RPOS 484/RPOS 584/RINT 584

American Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation

Class Meeting Location: Arts and Sciences 15
Class Meeting Time:
Undergraduates: Wednesday, 5:45-8:25 pm
Graduate Students: Wednesday, 5:45-8:25 pm and as arranged
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10am-12pm (Uptown Campus, Humanities B-16 Contact Office)
By Appointment (Downtown Campus, Milne 220)

Course Description
The United States is the most powerful country in the world. Since the end of World War II, the United States has fought wars against or conducted major military operations in at least sixteen different countries. The United States spends three to four times as much on its military as China, the next biggest spender. While a tiny part of the U.S. budget, the United States is the largest provider of foreign aid globally. U.S. decisions in international trade and climate negotiations have global effects. As a result, we should all try to better understand how the United States behaves in international politics, how it has behaved in the past, why it behaves that way, and how it should behave. This writing-intensive course will introduce students to theories of foreign policy that may explain U.S. behavior, along with more detailed case studies of important episodes in U.S. diplomatic and military history and reviews of contemporary U.S. foreign policy challenges. Students will leave the course with a greater knowledge of historical and contemporary U.S. foreign policy as well as a theoretical toolkit they can employ to understand international politics more broadly.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of the course, all students should be able to
1. Identify key concepts in readings and describe the steps of an argument
2. Critically evaluate common readings in discussions with instructor and fellow students
3. Ask incisive questions of texts as well as of fellow students
4. Speak and write effectively about course topics in formats appropriate to career goals

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 go here [http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml) and arrange for an academic accommodation letter to be sent to me. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please also inform me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity:
Don’t do unethical stuff, or your grade could suffer catastrophically. For a good survey of potential dangers, see [http://www.albany.edu/eltl/academic_integrity.php](http://www.albany.edu/eltl/academic_integrity.php).

Assignments and Grading:
The course will be assessed on a typical A-E scale (100-93% A, 92.9-90% A-, 89.9-87% B+, 86.9-83% B, 82.9-80% B-, 79.9-77% C+, 76.9-73% C, 72.9-70% C-, 69.9-67% D+, 66.9-63% D, 62.9-60% D-, 59.9-0% E).
Participation: 20%
As a discussion-based course, active participation is a crucial component of the grade. This includes both regular attendance in class and contribution to class discussion. Students should therefore complete all readings before attending class.

Reading Notes: 20%
Each week (except for the first session), you will be expected to submit one reading response on any (combination) of the readings assigned that week by no later than 5:00pm on Tuesday (the day before class) via e-mail (cclary@albany.edu). The discussion responses should be approximately 250 words (one-half, single-spaced page), and can reference multiple readings, or examine how a reading from that week relates to ideas or topics from an earlier week. They should be substantive responses on the assigned readings that you think would be useful to discuss in class. Responses that do not demonstrate engagement with the readings will not receive full credit.

Op-ed: 10% *** UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY ***
Each student will be asked to write a short piece (no less than 800 and no more than 1,000 words) of persuasive public writing designed to engage a non-specialist audience on a topic relevant to the course. The op-ed ought to avoid technical language, succinctly explain the issue, and advocate for a (set of) policy recommendation(s).

Graduate Discussion Group: 10% *** GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY ***
Graduate students taking the course for credit as RPOS 584 or RINT 584 will be asked to read additional texts, write additional reading notes on them, and engage in active discussion of them. Additional details will be provided on the first day of class.

Research paper: 50%
The research paper is the most important component of the final grade, so students should begin work on this as early as possible. Papers should be between 20 and 30 double-spaced pages and can be on any topic related to American foreign policy. The papers must include (1) a brief literature review, (2) a clearly stated argument or hypothesis (derived from the readings, another source, or an original argument), (3) a description of how the argument/hypothesis will be evaluated empirically, and (4) an evaluation of the argument using evidence from at least one historical case. While students are encouraged to evaluate an argument advanced in the course readings, they cannot use the same case(s) to evaluate the argument as are used in the readings.

One-fifth (20%) of the research paper grade (or 10% of the course grade overall) will be assessed on performance on three “checkpoint” assignments to ensure students are making adequate progress.

