AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
(POLITICAL SCIENCE 3574)

Class Time and Room: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:35 – 12:55pm, Mona Campbell 1108

Instructor: Prof. Brian Bow brian.bow@dal.ca

Instructor’s Office: Henry Hicks Academic Administration Building, Room 355

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00 – 12:00am, or by appointment

Assistant: TBA

Introduction

This course is a general introduction to American foreign policy. It has four main parts: i. a brief survey of the most prominent theoretical perspectives on what drives American foreign policy choices; ii. a basic outline of the history of American foreign policy since 1776, with the emphasis on the post-1945 period, and particular attention post-Cold War events and developments; iii. a review of some of the essential themes and debates over the sources and purposes of American foreign policy; and iv. some discussion of debates surrounding some of the main challenges facing the United States in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 world.

Assignments / assessment

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>Movie Homework</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Thursday, October 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simulation Participation, Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Thursday, December 6</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Movie Homework

The first assignment of the semester will be to watch a movie, and answer some questions about its interpretation of US foreign policy-making. The film this year is "Thirteen Days" (2000, directed by Roger Donaldson), the film adaptation of Robert Kennedy's memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The assignment is to watch the movie carefully, and answer six questions about its interpretation of the Kennedy administration's decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Read the questions carefully in advance, and take notes while the movie is playing. Your answers should be brief and to-the-point (i.e., one and a half single-spaced pages for the whole assignment).

The film will be shown on October 16, in the room where lecture is normally held, from 11:30 until 2:30pm. The movie is about three hours long, so you will have to check to make sure that this viewing time does not conflict with your class schedule. If you have another class right after the regular class time on October 16, you are welcome to rent the movie and watch it whenever you can fit it into your schedule. The assignment (i.e., answers to the six questions) is due October 23.
This is an on-line assignment, to be administered through the OWL/BbLearn system. The homework questions are available through the OWL/BbLearn system as of September 6, and the system can accept completed assignments on-line any time after that. Assignments submitted electronically after October 23 will be marked as late, and will incur a penalty of one point (out of 15) per day. OWL/BbLearn will not accept assignments submitted after October 27.

Foreign Policy Decision-Making Simulation

The simulation is a role-playing exercise in which students will argue over the content and presentation of a broad statement of American foreign policy priorities after 2012. Some students will represent foreign policy advisors to a new president, and some will represent various think-tanks trying to influence the terms of the debate.

Roles will be assigned and posted on OWL/BbLearn on November 1. Once the roles have been assigned, students will be free to communicate with other members of their assigned group, by email and/or in face-to-face meetings. The simulation itself will take place, in class, on November 20 and November 22. Based on their discussions with the various think-tank groups, the presidential advisors will put together the text of the new government's policy statement, which must be submitted to me, by email, at or before 4pm the next day (November 23); it will then be posted to OWL/BbLearn.

Over the next few days, all participants will write a brief report (750 words), reflecting on what was in the statement, what was left out, etc. In your report, you should be thinking about what you think the statement means, why it turned out the way it did, and how that “fits” with the perceptions and priorities of the group you were supposed to represent. Try to find a balance between thinking about your situation within the simulation and the “bigger picture” (i.e., what happened with the statement itself, and with other groups). Reports are to be submitted electronically, through the OWL/BbLearn site, on November 27 (at or before 4:00pm). Late reports will be penalized 2 points per day (out of 15).

Term Paper

The term paper will be due on December 6 (nine days after the simulation reports are due...). Each student’s paper must be submitted in two formats: a digital copy, submitted on the course website (see below), and a hard copy, submitted in my mailbox in the Political Science department office. Both versions should be submitted by 4:00pm (when the department office closes for the day). Papers can only be submitted by email by special permission, and that permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances (e.g., course website crashed, Hicks building destroyed by meteor, etc.).

The focus and format of the term paper is going to be different this year than in previous years. Each student will choose one of the following three clusters of questions, and use it as the basis for a short research paper:

Option #1: In US presidential elections, challengers almost always campaign on promises to correct their predecessors’ mistakes, on both domestic and foreign policy. During the 2008 campaign and in the early years of his presidency, what “lessons” did Obama claim to have learned from George W. Bush’s foreign policy errors, and how did he promise to apply those lessons to his own foreign policy choices? Looking back on Obama’s actual foreign policy choices, has he lived up to those promises? Would it be best to say that he learned the lessons taught by Bush’s errors, failed to learn them, or “over-learned” them (i.e., made foreign policy mistakes because he was too determined to do things differently)? For whichever answer you provide to this last question, why do you think this was so?
Option #2: The United States has had a strange relationship with China over the last twenty years. On one hand, US policy-makers see China as a potential strategic rival, and a possible military threat to US allies in the Asia-Pacific region (esp. Taiwan, but also Japan, South Korea, and most of Southeast Asia). Many therefore maintain that the US is pursuing a policy of “containment” against China, similar to that against the USSR during the Cold War. On the other hand, China is one of the United States’ most important commercial partners, in terms of trade, investment, currency holdings, and debt. Others therefore maintain that the US has been pursuing a policy of “engagement” with China. How do we explain this complicated and perhaps contradictory strategy? How does it fit with the expectations of Realism and Liberalism as theories of foreign policy? Thinking about future US-China relations, what difference (if any) do you think it will make whether Obama or Romney wins the upcoming presidential election?

