INR 4102
American Foreign Policy
Fall 2016

Instructor: Andrew Boutton

Location: Online

Office: 302 Howard Phillips Hall

Office Hours: TR 1:00-3:00

Email: andrew.boutton@ucf.edu

TA: Zlatin Mitkov

Overview

This course will cover the theory and practice of American foreign policy, with a particular focus on the post-1945 period. The goal is to provide students with a framework to which they can refer in order to understand past, ongoing, and future US foreign policy issues. The course will follow a mostly chronological path from the beginning of the Cold War to the present, examining how the American political system and features of the international system interact to shape the decisions and political incentives of US foreign policy makers. Are strategies and policies formulated with the sole aim of advancing US national interests? What other influences might factor into foreign policy decisions? What, if anything, can past foreign policy cases tell us about the present and future?

This is an upper-level course, and thus will be both reading- and writing-intensive. You should be prepared to keep up with the reading and written assignments throughout the semester. Stories and events related to US foreign policy are in the news on a daily basis, and keeping up with them will put you in a better position to do well on quizzes, discussion posts, and the final paper. A good place to start is the *World* section of the New York Times website, but please ask me if you're interested in additional recommendations.

While I students are encouraged to make use of my office hours, this class will take place entirely online, with no scheduled face-to-face meetings. This format works well for some people, but you should seriously reconsider taking this class in this format if you a) are not comfortable reading, communicating, or otherwise working online; or b) will not have unlimited access to high-speed internet between January 8 and May 1.

Objectives

This is not a history class, or even one about current events, although we will discuss both. The overarching goal of this class is to develop broad knowledge about general themes and trends in US foreign policy, and then be able to apply them to specific historical and contemporary cases. Specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify the primary foreign policy issues that have faced the United States since the end of World War II
2. Understand what motivates leaders' foreign policy actions and behavior

3. Apply general concepts learned in class to explain various US foreign policy crises and their outcomes
4. Draw upon historical examples in order to gain insight into current and future foreign policy issues (where possible and appropriate)
5. Evaluate policy alternatives using logic and evidence
6. Communicate and think critically about abstract ideas
7. Write an effective and coherent research paper

Materials

You will need to acquire the following books for this class:

James Lee Ray. 2013. *American Foreign Policy and Political Ambition.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

George Herring. 2013 *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975 (5th edition).* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Paul R. Pillar. 2001. *Terrorism and US Foreign Policy* Washington DC: Brookings University Press.

These books are in stock at university bookstores, but you may be able to find them for less on Amazon or another online bookseller. Regardless of where you get them, do so quickly. It is incumbent upon you to acquire the course materials in a timely fashion; we will begin using the textbook in earnest in Week 1, and no extensions will be granted if you're unable to complete an assignment because you cannot access the material.

On occasion, I will assign supplementary readings from academic articles, selections from books, online newspapers, or blog posts by academics or policy experts. Links to some of them are found in the online course schedule and/or PDF of the syllabus, and I'll make the others available to you via Webcourses.

Finally, the content for this class will also consist of several full-length films. If they are not available to stream online through a reputable website, they will be available to rent for $2.99 through Amazon, YouTube, Google Play, or some other source, so please make the necessary arrangements to access them through some digital distribution service.

Requirements & grading:

This class will consist of three different types of assignments: quizzes (10), discussion posts (10), and a research paper (1). These are explained in more detail below. The value of each assignment varies, but the total value of all assignments is 400 points. Thus, your final grade is based directly upon how many of the 400 points you earn throughout the semester.

Discussion posts (10 @ 10 point each)

For most of the course modules, you are expected to make two (2) kinds of online posts: an initial response post and a follow-up post for each of the course modules we will be covering. Initial posts are worth 50 points and follow-up posts are worth up to an additional 50, depending on quality. These will be graded according the rubric criteria, which can be found here. Please read the rubric carefully. The total points you can accumulate for discussion posts over the course of the semester will be aggregated in accord with the table posted below.

Quizzes: 150 points (10 @ 15 points each)

There will be ten (10) quizzes of equal value throughout this course. These will be based directly on the assigned reading for that module. The quizzes will vary in format and will typically consist of a mix of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions.

Final paper: 150 points (25 points for the proposal, 125 for the paper)

Each of you will produce a (roughly) 2,500-word research paper, which will cover a case or issue area of your choosing that is relevant to contemporary or historical US foreign policy. More specifically, you will analyze this case through the lens of the "political ambition" theory that serves as the framework for the Ray textbook. Does your case fit neatly within this framework, or do US actions and/or policies conflict with what political ambition theory would predict? Why and how does it fit? Does the policy or action that would most benefit the political career(s) of the relevant decision makers align with the national interest?

As part of this grade, you will need to submit a 750-word proposal that describes your case in detail. You can select any case or policy area you would like, but please clear it with me first. I'll provide more specifics on the paper and proposal at a later date.

You are welcome to choose any topic you would like, but please clear it with me by **March 1.**

The proposal will be due on **Wednesday, March 28, at 5:00 PM.**

The final paper will be due **Friday, April 27, at 5:00 PM** via Turnitin.