In week 5 (September 26), students are required to submit a research paper proposal (1-2 pages) that identifies the argument/hypothesis to be tested and the case(s) that will be examined.

In week 9 (October 24), students are required to submit a progress report updating and expanding the research proposal, along with enumerating and describing major theoretical, empirical, and/or
historical works from which the student intends to draw. I will provide written feedback to both the research paper proposal and the progress report.

In week 14 (November 28) students will be asked to bring in 4 pages of their paper draft, of which at least 2 pages must be from the introduction, which showcases their paper’s argument and how it is tested. These excerpts will be evaluated by peers, and also submitted to me. So students are asked to bring 4 copies of the excerpt to class—1 to hand-in, 2 to distribute for peer evaluation, and 1 for the student to consult during the exercise.

In addition to these “checkpoints,” students are permitted (but not required) to submit and receive feedback on one rough draft, but this must be submitted electronically no later than November 21. I will provide comments within two weeks of receiving a rough draft.

Students are also encouraged to consult with university-wide resources for writing assistance, such as the Writing Center (HU 140), or meet me during office hours or by appointment to discuss the paper. The final draft of the paper is due electronically on December 12. Failure to turn in the paper on time will result in substantial penalties.

Required Text:

Colin Dueck, Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – Introduction [August 29]

Week 2 – What is Grand Strategy? [116] [September 5]


Charles L. Glaser, Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 23-50. [27]

Week 3 – What is U.S. Grand Strategy? [76] [September 12]


Week 4 – NO CLASS [YOM KIPPUR] [September 19]

Week 5 – Ideational Theories of Foreign Policy [113 pages] [September 26]


    **RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE VIA E-MAIL**

Week 6 – Individual Explanations: Intelligence Failure and the Korean War [104 pages] [October 3]


Week 7 – NO CLASS [PROFESSOR ON THE ROAD] [October 10]

Week 8 –Vietnam [107 pages] [October 17]


Week 9 – Trade/Sanctions/Two-level Games [95] [October 24]


**RESEARCH PAPER PROGRESS REPORT DUE VIA E-MAIL**

Week 10 – Nuclear Nonproliferation and the Nuclear Taboo [93] [November 2]


Week 11 – 9/11 and the Iraq War [125] [November 9]


Week 12 – Iraq War 2, Part 1: Threat Inflation and “Oversell” [94] [November 16]

Week 13 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving) [November 21]

Week 14 – Iraq War 2, Part 2 [90 pages] [November 28]


**IN-CLASS PEER FEEDBACK EXERCISE IN CLASS [BRING 4 COPIES]**

Week 15 – Non-governmental Organizations / Lobbying [120 pages] [December 5]


Finals Week [December 12]

**RESEARCH PAPER TO BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY.**
THE BIG PICTURE

Week 1 – Introduction [August 29]

Week 2 – What is Grand Strategy? [116 pages] [September 5]

Week 3 – What is U.S. Grand Strategy [76 pages] [September 12]

Week 4 – NO CLASS [YOM KIPPUR] [September 19]

Week 5 – Ideational Theories of Foreign Policy [113 pages] [Need Dueck Book] [September 26]

Week 6 – Intelligence Failure/Korean War [104 pages] [Research Proposal] [October 3]

Week 7 – NO CLASS [Professor on the Road] [October 10]

Week 8 – Vietnam [107 pages] [October 17]

Week 9 – Trade/Sanctions/Two-level Games [95] [Progress Report] [October 24]

Week 10 – Nuclear Nonproliferation and the Nuclear Taboo [93] [November 2]

Week 11 – 9/11 and the Iraq War [125 pages] [November 9]

Week 12 – Iraq War 2, Part 1: Threat Inflation and “Oversell” [94] [November 16]

Week 13 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving) [OPTIONAL ROUGH DRAFT] [November 21]

Week 14 – Iraq War 2, Part 2 [90 pages] [IN-CLASS FEEDBACK EXERCISE] [November 28]

Week 15 – Non-governmental Organizations / Lobbying [120 pages] [December 5]

Finals Week – [RESEARCH PAPER DUE] [December 12]