

300.746: US Foreign Policy

Summer Semester 2024

Tuesday, 13:15-14:45, HS 388 (RU42OG1.114)

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 15:00-16:00 (by appointment)

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Course Description

What factors explain US foreign policy, and how has it changed over the years? This seminar aims to provide participants with a comprehensive introduction to the actors, processes, and strategies that shape the United States' engagement with the world. In this seminar, we will start by discussing important actors in the policymaking process, scrutinizing the role of the president, Congress, interest groups, and the public in shaping foreign policy processes. We will study the process by which US foreign policy decisions are made and familiarize ourselves with theories and empirical evidence used to explain various foreign policy decisions. In doing so, we will delve into different foreign policymaking areas—such as diplomacy, foreign aid, sanctions, and defense. Using this foundation, we will then analyze select US policy decisions concerning prominent foreign countries, including Iran, China, and Russia.

Course Objective

By the end of this course students will:

- Gain an introduction to empirically and scientifically studying US foreign policy
- Examine processes, dynamics, and challenges associated with US foreign policy making
- Apply theoretical approaches to analyze (current) real-world events
- Learn to engage in group discussions, as well as provide and receive constructive criticism

Course Requirements

1. Attendance: You are expected to attend the weekly sessions. You can miss 2 sessions unexcused. If you miss 3 sessions a compensation task will be required. If you miss more than 3 sessions unexcused, you will fail this course.
2. Participation (10% of the grade): You are expected to actively participate in class discussions. To be able to do so, you should read the required readings in advance of

each session. You are expected to be able to summarize the main points of each required reading in your own words and to argue for your own opinion. You are expected to bring a digital or paper copy of the required readings to class. You are strongly encouraged to offer suggestions and email material to me to circulate in class.

3. Group presentation (10% of the grade): In groups of two, you will present a journal article related to one of the formulated questions guiding a class session (suggestions can be found in the syllabus). The presentation should (1) cover the core arguments and empirical evidence presented in the paper, (2) establish connections to the required readings of the respective session, and (3) pose two discussion questions to the class. The group presentation should be max. 10 minutes long.
4. Essay I (35% of the grade): You will write essay (I) that consists of no more than 1500 words that answers a question that I will distribute to the class on 7 May. Your essay should engage, draw on, and cite assigned readings, as well as other course materials.

I will evaluate your essay by assessing your comprehension of the readings and course material, your ability to connect and integrate different readings, the structure and expression of your argument, and the empirical evidence you use to support your points. The deadline for the essay is **28 May at 23:59 pm**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard. You need to submit Essay I to pass this course.

5. Simulation (10%): This session will involve a brief simulation of the process behind the implementation of a policy proposal, set by the course instructor. You will be assigned roles (executive branch, legislative branch, interest group, or general public) one week prior to the session. Your task is to prepare a memo that is no longer than two pages that outlines (1) the pros and cons of this policy proposal from the perspective of your role, (2) states your position and (3) strategy for this policy process. The deadline for the essay is **25 June at 10:00 am**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard.
6. Essay II (35%): You will write essay (II) that consists of no more than 1500 words that answers a question that I will distribute to the class on 25 June. Your essay should engage, draw on, and cite assigned readings, as well as other course materials.

I will evaluate your essay by assessing your comprehension of the readings and course material, your ability to connect and integrate different readings, the structure and expression of your argument, and the empirical evidence you use to support your points. The deadline for the essay is **16 July at 23:59 pm**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard. You need to submit Essay II to pass this course.

