
American Foreign Policy PSCI 380

**Fall 2009
TTh 12:00 – 1:15 pm
Ross 141**

Dr Michael MacLeod
Center Street House, Room 3
Telephone: 503-554-2675
Email: mmacleod@georgefox.edu
Office Hours: MW 3:00-6:00 pm; TTh 3:30-6:00 pm, or by appointment.

Course Description & Objectives

This course will examine the history, theory and processes behind the foreign policy of the United States. It does not demand that you necessarily have prior knowledge of American or international politics, however, without any background in these areas, you may struggle at times to comprehend much of the theoretical and structural framework on which this course is built. It is also an upper-level undergraduate course and therefore will require considerable effort on the part of students.

By the end of the term, students should be able to

- understand and discuss the historical political traditions of foreign policy in the US
- have a greater awareness of current political events that bridge the national & international as seen through the lens of US national interests
- describe and assess the structure and process of foreign policy making in the US, and actors involved therein
- better integrate their understanding of American foreign policy with the core elements of the Christian faith

Overall, the primary objective of the course is to educate and inspire students with an informed interest in American foreign policy. Accordingly, students should be prepared for a good amount of reading and work to achieve good results.

About the Syllabus

Please note: unless I clearly and unambiguously change something on this syllabus, which is quite possible, you are responsible for everything on it. You should read it, keep it, and follow it religiously. Also: we may have to be flexible regarding the schedule and assignments outlined below because of an expected heavy flu season, as you may well know. I have tried to take this into consideration, but other adjustments may be necessary.

Course Materials

I reserve the right the change or amend the course materials.

1. BOOKS. There is one required text for this course:

Michael Cox & Douglas Stokes eds., US Foreign Policy. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Students are *highly* recommended to utilize the excellent website that was developed for the text, which includes multiple choice questions and other helpful items. The web address is:

<http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199226429/>

2. READINGS. I will be assigning additional readings as I see fit during specific weeks and will make them available via the FoxTALE system and site for this course. Some are already noted in the class schedule below and others will be noted and made available later.

Students are also *required* to monitor what the bloggers are saying at www.foreignpolicy.com (I recommend Daniel Drezner, Marc Lynch and Stephen Walt, the links to which all located on the lower left side under 'Directory'). These will not require extensive reading, maybe 10-15 minutes every few days, and their issues usually cover the gamut of important US foreign policy developments. I will be utilizing these blogs as part of the regular classes from time to time, and they may also form the basis of assignments.

3. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES. Students are expected to follow international news during this course, and particularly the relationship that the US has to a particular issue, event or country(ies) involved. Part of our regular discussion & interaction amongst ourselves will be about current events, and trying to relate them to the content of this course. Sometimes this will be easy, sometimes not. But being aware of events and issues, and making intelligent comments and contributions, will constitute a part of your class discussion grade.

Here are my recommended reads/listen:

Newspapers: *The New York Times*

Magazines: *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Economist*

Other: *BBC World Service* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/>)

The BBC link enables you to listen 5 minute news reports on world developments (see 'hourly bulletins' on the right side of the page).

Course Requirements & Grading

1. Attendance: Although I will not be taking attendance, I expect students to attend class regularly. Please note that the content of the classes will not necessarily be identical to the content of the readings, and thus regular attendance is crucial for achieving success.

2. Your final grade will be determined on the following basis:

Class Participation	10%
Weekly Questions	10%
Mid-Term Exam	25%
Group Project & Presentation	25%
Final Exam	30%

Class Participation (10%): This includes asking questions (either about the lectures or the readings), answering questions posed by the instructor, and connecting course topics to current events. The quality of a student's participation is always more important than the quantity. For simplicity sake, I will use a basic letter scale for this component (A = excellent, B = good to very good, C = fair to average, D = barely passing, F = failure) and convert these into the standard numerical grade scale (below). You should come to each class prepared to discuss international events, the week's lectures, readings and questions posted at the end of the relevant chapters for that week. You should strive to make a meaningful contribution – I am NOT a mind reader. To earn a top grade, you must participate verbally and demonstrate that you are keeping on top of readings, etc, and that you are able to engage the weekly topic. You must also show respect for me and for the other students in the class. Disrespectful, rude, and intimidating behavior will not be tolerated. Please be aware that there is no way to make up your participation grade at the end of the term; if you chose to miss classes and/or not participate in the discussion without explanation, you will either receive a poor grade or forfeit this mark.

Weekly Questions (10%): Starting with week 2 and through to week 11 (except for week 7), each student will prepare and submit a written response to one of the discussion questions listed for that week. Your answer should be about 250-500 words long; you can/should use Word to compose the answer, and then upload it into the FoxTALE site for this class (to be discussed in the 2nd class). The deadline for these submissions is 8 am the day of the first class of the week, i.e. Tuesday. These questions will be graded as a simple PASS or FAIL, and you will receive one point for each answer you submit over the nine weeks from Week 2 to Week 11 (aside from Week 7). In addition, during one of those weeks, you will submit an additional answer to one of the questions for that week, so that you end up submitting 10 answers all together. This is an *easy* assignment to obtain 10 points for the class, provided your answer shows that you actually did the reading and composed a quality (i.e. well thought out) answer. While I will not hesitate to FAIL a submission if I believe that you did a poor job, I will give you one 'free' poor answer and tell you that you need to get better at this. I will also be using student answers in class and may ask you to elaborate on your response.

