

Seminar in American Foreign Policy
INR-5105
Spring 2009
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Introduction

This course will explore a variety of analytical and historical approaches to the study of US foreign policy, with an overview of the dominant theoretical approaches that have informed the study of US foreign policymaking over the past century. The first section provides an overview of economic, liberal institutional and realist approaches. The second section analyzes patterns of US intervention in the developing world. The final section examines the transition from the Cold War to the Post-Cold War period and explores the continuities and discontinuities associated with U.S. foreign policy before and after 9/11.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes, to read the assignments each week, and to engage in class discussion. All students will be required to write three essays of 9-10 pages covering material discussed during each of the thematic sections of the course. For the essay assignments, students will answer three questions that are included in the outline portion of the syllabus. Each of the questions relates to the previous articles and/or books that have been assigned and asks students to address the implications of these scholarly works for a broader understanding of U.S. foreign policy. On the day that each essay is due, we will have a roundtable discussion that integrates the issues that each of you have written about. Course grades will be determined by the following point distribution:

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Paper Assignments: | 300 points |
| Class Discussion: | 100 points |
| Total: | 400 points |

Students attaining 93 percent or higher of the possible 400 points will receive an A; 90-92 percent an A-; 88-89 a B+; 83-87 a B; 80-82 a B-; 78-79 a C+; 73-77 a C; 70-72 a C-; 60-69 a D; and below 60 an F.

Readings

All of the following books are required for this course and are available at the University Park Bookstore:

Amsden, Alice. *Escape from Empire*. MIT Press, 2007.

- Bacevich, Andrew. *The Limits of Power*. Metropolitan Books, 2008.
- Halper, Stefan, and Jonathan Clarke. *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Ikenberry, John. *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition*. Polity Press, 2006.
- Klare, Michael. *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet*. Metropolitan Books, 2008.
- Layne, Christopher. *Peace of Illusions*. Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Morley, Morris. *Unfinished Business: America and Cuba After the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Porter, Gareth. *Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam*. University of California Press, 2005.
- Trubowitz, Peter. *Defining the National Interest*, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Course Outline

Theories of American Foreign Policy

January 8: Introduction

Readings: None.

January 15: Sectoral Interpretations

Readings: Trubowitz, all

January 22: Institutional Interpretations

Readings: Ikenberry, all.

January 29: Realist Interpretations

Readings: Layne, all.

February 5: Paper Presentations Addressing the Following Question:

What are the different levels of analysis used by Trubowitz, Ikenberry, and Layne? Can the theoretical approaches of the authors be reconciled and/or combined? Or do they simply represent such divergent theoretical perspectives that they are speaking about different aspects of the foreign policy process? How would you be able to determine which approach had more explanatory capability?

US Foreign Policy and the Developing World

February 12: US Foreign Policy and Economic Development

Readings: Amsden, all.

February 19: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War: A Bureaucratic Politics Approach

Readings: Porter, all.

February 26: U.S. Foreign Policy and Humanitarian Interventions

Readings: David Gibbs, *Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, completed manuscript, forthcoming Vanderbilt University Press, 2009.

March 5: Interest Groups and US Foreign Policy Toward Cuba

Readings: Morley, all.

March 12: Paper Presentations Addressing the Following Question:

What theoretical perspectives inform the work of Amsden, Porter, Gibbs and Morley? Are there substantial differences in the levels of analysis used by each of the authors? Which of their approaches are potentially applicable to a wider range of case studies in US foreign policy?

March 16-21: Spring Break

US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Patterns of Continuity and Change

March 26: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Post-Cold War Period in Historical Context

Readings: Bacevich, all.

April 2: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Post-Cold War Period: A Geostrategic Approach

Readings: Klare, all.

April 9: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Post-Cold War Period: An Ideological Framework

Readings: Halper and Clarke, all.

April 16: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period: A Neo-Marxist Approach

Readings: Harvey, all.

April 23: Final Paper Presentations Addressing the Following Question:

Using the last four readings, assess the different levels of analysis employed by the authors. What kind of empirical/statistical/qualitative evidence could be used in determining which of these theories do the best job in explaining US foreign policy decision-making?