Important Dates

28 May 2024	Essay I
25 June 2024	Memo
16 July 2024	Essay II
[Insert date]	Group presentation

Other Information

- Expectations: Handle all your coursework diligently. Invest time to actively participate in class, pay attention to the written assignments, group presentations, and your interactions with fellow students. Ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. Please be respectful to each other. Any disrespectful, disruptive or hateful comments may result in an academic penalty. All cell phones are to be turned off or silenced during class.
- Accommodation: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please let me know if you have a documented disability, so I can provide the accommodations you may need.
- Late submissions: Please note that late submissions will be penalized by subtracting one third of a grade for each day of delay. This includes weekends and holidays. I only make an exception to this if you have a medical certificate.
- Plagiarism: Please note that all work you submit to the university for assessment must be your own work. Plagiarism will result in a “nicht genügend” on your course work and possibly in formal disciplinary procedures.
- Course schedule: The schedule and readings are subject to change. All changes will be announced by email and updated on Blackboard in advance. It is your responsibility to keep up with the current changes. Reading assignments are given by date and should be completed prior to the respective class.

Course Plan

Section I: Introduction

Session 1 (5 March 2024): Course structure and requirements

Session 2 (12 March 2024): IR theories and US foreign policy

What is foreign policy? How do different theories explain US foreign policy decisions? To what extent is US foreign policy characterized by either isolationism or internationalism? Are exceptionalism and imperialism two sides of the same coin?

Required readings

- Deudney, D. & Meiser, J. (2008). American exceptionalism. In M. Cox & D. Stokes (Eds.), *US Foreign Policy* (pp. 21-37). Oxford University Press. (Chapter 2).
- Snyder, J. (2004). One world, rival theories. *Foreign Policy*, (145), 52-62.

Further readings

- Hudson, V. M., & Day, B. S. (2019). *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H. W., Sapin, B., Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H. W., & Sapin, B. (2002). *Decision-making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (pp. 21-152). Palgrave Macmillan US.

Section II: Foreign policy actors & processes

Session 3 (19 March 2024): President and the executive branch

How does the constitution divide responsibility for foreign affairs between the president and Congress? Are there “two presidencies”? What is the president’s advantage in foreign policymaking?

Required readings

- Meese, M. J., Nielsen, S. C., & Sondheimer, R. M. (2018). *American national security*. JHU Press. (Chapter 4: Presidential Leadership and Executive Branch).
- Wildavsky, A. (1966). The Two Presidencies. *Trans-action*, 4(2), 162-173.

Presentation

- Drezner, D. W. (2020). Immature leadership: Donald Trump and the American presidency. *International Affairs*, 96(2), 383-400.
- Skidmore, D. (2012). The Obama Presidency and US Foreign Policy: Where's the Multilateralism? *International Studies Perspectives*, 13(1), 43-64.

Further readings

- Brzezinski, Z. (2010). From hope to audacity: Appraising Obama's foreign policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 16-30.

- Liu, S. (2023). Personalization of Trump and Xi in the US–China trade conflict news: Comparison between the US and China. *International Communication Gazette, Online First*, 383-400.
- Margon, S. (2018). Giving up the high ground: America's retreat on human rights. *Foreign Affairs*, 97, 39–45.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2015). *Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy* (pp. 33-76). Princeton University Press. (Chapter 2: A Theory of Presidential Power and US Foreign Policy).

26 March 2024: No class

2 April 2024: No class

9 April 2024: No class

Session 4 (16 April 2024): Congress

How does Congress work? What role does Congress play in foreign policy? How is party polarization affecting the role of Congress in foreign policy?

Required readings

- Bryan, J. D., & Tama, J. (2022). The prevalence of bipartisanship in US foreign policy: An analysis of important congressional votes. *International Politics*, 59(5), 874-897.
- Scott, J. M., & Carter, R. G. (2002). Acting on the hill: Congressional assertiveness in US foreign policy. *Congress & the Presidency*, 29(2), 151-169.

Presentation

- Carter, R. G., & Scott, J. M. (2004). Taking the lead: Congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs in US foreign policy. *Politics & Policy*, 32(1), 34-70.
- Tama, J. (2019). Anti-presidential bipartisanship in US foreign policy under Trump: The case of the International Affairs Budget. *Available at SSRN 3393170*.

