

Course Code	IR6028
Course Title	TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
Academic Year / Trimester	AY2019-20 / Trimester 2
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Day / Time / Venue	Monday, 6.30pm – 9.30pm SR 1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Should the United States bother to continue trying to prevent North Korea and Iran from proliferating nuclear weapons? What should the United States do if China attacks Taiwan or annexes disputed islands in the South China or East China Seas? Was it a mistake for Washington to alienate Russia by expanding NATO after the end of the Cold War? This course addresses these and other salient questions pertaining to contemporary U.S. foreign policy. It is divided into three sections. The first section broadly introduces students to the subject matter of the class. It includes a review of the syllabus, discussion how to judge success and failure in foreign policy, and investigation of the thesis of American “exceptionalism.” The second section examines a series of topics pertaining to military force, the most salient tool of U.S. statecraft: grand strategy; military strategy and defense spending; civil-military relations; weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency; and humanitarian intervention. The third section focuses on the great power challenges posed by China and Russia.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course presupposes an elementary familiarity with the history of U.S. foreign relations and the rudiments of the U.S. foreign policymaking process. If you feel that need to brush up on these subjects, I strongly recommend that you read the following: Bruce Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century* (Norton, 2014), Ch's 2 & 4-6 (pp. 27-55; 89-214). This book is available at the RSIS Library.

The final course grade will be based on the following:

- *General seminar participation (15%)
- *Outline for guided research paper (5%)
- *Guided research paper (40%)
- *Closed book final examination (40%)

General seminar participation

This class allocates an extremely large percentage of the final grade (15%) to class participation. This is because it is a seminar course, not a lecture course, in which the students are expected to dominate class discussions and debates. The professor's job is merely to set the agenda and help guide the discussion. To facilitate discussion, *STUDENTS ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED FROM USING LAPTOP COMPUTERS, ELECTRONIC TABLETS, AND CELL PHONES DURING CLASS DISCUSSIONS*. Virtually all of the notes that you will have to take in this course will be taken outside of class while you do the readings, not in class while you are discussing them. In class, you will only need a pen and paper to jot down the occasional question, comment, or insight.

In order for the seminar to be productive, rather than a waste of everyone's time, *ALL STUDENTS MUST CONTRIBUTE FREQUENTLY AND POSITIVELY TO THE CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES*. To contribute frequently means that each student must speak publicly every single week, not merely a few times over the course of the trimester. Students that do not speak often in class are free riders on those that do. To contribute positively means that each student must be familiar with the arguments found in the required readings before showing up for class. A student that speaks without having done the week's readings is merely distracting from the task at hand, which is to assess the readings and not pontificate about the issues under discussion in an uninformed manner (informed pontificating is acceptable). I have carefully kept the maximum required weekly readings at about 50-80 pages, which means there is no excuse for students not to do *all of the readings* before class.

I will begin each session by introducing the topic of the day and distributing a short handout (op-ed, newspaper article, speech, government document, etc.) that is intended to facilitate a free-

ranging discussion of the assigned readings. During that time, the class will focus on the four discussion questions listed in the syllabus above the week's required readings. During some sessions, as indicated in the syllabus, the discussion will be truncated in order to make time for an in-class film. The contents of the films will be fair game for the final examination.

Closed book final examination

The final examination, which will be held during the concluding week of the trimester (Week #13), will test students' knowledge of the course materials. It will consist of two parts. The first part will require students to briefly define and explain the significance of 2 (out of 4) key terms and concepts (2 x 4 points apiece = 8 points). The second part requires students to answer 2 (out of 4) longer form essay questions (2 x 16 points apiece = 32 points). During the review session (Week #12) I will distribute a study sheet which will include a list of key terms and essay questions from which I will construct the final exam.

Guided research paper and outline

The research paper will be due at the commencement of class in Week #11 and will consist of a 5000-6000 word essay that answers the following question:

Select a historical case study in which the United States attempted to exercise influence over a state (or states or non-state actor) and assess the degree to which that influence attempt was successful. In your essay, you must employ the analytical framework for evaluating success and failure in foreign policy that is proposed in David A. Baldwin, "Success and Failure in Foreign Policy," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2000), pp. 167-182.

An influence attempt constitutes the attempt by one state to modify or perpetuate the behavior of another state (or non-state actor) via the use of one or more techniques of statecraft, i.e., diplomacy, economic statecraft, military statecraft, propaganda, covert action, etc. Many influence attempts involve the simultaneous or sequential use of various techniques of statecraft. For example, coercive diplomacy often involves the simultaneous or near-simultaneous use of diplomatic threats and the demonstrative use of military force to persuade a target to change its behavior. As a result, the specific influence attempt you select can either be narrow or wide in scope. An example of a narrowly-gauged influence attempt was the George H. W. Bush Administration's sale of F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan in 1992. An example of a wide-gauged influence attempt was the U.S. war in Iraq (2003-2011).

