt, Stephen M. (1998). International Relations: One World, Many Theories. *Foreign Policy*, 29-46.

**Tuesday, April 3:** The President

Hook Chapter 4 (pp. 102-134).

Byman, Daniel L. and K. Pollack (2001). Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In, *International Security*, 25(4), 107-146. Read only **pp. 107-109, 133-146.**

**Thursday, April 5:** Congress

Hook chapter 5 (pp. 136-168)

**Tuesday, April 10:** The Bureaucracy

Hook chapter 6 (pp. 171-207)

Jervis, Robert (2006). Reports, politics, and intelligence failures: The case of Iraq, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29(1), 3-52.

**Thursday, April 12:** Interest Groups

Hook chapter 9 (pp. 276-309)

Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt (2009). Is it Love or the Lobby? Explaining America's Special Relationship with Israel, *Security Studies*, 18, 58-78.

**Tuesday, April 17:** Public Opinion

Hook chapter 7 (pp. 210-240).

Aldrich, J et al. (2006). Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 477-502. Read only **491-497** – skim the rest if interested.

**Thursday, April 19:** The Media

Hook chapter 8 (pp. 242-275)

Robinson, Piers (1999). The CNN effect: Can the news media drive foreign policy? *Review of International Studies*, 25(2), p. 301-309.

**Tuesday, April 24:** Midterm Exam

## **Section II: Contemporary Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy**

**Thursday, April 26:** American Power

Hook chapter 1, pp. 1-25

Check out the Pew Global Attitudes Project to get a sense of how opinion of US power varies across the world: <http://pewglobal.org/database/>

**Tuesday, May 1:** The Rise of China and Decline of American Power

Zakaria, Fareed (2008). The Future of American Power: How America can Survive the Rise of the Rest, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, pp. 1-14.

**Debate:** Should the U.S. Challenge a Rising China?

**YES:** Friedberg, Aaron L. (2007). Are we Ready for China?, *Commentary*, October, p. 39-43.

**NO:** Layne, Christopher (2008). China's challenge to US Hegemony, *Current History*, January, p. 13-18

**Thursday, May 3: National Security and War**

Hook chapter 10 (read only pp. 291-310)

Jervis, Robert (2003). Understanding the Bush doctrine, *Political Science Quarterly*, 118 (3), 365-388.

**Tuesday, May 8: Nuclear Weapons**

Hook chapter 10 (read only p. 311-316)

Daalder, Ivo, and Jan Lodol (2008). The Logic of Zero: Toward a World Without Nuclear Weapons, *Foreign Affairs*, 87(6), 80-95.

**Debate:** Should the U.S. engage in preventive war against Iran?

**YES:** Podhoretz, Norman (2008). Stopping Iran: Why the Case for Military Action Still Stands, *Commentary*, XX-XX.

**NO:** Sagan, Scott D. (2006). How to Keep the Bomb from Iran, *Foreign Affairs*, 85, 45-54.

**Thursday, May 10: Class Cancelled**

**Tuesday, May 15: Terrorism**

The Threat of International Terrorism

Hook chapter 10 (pp. 317-323)

Mueller, John (2006). Six Rather Unusual Propositions About Terrorism, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17(4), 487-505.

**Recommended:**

Abrahms, Max (2008). What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy, *International Security*, 32(4), 78-105.

**Thursday, May 17:** Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention

Hook chapter 12 (read only pp. 401-413).

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty: The Responsibility to Protect, in *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), Bruce W. Jentleson. W.W. Norton & Company, pp. 672-674.

**Debate:** Is torture ever justified when combating terrorism?

**YES:** Krauthammer, Charles (2005). The Truth about Torture: It's Time to Be Honest about Doing Terrible Things, *The Weekly Standard*, December 5.

**NO:** Rattner, Steven (2008). Think Again: Geneva Conventions, *Foreign Policy*, 26-32.

**Tuesday, May 22:** Energy and the Environment

Hook chapter 12 (pp. 384-393)

**Recommended:**

Busby, Josh (2008). Who Cares about the Weather? Climate Change and U.S. National Security, *Security Studies*, 17(3),468-504.

**Debate:** Should the U.S. military intervene in conflicts for humanitarian purposes?

**YES:** Roth, Kenneth (2004). Setting the Standard; Justifying Humanitarian Intervention, *Harvard International Review*, 2, 58-62.

**NO:** Kuperman, Alan J. (2004). Humanitarian Hazard: Revising Doctrines of Intervention, *Harvard International Review*, Spring, 64-68.

**Thursday, May 24:** Economic Statecraft, Foreign Aid, and Positive Inducements

Hook chapter 11 (pp. 363-381)

**Tuesday, May 29:** The Future of American Foreign Policy

*No Lecture Readings*

**Debate:** Should the U.S. continue sanctions on Cuba?

**YES:** Reich, Otto J. (2002). Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, May 21.

**NO:** Zedillo, Ernesto and Thomas R. Pickering (2008). Rethinking U.S.-Latin American Relations. *A Report of the Partnership for the Americas Commission*, The Brookings Institution.

**Thursday, May 31:** In-class final exam