Further readings

- Davidson, R. H., Oleszek, W. J., Lee, F. E., & Schickler, E. (2019). *Congress and its members*. CQ Press.
- Fowler, L. L. (2015). *Watchdogs on the hill: The decline of congressional oversight of US foreign relations*. Princeton University Press.
- Howell, W. G., & Pevehouse, J. C. (2007). *While dangers gather: Congressional checks on presidential war powers*. Princeton University Press.
- Schultz, K. A. (2017). Perils of polarization for US foreign policy. *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(4), 7-28.

Session 5 (23 April 2024): Interest groups

What are interest groups and what do they do? How do interest groups influence foreign policy? Are some interest groups more effective than others?

- Kim, I. S. and Milner, H. V. (2019). Multinational corporations and their influence through lobbying on foreign policy. *Working paper*.
- Newhouse, J. (2009). Diplomacy, Inc.: The influence of lobbies on US foreign policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 73-92.

Presentation

- Dietrich, J. W. (1999). Interest groups and foreign policy: Clinton and the China MFN debates. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 29(2), 280-296.
- Snyder, S. B. (2018). *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed US Foreign Policy* (pp. 116–147). Columbia University Press. (Chapter 5: Translating Human Rights into the Language of Washington: American Activism in the Wake of the Coup in Chile).

Further readings

- Fordham, B. O. (1998). Economic interests, party, and ideology in early Cold War era US foreign policy. *International Organization*, 52(2), 359-396.
- Haney, P. J., & Vanderbush, W. (1999). The role of ethnic interest groups in US foreign policy: the case of the Cuban American National Foundation. *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(2), 341-361.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2015). *Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy* (pp. 77–120). Princeton University Press. (Chapter 3: Follow the sand dollars: Interest groups and American Foreign Policy Instruments).
- Prasad, S. K., & Savatic, F. (2023). Diasporic foreign policy interest groups in the United States: democracy, conflict, and political entrepreneurship. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(3), 831-848.

Session 6 (30 April 2024): Public opinion

Does public opinion matter? Can public opinion influence leaders' foreign policy decisions? Which domestic actor would you say influences US foreign policy the most?

Required readings

- Goldsmith, B. E., & Horiuchi, Y. (2012). In search of soft power: Does foreign public opinion matter for US foreign policy? *World Politics*, 64(3), 555-585.
- Knecht, T., & Weatherford, M. S. (2006). Public opinion and foreign policy: The stages of presidential decision making. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(3), 705-727.

Presentation

- LeoGrande, W. M. (1998). From Havana to Miami: US Cuba policy as a two-level game. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 40(1), 67-86.
- Voeten, E., & Brewer, P. R. (2006). Public opinion, the war in Iraq, and presidential accountability. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50(6), 809-830.

Further readings

- Canes-Wrone, B. (2010). *Who leads whom? Presidents, policy, and the public*. University of Chicago Press.
- Jacobs, L. R., & Page, B. I. (2005). Who influences US foreign policy? *American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 107-123.
- Kertzer, J. D., & Zeitzoff, T. (2017). A bottom-up theory of public opinion about foreign policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(3), 543-558.
- Saunders, E. N. (2015). War and the inner circle: Democratic elites and the politics of using force. *Security Studies*, 24(3), 466-501.

Section III: Foreign policy tools

Session 7 (7 May 2024): Foreign aid and economic sanctions

How has the use economic statecraft changed over the years? What are the dangers of an overreliance on economic statecraft? What factors shape preferences for foreign aid by US policy makers?

Required readings

- Blackwill, R. D., & Harris, J. M. (2016). The lost art of economic statecraft: Restoring an American tradition. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 99.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. H. (2010). The political economy of US foreign aid: American legislators and the domestic politics of aid. *Economics & Politics*, 22(2), 200-232.

Presentation

- Peksen, D., Peterson, T. M., & Drury, A. C. (2014). Media-driven humanitarianism? News media coverage of human rights abuses and the use of economic sanctions. *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(4), 855-866.
- Tokdemir, E. (2017). Winning hearts & minds (!): The dilemma of foreign aid in anti-Americanism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 54(6):819–832.