Importantly, influence attempts may consist of negative sanctions (i.e., the use of threats and/or punishments), positive sanctions (i.e., the use of promises and/or rewards), or a combination of the two (i.e., "carrots-and-sticks").

To help students that are experiencing trouble finding a specific topic for their papers, I have placed the following historical surveys of U.S. foreign policy on reserve at the RSIS Library for their perusal:

*Warren I. Cohen, ed., *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*,
Vol's 1-4 (New York: 2013).

Vol. 1: William E. Weeks, *Dimensions of the Early American Empire, 1754-1865*

Vol. 2: Walter LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*

Vol. 3: Akira Iriye, *The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*

Vol. 4: Warren I. Cohen, *Challenges to American Primacy: 1945 to the Present*

*George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*
(Oxford University Press, 2008).

A partial list of periodicals that are likely to have useful articles for various topics follows:

Academic Journals:

World Politics

International Security

Diplomatic History

Diplomacy and Statecraft

Security Studies

Cold War History

Journal of Strategic Studies

Journal of Cold War Studies

Texas National Security Review

Armed Forces and Society

Peacekeeping

International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence

Intelligence and National Security

International Organization

International Studies Quarterly

Foreign Policy Analysis

European Journal of International Relations

European Journal of International Security

Journal of Global Security Studies

Policy Journals:

Foreign Affairs

The National Interest

The American Interest

Survival

Washington Quarterly

Foreign Policy

Orbis

Commentary

World Policy Journal

World Affairs

International Affairs

Specialized Professional and Trade Journals:

Naval War College Review
Parameters: Journal of the Army War College
Military Review
Army
Airpower Journal
Strategic Studies Quarterly
JFQ: Joint Forces Quarterly
Armed Forces Journal
Defense and Aerospace Week
Defense News
Inside the Pentagon
Jane's Defense Weekly
Studies in Intelligence
RUSI Journal

Primary Sources:

New York Times [NTU databases: LexisNexis Academic Universe]
Wall Street Journal [Lexis]
Washington Post [Lexis]
Digital National Security Archive <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/marketing/index.jsp>>.
Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) Diplomatic Papers
<<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>>.

Students must include references to all ideas that are not their own, in the form of footnotes (I prefer footnotes to endnotes or in-text citations). For a model of how footnotes should look, students should emulate the style used in the following article from the academic journal *International Security*, which I have assigned in Week #10: Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security*, 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41-78. This style of referencing obviates the need to include a separate bibliography at the end of the essay. **IF YOU DO NOT SCRUPULOUSLY INCLUDE PRECISE CITATIONS TO EVERY IDEA THAT IS NOT YOUR OWN, YOU ARE COMMITTING ACADEMIC PLAGIARISM, WHICH WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO ON THE ASSIGNMENT.**

Students must be very careful in selecting source material for their papers. Although there are many acceptable primary and secondary sources that can be accessed via the internet, there are also many internet sources of dubious, trivial, and unreliable character. In using the internet as a search tool, students should be careful to glean only valid source material, such as published newspaper, magazine, and journal articles, as well as declassified government documents. Under no circumstances should students use Wikipedia articles as source material for their essays, though Wikipedia articles may be used preliminarily in order to direct students to better sources for the topics they are researching.

A draft version of the essay's introductory paragraph, which should provide a clear and comprehensive outline of the paper's core argument, is due at the beginning of class on Week #6. I will return the reviewed and graded introductory paragraphs/outlines at the end of class on Week #7.

COURSE TEXTS

*Richard Betts, *American Force: Dangers, Delusions, and Dilemmas in National Security* (Columbia University Press, 2012).

I strongly recommend purchasing this book because we will read all of it over the course of the trimester.

*Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner, and Diane N. Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (Columbia University Press, 2018).

Although this edited volume is excellent, we will only be covering some of its many essays.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: Introduction

Week #1: Introduction to the Course

NO REQUIRED READINGS

In-class handouts:

Excerpt from the Farewell Address of President George Washington, September 19, 1796.

Excerpt from Secretary of State John Quincy Adams' Address Celebrating the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1821.