Calculating your final grade

Your final grade can be calculated using the following formula:

Percentage grade = (Total discussion points earned + Total quiz points earned + Total paper & proposal points earned)/400

Letter grades will be assigned according to the table below:

Make-up/late work policy

All assignments are due at 11:55 PM Eastern Standard Time on the date indicated on the course schedule and syllabus. You may submit late work without a university excuse up to four (4) days after the due date, but with a **15% deduction per day from your grade** on that assignment. I will not accept anything beyond four days past the deadline.
Students with an university-approved excuse (hospitalization, jury duty, family emergency) may be asked to provide documentation in order to make up graded assignments. Students with an approved excuse must also contact me before the assignment in question is due, otherwise no accommodations will be made. All make-up work is at the discretion of the instructor.

Extra credit & grade rounding

There will be absolutely no extra credit offered in this class, so please do not ask. Final grades will be rounded up to the nearest whole number if and only if the grade is within 0.5 points of the next highest

Letter grade	Percentage (out of 450 points)
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	<59

whole number. For example, a grade of 89.5 will be rounded to 90, but a grade of 89.49 will not be. There will be no discussion on this point. I realize this may be frustrating in some cases, but you are all adults, and the line must be drawn somewhere.

Communication

If you have any questions about readings, specific assignments, or anything else that is not answered in the syllabus, please either email me (or get in touch via the email feature in Webcourses. The TA for the course, Zlatin Mitkov () will also be able to answer questions that pertain specifically to grading. I will make every effort to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them. I will post important class announcements and reminders on the *Announcements* page in Webcourses, so be sure to check that multiple times per week. ****Please to not attempt to contact me by simply replying to an announcement. It is unlikely that I will notice that****

Academic conduct & plagiarism

As in all University courses, the Golden Rule (see the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/)) will be applied in cases of academic misconduct. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and, depending on the case, a 0 for the assignment and possibly an F for the entire class.
Plagiarism is serious, and despite what some students seem to think, it is quite easy to detect. Fortunately, it is also easily avoidable by following citing your sources correctly. For this class, please use APSA format for citations. Instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the class and will see the case forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation for expulsion.

Course Schedule:[1]

Week 1 (January 8-14):

1.1 Course intro

1.2 Theoretical framework

Week 2 (January 15-21):

2.1 None (MLK Day)

2.2 History of US foreign policy

Week 3 (January 22-28)

3.1 The presidency & congress

- The War Powers Act

3.2 Interest groups

- John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. 2007. "The Israel Lobby". *London Review of Books*, 28(6)

Week 4 (January 29-February 4)

4.1 The media

4.2 Public opinion

- Adam Berinsky. 2007, "Assuming the costs of war: Events, elites, and American public support for military conflict" *Journal of Politics* 69(4)

Week 5 (February 5-11)

5.2 Carrots & sticks

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith. 2007. "Foreign aid and policy concessions" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(2)

5.3 Carrots & sticks II

- Patricia Sullivan. 2007. "War aims and war outcomes: Why powerful states lose limited wars" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(3)

Week 6 (February 12-18)

6.1 Allies, cooperation, & empire

- David Lake. 2007. "Escape from the state of nature: Authority and hierarchy in world politics" *International Security* 32(1)

6.2 Nation-building and democracy promotion

Week 7 (February 19-25)

7.1 The Cold War

[1] The reading assignments are subject to change slightly. I will make you aware of any changes well in advance.

- George Kennan. 1947. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3629

7.2 The Cold War II

- John Lewis Gaddis. 1986. "The long peace: Elements of stability in the postwar international system" *International Security* 10(4)

Week 8 (February 26-March 4)

8.1 Nuclear weapons and deterrence

- watch *Dr. Strangelove*

8.2 Vietnam I

- Herring, Ch 1-2

Week 9 (March 5-11)

9.1 Vietnam II

- Herring, Ch 3-4

9.2 Vietnam III

- Herring, Ch 5-6

Week 10 (March 12-18): Spring Break: No class

Week 11 (March 19-25)

11.1 Vietnam IV

- Herring, Ch 7-8

11.2 Terrorism & Counterterrorism I

- Pillar, Ch 1-2

Week 12 (March 26-April 1)

12.1 Terrorism & Counterterrorism II

- Pillar, Ch 3-4

12.2 Terrorism & Counterterrorism III

- Pillar, Ch 6-8

Week 13 (April 2-8)

13.1 US foreign policy in Africa

13.2 US foreign policy in Asia

Week 14 (April 9-15)

14.1 US foreign policy in Europe

14.2 US foreign policy in Latin America

Week 15 (April 16-22)

15.1 US foreign policy in the Middle East

15.2 Quiz 6 (will cover bivariate & multivariate regression)

Week 16 (April 23-29)

16.1 work day

16.2 Final paper due

Disability access

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

Religious observances

Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance if a holy day of their religious faith is expected to influence their participation in the class. Given the online nature of the class, this is not expected to be an issue. If a conflict does exist, immediately notify the instructor. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the Faculty Center's main web page under "Calendars," and for additional information, contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at 407.823.6479.