Further readings

- Attia, H. (2024). Divert when it does not hurt: The initiation of economic sanctions by US presidents from 1989 to 2015. *Review of International Economics*, 32(1), 109-131.
- Early, B. R., & Preble, K. A. (2020). Going fishing versus hunting whales: Explaining changes in how the US enforces economic sanctions. *Security Studies*, 29(2), 231-267.
- Essex, J. (2013). *Development, security, and aid: geopolitics and geoeconomics at the US Agency for International Development* (Vol. 16). University of Georgia Press.
- Hurst, R., Tidwell, T., and Hawkins, D. (2017). Down the rathole? Public support for US foreign aid. *International Studies Quarterly*, 61(2), 442–454.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2013). The choice for multilateralism: Foreign aid and American foreign policy. *The Review of International Organizations*, 8, 313-341.
- Tama, J. (2020). Forcing the president's hand: How the US congress shapes foreign policy through sanctions legislation. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(3), 397-416.

Session 8 (14 May 2024): Military intervention

When and why does the US intervene militarily? What factors led to a comparatively limited use of force as a policy option in the recent decade?

Required readings

- Mayer, M. (2019). Trigger happy: The foundations of US military interventions. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42(2):259–281.
- Yoon, M. Y. (1997). Explaining US intervention in third world internal wars, 1945-1989. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41(4), 580-602.

Presentation

- Von Hippel, K. (2000). *Democracy by force: US military intervention in the post-Cold War world* (pp. 92–127). Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 4: Heartened in Haiti).
- Weissman, S. R. (2016). Presidential deception in foreign policy making: Military intervention in Libya 2011. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 46(3):669–690.

Further readings

- Dobbins, J., Reveron, D. S., Cushman, C., Anderson, G. W., Veillette, C., Serafino, N., ... & Marks, E. (2014). *Mission creep: the militarization of US foreign policy?* Georgetown University Press.
- Ellis, R. E. (2019). The U.S. military in support of strategic objectives in Latin America and the Caribbean. *PRISM*, 8(1):26–39.
- Howell, W. G., & Pevehouse, J. C. (2005). Presidents, Congress, and the use of force. *International Organization*, 59(1), 209-232.
- Krebs, R. R. and Spindel, J. (2018). Divided priorities: Why and when allies differ over military intervention. *Security Studies*, 27(4), 575–606.
- O'Hanlon, M. E. (2021). *Defense 101: Understanding the Military of Today and Tomorrow*. Cornell University Press.

21 May 2024: No class

Session 9 (28 May 2024): (Digital) diplomacy

How is the cyber space influencing power dynamics? How are the Internet and new media technologies playing a growing role in transforming US public diplomacy programs?

Required readings

- Barrinha, A. and Renard, T. (2020). Power and diplomacy in the post-liberal cyberspace. *International Affairs*, 96(3), 749–766.
- Hallams, E. (2010). Digital diplomacy: the internet, the battle for ideas & US foreign policy. *CEU Political Science Journal*, (04), 538-574.

Presentation

- Suri, J. (2015). In Hutchings, R., & Suri, J. (Eds.). *From Isolation to Engagement: American Diplomacy and the Opening to China, 1969–1972. Foreign policy breakthroughs: cases in successful diplomacy* (pp. 101 - 120). Oxford University Press. (Chapter 5).
- Gady, F. S., & Austin, G. (2010). *Russia, the United States, and cyber diplomacy*. New York: East West Institute.

Further readings

- Hixson, W. L. (2008). *The myth of American diplomacy: National identity and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press.
- Kennedy, L., & Lucas, S. (2005). Enduring freedom: Public diplomacy and US foreign policy. *American Quarterly*, 57(2), 309-333.
- Kissinger, H. (2002). *Does America need a foreign policy? Toward a diplomacy for the 21st century*. Simon and Schuster.

Section IV: Case studies

Session 10 (4 June 2024): Russia

How has the US policy towards Russia developed since the collapse of the Soviet Union? Has the US incited Russia's interventions in Ukraine or are Moscow's actions unprovoked aggressions?