Week #2: Evaluating Success and Failure in Foreign Policy

Discussion questions:

- (1) Why is it extremely difficult to evaluate foreign policy outcomes? Is it even possible to do so objectively?***
- (2) Why are costs such an important, yet frequently neglected, criterion of foreign policy success or failure?***
- (3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of Baldwin's analytical framework for assessing success and failure in foreign policy?***
- (4) How does Drezner illuminate the problem of selection bias in assessing foreign policy instruments, such as economic sanctions?***

Required reading:

David A. Baldwin, "Success and Failure in Foreign Policy," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2000), pp. 167-182.

Daniel W. Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion," *International Organization*, 57, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 643-659.

Week #3: Is the United States “Exceptional”?

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Is the United States “exceptional” or is it just a typical great power?***
- (2) Do you think that Woodrow Wilson has had a positive or negative impact on the subsequent trajectory of U.S. foreign policy?***
- (3) Does America’s promotion of democracy abroad compromise its democracy at home?***
- (4) How does President Trump construe the term “exceptionalism”?***

Required readings:

Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), Ch. 2 (pp. 29-55).

Samuel P. Huntington, “American Ideals Versus American Institutions,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 97, No. 1 (Spring 1982), pp. 1-37 (esp. 15-37).

Stephen Wertheim, “Trump Against Exceptionalism: The Sources of Trumpian Conduct,” in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 9 (pp. 125-135).

In-class handout:

President Woodrow Wilson’s War Message to the U.S. Congress, April 2, 1917.

Part II: Aspects of Military Statecraft

Week #4: Grand Strategy

Discussion Questions:

- (1) What is grand strategy? Are grand strategies necessary?***
- (2) In what crucial respect was America's Cold War grand strategy of containment based on a "wobbly" and "incoherent" military strategy?***
- (3) Would present-day U.S. interests be better served by a grand strategy of offshore balancing or continued deep engagement?***
- (4) Has Trump dramatically transformed the grand strategy he inherited from his post-Cold War predecessors?***

Required readings:

Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy?* (Cornell Univ. Press, 2014), Introduction (pp. 1-16).

Richard Betts, *American Force*, Ch. 2 (pp. 19-49).

Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Lean Forward: In Defense of American Engagement," *Foreign Affairs*, 92, No. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2013), pp. 130-142.

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, (July/August 2016), pp. 70-83.

Barry R. Posen, "The Rise of Illiberal Hegemony: Trump's Surprising Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, 97, No. 2 (March/April 2018), pp. 20-27.

Week #5: Military Strategy and Defense Spending

Discussion Questions:

- (1) *Has the United State been on a “permanent war” footing since the end of the Cold War? If so, why?*
- (2) *What is military strategy? Why is it important?*
- (3) *Why is military power so difficult to use effectively in wartime?*
- (4) *Is the U.S. defense budget too big, too small, or just right?*

IN-CLASS FILM: President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Televised Farewell Address, January 17, 1961

Required readings:

Richard Betts, *American Force*, Ch.’s 10-12 (pp. 232-299).

Jessica T. Mathews, “America’s Indefensible Defense Budget,” *New York Review of Books*, 66, No. 12, July 18, 2019, pp. 23-24.

Week #6: Civil-Military Relations

[RESEARCH PAPER INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS]

Discussion Questions:

- (1) *Why is there an inherent tension in civil-military relations?*
- (2) *According to Bacevich, why have post-1945 civil-military relations in the United States been dysfunctional? According to Betts, why have they been relatively functional?*
- (3) *Is the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine a useful guidepost for the use of military force by the United States?*
- (4) *Was it reassuring or unnerving that President Trump appointed so many serving and retired military officers to important posts in his administration?*

Required readings:

Andrew Bacevich, "Elusive Bargain: The Pattern of U.S. Civil-Military Relations Since World War II," in Bacevich, ed., *The Long War: A New History of U.S. National Security Policy Since World War II* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2007), pp. 207-264.

Betts, *American Force*, Ch. 9 (pp. 201-231).

"The Uses of Military Power," Remarks Prepared for Delivery by the Hon. Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, to the National Press Club, Washington, DC, Nov. 28, 1984. < <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/force/weinberger.html>>.

Charlie Savage, "Controlling the Chief," *New York Review of Books*, February 8, 2018, pp. 24-26.

Week #7: Weapons of Mass Destruction

[INTRO PARAGRAPHS RETURNED AT THE END OF CLASS]

Discussion Questions:

- (1) *Are all Weapons of Mass Destruction more or less equally frightening?*
- (2) *Is there a causal relationship between U.S. grand strategy and the likelihood that it will be victimized by WMD attacks?*
- (3) *Are airstrikes the best way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons?*
- (4) *Have U.S. efforts to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons been counterproductive?*

In-Class Film: Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed," University of California, Santa Barbara, February 24, 2005.

Required readings:

Betts, *American Force*, Ch.'s 4 and 6 (pp. 81-104; 128-144).

