RPOS 399: Foreign Policy and Coercive Statecraft

Professor: Bryan R. Early  
Class #: 3599  
Class Times: Tuesday-Thursday, 8:45-10:05AM  
Room: Humanities Building 133  
Email: bearily@albany.edu  
Office Hours: Uptown, Humanities Building B16 – Tuesdays, 10:15-11:15 AM  
            Downtown, Milne Hall 300A – Thursdays, 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the study and practice of foreign policy with a particular emphasis on American foreign policy and the use of coercive statecraft. The course begins by exploring what motivates foreign policy choices and the processes by which foreign policy decisions are made. The next section examines how U.S. foreign policy is conducted and examines the key institutions involved in U.S. foreign policy-making. In the second half of the course, the main focus is placed upon how and why states engage in coercive statecraft and what are its consequences. Both the use of military coercion and economic sanctions are explored in depth. By the end of the course, students should understand how and why great powers like the United States employ coercive foreign policies and what the potential benefits and pitfalls of those policies can be. The course’s capstone project will involve a group-based assignment to develop and analyze a policy recommendation for the adoption of a new coercive policy by the U.S. Government. This assignment will involve writing a professional policy brief, giving a public presentation to a panel of foreign policy experts, and defending their recommendations during a Q&A session.

Expectations

This is a reading intensive course. Students are expected to attend every class on time, having done the assigned readings, and prepared to contribute to course discussions. All quizzes and assignments must be turned in by the assigned due date.

Course Learning Objectives

- Students will know and understand what foreign policy is and how it is conducted by governments
- Students will know and understand the processes by which U.S. foreign policy is conducted and the major institutions that play a role in U.S. foreign policy
- Students will know and understand how and why states employ coercive diplomacy
- Students will know and know the different types and uses of military force
- Students will know and understand why leaders employ economic sanctions, the various types that are used, and the processes by which they are threatened and imposed
- Students will know and understand the factors that contribute to why economic sanctions succeed or fail
- Students will appreciate the broad consequences of economic sanctions
• Students will engage in critical thinking about how coercive diplomacy can be used by policymaking
• Students will practice group decision-making in approaching a real-world policy scenario
• Students will develop professional-level writing and presentation skills

**Grading**

**Quizzes – 20%**

A total of 6 pop quizzes will be given during the semester that will test students’ knowledge of the readings and concepts covered in class. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, but students’ lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**Midterm Exam – 25%**

Students will be given an in-class midterm exam that covers all the course readings, lectures, and group activities up until the exam.

**Final Exam – 25%**

Students will be given a two-hour comprehensive exam that covers all the course readings, lectures, and group activities.

**Coercive Statecraft Policy Proposal – 30%**

Students will work in small groups to develop a collective 15-page proposal on how the U.S. Government can utilize the instruments of coercive statecraft to achieve a foreign policy objective. Students will conduct a 15-minute professional briefing using power-point in front of a panel of foreign policy experts, which will include an additional 10-15 minute Q&A session. The instructor will provide more details about the assignment. Due Dates: TBD, but after Thanksgiving Break.

**Grading Policy**

Tests and papers will be graded blind by the instructor and/or teaching assistant. If a student wishes to challenge how his or her exam or paper was graded, the student must submit a written statement describing what part of their assignment was improperly evaluated and why they think that was the case. This must be done within five days of having the assignment returned. Both the instructor and assistant will re-grade the entire project, compare their assessments, and mutually decide on a final grade. This grade may be higher or lower than the original grade given and will be final. Any clear mistakes or errors made by the instructor will be promptly corrected and need only be brought to the instructor’s attention.
Policy on Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the undergraduate bulletin’s descriptions of cheating and plagiarism. If you are involved in plagiarism or cheating on an exam or research paper, the instructor reserves the right to issue a 0 on the assignment, give a failing grade to the student for the course, and/or submit a “Violation of Academic Integrity Report.” If you are not sure if something violates standards – feel free to ask ahead of time. In general, it’s always better to err on the side of citing too much than too little in your research papers. The university’s official policy can be found at: http://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/appendix-c.php. Lastly, never cite Wikipedia as source.

Accommodations

“Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). The office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.” For the University’s policy, see: http://www.albany.edu/disability/docs/RAP.pdf. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Resources

Required Books


Required Articles and Book Chapters

- All course readings that are not in the books or linked to a website will be posted on the class Blackboard Page in the “Course Readings” Folder.

Course Schedule

Part I: An Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis and U.S. Foreign Policy

Week 1: Course Introduction
- (8/27)

Week 2: Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory
- (9/1)

- (9/3): National Interests, Interest Groups, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy

Part II: Foreign Policy Institutions, Processes, and Decision Making

Week 3:
- (9/8): Foreign Policy Decision Making: Rationalist and Cognitive Approaches
- (9/10): Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groups and Bureaucratic Politics

Week 4:
- (9/15) – No Class
- (9/17): Foreign Policy Decision Making: Pathologies

Week 5:
- (9/22): The President, Congress, and Foreign Policy

- (9/24) – No Class

Week 6:
- (9/29): U.S. Agencies Involved Foreign Policy
  - Peruse the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Treasury Websites. Learn basic facts about the organizations’ leadership.
- (10/1) : U.S. Agencies Involved Foreign Policy (Cont.)

Week 7:
- (10/6): Crafting Policy

Part III: Coercive Statecraft

- (10/8): What is Coercion?

The Threat and Use of Military Force

Week 8:
- (10/13): Military Coercion
- (10/15): Coercive Threats and Deterrence

Week 9:
- (10/20): Policy Analysis, Research, and Writing
  o TBD

- (10/22): Deterrence, Compellence, and Crisis Escalation in the Nuclear Age
  o Thomas Schelling. 1966. “Chapters 1-3.” *Arms and Influence.*

Week 10:
- (10/27): Deterrence, Compellence, and Crisis Escalation in the Nuclear Age
  o Thomas Schelling. 1966. “Chapters 4-7.” *Arms and Influence.*

**Economic Sanctions**
- (10/29): What are Economic Sanctions and Why Are They Used?

Week 11:
- (11/3): The Goals of Economic Sanctions
  o U.S. Department of State. 2015. “Economic Sanctions Policy and Implementation.” Available at: [http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/](http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/). Look at this site and the link the Department of Treasury’s OFAC site.
- (11/5): Threatening and Imposing Economic Sanctions

Week 12:
- (11/10): Factors Affecting the Success of Economic Sanctions

- (11/12): The Humanitarian Consequences of Economic Sanctions

Week 13:

- (10/19): The Political Side-Effects of Economic Sanctions
Week 14: Thanksgiving Break (No Class This Week)
  - (11/24) – No Class
  - (10/26) – No Class

Week 15:
  - (12/1): In-Class Workshop for Policy Presentations
  - (12/3): Economic Sanctions and Sanctions-Busting: Causes and Consequences

**Part IV: Conclusion**

Week 16:
  - (12/8): Wrap-Up