Mid-term Exam (25%): The mid-term exam is scheduled in-class for **Thursday, October 15**. The exam will consist of some combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer and/or an essay question, and will take the entire 75 minutes in length. You are responsible for all of the material covered in the classes and the assigned readings. Those students who miss the mid-term exam must present a medical or counseling certificate in order to avoid receiving an F. You should contact me immediately to arrange a make-up exam in the event that you have a valid excuse. There will be a very short time frame for a make-up.

Group Project & Presentation (25%): Students will be divided into groups of 3 and asked to create a 30-40 minute presentation to President Obama at the National Security Council on a foreign policy

issue (a list of topics and other details will be supplied after the term starts). Like papers, presentations will be graded on substance, style and structure. Unlike papers, you will be presenting findings before an audience who expect to be informed about a particular foreign policy problem and be given specific policy recommendations. Your group will be asked questions and your responses will help determine your grade, in addition to the quality of the presentation itself.

Take Home Examination (30%): At the end of the last class, students will be given a take-home assignment/exam that will represent the equivalent of a final examination. The exam will be due in the class on **Wednesday, December 16 at 8 am** during the regularly scheduled exam slot for this class.

4. Grading Scale: A final letter grade based upon the percentage of points you earn in this course will be given based on the following scale:

A 93-100	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99
A- 90-92.99	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99	F 0-59.99
B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	

Course Schedule

Here you will find the main theme of the week for the class, the required readings (to be done beforehand, except for the first class), and questions that will be used by me to guide lectures and for you to answer (as per above). The dates and topics are *guidelines* only, i.e. we will need to be flexible, depending on the term unfolds.

Note: there are no classes on September 24 (I am away) and November 26 (holiday)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
1	Sept 1 Sept 3	Course Introduction The Beginning ...	Text: Introduction

Also read: George Washington's farewell address
Available at: avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp (or google it)

Discuss: Did George Washington believe that ethics or self interest should have the greater role in foreign policy making? Why did Washington believe that the US should have no "permanent friends?"

2	Sept 8, 10	Theoretical Context	Chapters 1-2
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Also read: Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories"

Discuss: Which theoretical perspective (if any) best explains the nature of US foreign policy and why? Which has the greater influence on the making of US foreign policy: the external environment or domestic politics? Which factor or combination of

factors best accounts for the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003? Is America exceptional? To what extent is US foreign policy characterized by isolationism or internationalism? Is American exceptionalism on the rise after 9/11?

3 Sept 15, 17 Historical Context (I) Chapters 3-4

Discuss: Is America an Empire? (discuss in regard to the expansion of US power between 1776 and 1945) To what extent was early US imperialism linked to notions of American exceptionalism? Who was responsible for the onset of the Cold War – the US or the USSR? Was the expansion of US power during the Cold War a reaction to Soviet expansionism, or a conscious effort to extend US hegemony?

4 Sept 22 Historical Context (II) Chapter 4-5
[no class Sept 24]

Discuss: What caused the end of the Cold War? What were the main challenges and opportunities facing the US at the end of the Cold War? Why did the US intervene in Somalia and Bosnia but not in Rwanda?

5 Sept 29, Oct 1 Structures & Processes (I) Chapters 6-8

Discuss: How democratic is the US foreign policy-making process? Did the existence of nuclear weapons increase or decrease US security during the Cold War? Why has the US failed to secure stability in Iraq after its initial successes in 2003? Is Iraq a new Vietnam? Under what conditions should the US employ military force? Do regions matter in the study of US foreign policy? Does politics 'stop at the waters edge in the US'?

6 Oct 6, 8: Structures & Processes (II) Chapters 9-10

Discuss: Which model best captures the relationship between media, public opinion and foreign policy in the US – the pluralist model or the elite model (explain)? Is the development of the internet a potential problem or resource for the US with regard to public diplomacy (how)? Does the US government use the media to promote its foreign policy agenda and to what extent can the media change this agenda?

7 Oct 13: Catch-up and/or Review class
Oct 15: Mid-Term

8 Oct 20, 22 The US & Countries/Regions Chapters 11-13

Discuss: Is the US suffering 'blowback' from its earlier policies in the Middle East? What are the arguments for and against US involvement in the Middle East? What does it mean that 'Americans are from Mars, Europeans from Venus' (do you agree)? Is Russia a threat to US hegemony?

9	Oct 27, 29	The US & Countries/Regions	Chapters 14-16
	<u>Discuss:</u> Does the rise of China threaten the US? To what extent has the US pursued an imperialist strategy in Latin America? How did the Cold War shape US policy towards Latin America? Why did the US intervene in Somalia but not in Rwanda during the 1990s?		
10	Nov 3, 5	Key Issues	Chapters 17-19
	<u>Discuss:</u> What are the main challenges facing US economic strategy today? To what extent is US foreign policy as a whole driven by economic interests? Has the 'War on Terror' been successful? Is environmental leadership in the self-interest of the US?		
11	Nov 10, 12	9-11 and beyond	Chapters 20-22
	<u>Discuss:</u> Was 9/11 a 'world order moment'? Did the 'Bush Doctrine' (the National Security Strategy of 2002) revolutionize US foreign policy? Does 'soft power' matter? How did (or didn't) the departure of George W. Bush as US president alter the shape of US foreign policy?		
12	Nov 17, 19	Class Presentations	
13	Nov 24 [no class Nov 26]	Class Presentations	
14	Dec 1, 3	Class Presentations	
15	Dec 8, 10	Film	

Other Important Information

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, go to ds.georgefox.edu or contact Rick Muthiah, Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning (503-554-2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu).

The university deals strongly with cases of cheating & plagiarism. Stress is no excuse, so it's better to discuss with me (and other appropriate people) before temptation hits.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. Go to www.georgefox.edu/arc/ for information about consultants' areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at x2314 if you have questions.