John Mueller, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), Ch's. 9-11 (pp. 115-158).

Week #8: Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Wars

Discussion Questions:

- (1) How worrisome is the threat posed to the United States by terrorism?***
- (2) Do you think that Cohen's and Zenko's counterfactual post-9/11 U.S. counterterrorism strategy would have been more successful than the actual one pursued by the George W. Bush administration? Would it have been viable?***
- (3) Which is the correct lesson to draw from the Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars, that the U.S. needs to more effectively wage counterinsurgency wars or that the U.S. should never wage COIN wars in the first place?***
- (4) Has Donald Trump's counterterrorism policy been much different from those of Obama and (George W.) Bush, in terms of strategy, tactics, or outcome?***

In-Class Film: "The Rise of ISIS" (PBS Frontline Series, 2014).

Required readings:

Richard Betts, *American Force*, Ch.'s 5 & 7 (pp. 105-127, 145-170).

Michael A. Cohen and Micah Zenko, *Clear and Present Safety: The World Has Never Been Better and Why That Matters to Americans* (Yale Univ. Press, 2019), pp. 131-155.

Daniel Byman, "Assessing Trump's Emerging Counterterrorism Policy," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 15 (pp. 198-209).

James Thomson, "How Could Vietnam Happen? An Autopsy" *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1968.

Week #9: Humanitarian Intervention

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Is it wise for the United States to tell other countries' governments how to rule their people?*
- (2) Under what conditions will humanitarian intervention be most likely to succeed? Are these conditions feasible in most cases?*
- (3) In what respects did Libya (2011) serve as a cautionary tale for advocates of humanitarian intervention?*
- (4) Should the United States have militarily intervened to stop the bloodshed in Syria? If so, how?*

Required readings:

Richard Betts, *American Force*, Ch. 3 (pp. 50-80).

Alan Kuperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, 94, No. 2 (Mar/Apr 2015), pp. 66-77.

Daniel Byman, "Six Bad Options for Syria," *The Washington Quarterly*, 38, No. 4 (Winter 2016), pp. 171-186.

Mark Philip Bradley, "The United States and the Global Human Rights Order," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 25 (pp. 331-336).

Samuel Moyn, "Donald Trump and the Irrelevance of Human Rights," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 26 (pp. 337-340).

Part III: Great Power Challenges

Week #10: China

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Is China poised to overtake the United States as the preeminent power in the international system?***
- (2) What is the “responsible stakeholder” strategy? Has it failed?***
- (3) Does China’s rise inevitably threaten vital U.S. interests?***
- (4) Should the United States pursue a laissez-faire or interventionist economic policy towards China?***

In-Class Film: “Can China Rise Peacefully?” Debate Between John Mearsheimer and Yan Xuetong, Tsinghua University, Nov. 2, 2013

Required readings:

Michael Beckley, “China’s Century? Why America’s Edge Will Endure,” *International Security*, 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41-78.

Richard Betts, *American Force*, pp. 171-188.

Hal Brands and Zack Cooper, “After the Responsible Stakeholder, What? Debating America’s China Strategy,” *Texas National Security Review*, 2, No. 2 (Feb. 2019), pp. 69-81.

Charles Glaser, “Will China’s Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” *Foreign Affairs*, 90, No. 2 (March/April 2011), pp. 80-91.

Aaron Friedberg, “A New U.S. Economic Strategy toward China?” *Washington Quarterly*, 40, No. 4 (Winter 2018), pp. 97-114.

Week #11: Russia

[RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AT START OF CLASS IN HARDCOPY FORMAT]

Discussion Questions:

- (1) *Are America's NATO allies a net benefit or cost to the United States?*
- (2) *Is Russia an enemy of the United States?*
- (3) *Was it a good idea for the United States to expand NATO into Eastern Europe?*
- (4) *Who was more to blame for the ongoing Ukraine crisis, the West or Russia?*

Required readings:

Richard Betts, *American Force*, pp. 188-198.

John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, 93, No. 5 (Sept/Oct 2014), pp. 77-89.

Kimberly Martin, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," *European Journal of International Security*, 3, No. 2 (June 2018), pp. 135-161.

Stanley R. Sloan, "Donald Trump and NATO: Historic Alliance Meets A-historic President," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 17 (pp. 221-234).

Robert Legvold, "US-Russia Relations Unhinged," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 22 (pp. 287-300).

William R. Keylor, "The Future of the Atlantic Alliance Under President Trump," in Jervis, Gavin, Rovner, and Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, Ch. 24 (pp. 322-327).

Week #12: REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM

Week #13: FINAL EXAM