Required readings

- Kagan, R. (2022). The price of hegemony: Can America learn to use its power? *Foreign Affairs*, 101, 10–19.
- Ohanyan, A. (2021). The road not yet taken: Regionalizing US policy toward Russia. *The Washington Quarterly*, 44(4):29–47.

Presentation

- Renz, B. (2019). Russian responses to the changing character of war. *International Affairs*, 95(4): 817–834.
- Fazal, T. M. (2022). The Return of Conquest? Why the Future of Global Order Hinges on Ukraine. *Foreign Affairs*, 101, 20-28.

Further readings

- Frye, T. (2019). Economic sanctions and public opinion: Survey experiments from Russia. *Comparative political studies*, 52(7), 967-994.
- Kofman, M., & Kendall-Taylor, A. (2021). The myth of Russian decline: Why Moscow will be a persistent power. *Foreign Affairs*, 100, 142-153.
- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy. *International security*, 34(4), 63-95.
- Rasmussen, A. F., Stent, A., Walt, S. M., Mohan, C. R., Niblett, R., Fox, L., Allen, E., and Theil, S. (2022). Revisiting U.S. Grand Strategy After Ukraine. *Foreign Policy*.

Session 11 (11 June 2024 Russia): China

How has a rising China influenced US foreign policy? How should the US strategy towards China look like? Should the US pursue a strategy of limited geopolitical accommodation to avoid conflict?

Required readings

- Glaser, C. L. (2015). A US-China grand bargain? The hard choice between military competition and accommodation. *International Security*, 39(4):49–90.
- Weiss, J. C. (2022). The China trap: US foreign policy and the perilous logic of zero-sum competition. *Foreign Affairs*, 101(5):40–58.

Presentation

- Arnold, A. (2023). Curbing China's Resilience to US Coercive Economic Statecraft. *The Washington Quarterly*, 46(1), 153-167.
- Fang, S., Li, X., & Liu, A. Y. (2022). Chinese public opinion about US–China relations from Trump to Biden. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 15(1), 27-46.

Further readings

- Cunningham, F. S. and Fravel, M. T. (2015). Assuring assured retaliation: China's nuclear posture and US-China strategic stability. *International Security*, 40(2):7–50.
- De Graaff, N. and Van Apeldoorn, B. (2018). US-China relations and the liberal world order: Contending elites, colliding visions? *International Affairs*, 94(1):113–131.
- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy. *International Security*, 34(4), 63-95.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2021). The inevitable rivalry: America, China, and the tragedy of great-power politics. *Foreign Affairs*, 100, 48-60.

Session 12 (18 June 2024): Middle East and Iran

What are US interests in the Middle East? Should the US withdraw from the Middle East altogether? What was Obama's policy in the Middle East and why?

Required readings

- Cook, S. A. (2020). No exit: Why the Middle East still matters to America. *Foreign Affairs*, 99(6):133–142.
- Krieg, A. (2016). Externalizing the burden of war: The Obama Doctrine and US foreign policy in the Middle East. *International Affairs*, 92(1):97–113.

Presentation

- Van de Graaf, T. (2013). The “oil weapon” reversed? Sanctions against Iran and US-EU structural power. *Middle East Policy*, 20(3), 145-163.
- Wolf, A. B. (2018). After JCPOA: American grand strategy toward Iran. *Comparative Strategy*, 37(1), 22-34.

Further readings

- Baumgartner, J. C., Francia, P. L., and Morris, J. S. (2008). A clash of civilizations? The influence of religion on public opinion of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2):171–179.
- Edelman, E., and Takeyh, R. (2020). The Next Iranian Revolution: Why Washington Should Seek Regime Change in Tehran. *Foreign Affairs*, 99(3), 131-145.
- Goldenberg, I., Ewers, E. C., & Thomas, K. (2020). *Reengaging Iran*. Center for New American Media.
- Mousavian, S. H. (2018). The Strategic Disaster of Leaving the Iran Deal. *Foreign Affairs*.

Session 13 (25 June 2024): Simulation