Option #3: The United States is often the most “indispensable” partner in any multilateral initiative, in the sense that its support or opposition can make or break a potential agreement. Particularly after the end of the Cold War, the US has often found itself taking the lead in pushing for a new global agreement, but then pulling back or even strongly opposing that agreement. Using a historical example (i.e., a specific treaty negotiation) from either the human rights or environmental issue-areas, describe the way that US policy has been contradictory and/or changeable during the course of the negotiations, and—with reference to some of the theories and concepts outlined in this course—try to explain why you think the US approach to this issue has played out as it did. Be especially attentive to whether these contradictory/changeable tendencies are better explained by the United States’ international situation or by its domestic politics.

Whichever option you choose, be sure to be absolutely clear about: a. which one you are doing; b. how you are answering each question; and c. where and how your answers connect up to the general theories discussed in lectures and required readings. Your papers should give an overview of what others have said about the answers to your questions (i.e., literature review), but they should also advance a clear argument (i.e., your own answers to these questions). While I do want you to answer all of the questions for your option, I don't want a series of disconnected short-answer responses; I want you to try to put them together so that they form one coherent essay.

Your essay should be between 2500 and 3000 words, which generally works out to be 10-12 pages, double-spaced, with normal fonts and margins. Papers that go beyond 3500 words will not be accepted, except with the professor’s specific, explicit permission.

Additional information about the format and other requirements for the term papers will be made available through the OWL/BbLearn site.

Final Exam

The final exam will be scheduled by the University Registrar. The official exam period for the Fall 2012 semester is December 6-17. Do not make work or travel plans until after you know the official dates and times for all of your final exams. If you will be obliged to be absent from the final exam for some compelling reason (e.g., serious illness or injury, death in your immediate family), you must elaborate that reason in a letter to the Chair of the Department, in advance of the scheduled exam; the Chair will render a decision on the matter.

For the final exam, you will be responsible for all of the ideas and issues raised in lectures and in required readings, through the entire semester. There will be some choice (e.g., answer 3 of 5 questions in this section) in all parts of the exam. Additional information will be available through the OWL/BbLearn site.
General policies concerning assignments, deadlines, and grades

The University Calendar makes plain that "[s]tudents are expected to complete class work by the prescribed deadlines. Only in special circumstances (e.g. the death of a close relative) may an instructor extend such deadlines." Late term papers will be assessed a penalty of one mark (out of 35) per day. If you miss the term paper deadline on account of illness, you must hand it in within one week of your return to class, with a copy of a medical certificate, per academic regulations in the Dalhousie Calendar.

Essays not submitted directly to the professor must be submitted in person to the Political Science office (if the office is open, hand the paper to the secretary, and ask to have it stamped with date and time; if the office is not open, put the paper in the after-hours drop-box). Neither the professor nor the Department can assume responsibility for papers submitted by mail, fax, or email. Do not submit any assignments to the teaching assistant.

| Plagiarism (intentionally or unintentionally representing other people's ideas as your own) is a serious violation of academic ethics, and will be taken very seriously in this class. You can (and should) get information on what plagiarism is, how you can avoid it, and what the relevant university and departmental policies are, at http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/. Please also take note of the formal notice of university policy with respect to academic integrity posted on the course website. |

The grading thresholds for this course are:

| 90-100 = A+ | 85-89.9 = A | 80-84.9 = A- |
| 77-79.9 = B+ | 73-76.9 = B | 70-72.9 = B- |
| 65-69.9 = C+ | 60-64.9 = C | 55-59.9 = C- |
| 50-54.9 = D | 50 > F |

Resources

The course textbook this year is Michael Cox & Doug Stokes, eds., *US Foreign Policy* (2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2012). It's available at the campus bookstore, and it should be reasonably easy to find/buy on-line.

The course website can be accessed through OWL/BbLearn: https://dalhousie.blackboard.com/. Login using the same ID and password that you use for your Dalhousie email. In addition to links to course readings, the OWL/BbLearn site also has a downloadable copy of the course syllabus and general instructions and advice for the exams and term paper. Powerpoint slides from the lectures will be posted there (usually—but not necessarily always—in advance...). The OWL/BbLearn website is a crucial resource for this course. If the professor or TA wants to send a message to the whole class (e.g., class canceled due to snow, office hours changed for a particular week, etc.), they will do so through OWL/BbLearn, and not by email. Students are expected to check the OWL/BbLearn site for announcements and updates at least once per week.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is intended as a general guide to the course. The instructor reserves the right to reschedule or revise assigned readings, assignments, lecture topics, etc., as necessary.

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1 The first edition of the book is similar to, but not the same as, the second edition. Most of the chapters are the same, but many of them have been updated, often in important ways, and two new chapters have been added. You can use the first edition to get your hands on a particular reading (or a few), but you should not consider it a suitable replacement for the second edition, particularly with respect to preparing for the final exam.
# Lectures and readings

## SECTION ONE  Introduction

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<th>Class meetings:</th>
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<td>Topics/themes:</td>
<td>Overview of the course; review of syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required reading:</td>
<td>• skim USFP textbook (see above)</td>
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## SECTION TWO  Explaining US Foreign Policy

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<tr>
<th>Class meetings:</th>
<th>September 11, 13</th>
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| Topics/themes:  | • External pressures vs internal pressures  
|                 | • International Relations theories and US foreign policy  
|                 | • Realism vs liberalism: clashes and combinations  
|                 | • Overview of other kinds of explanations |

## SECTION THREE  Overview of the History of US Foreign Policy

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<th>Class meetings:</th>
<th>September 18, 20, 25</th>
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| Topics/themes:  | • Revolutionary foundations  
|                 | • Expansion and its dilemmas  
|                 | • Emergence as a world power  
|                 | • Cold War challenges  
|                 | • The “unipolar moment” and the question of relative decline |
• Robyn Eckersley, “Global Environment,” in USFP textbook. |

| **SECTION FOUR** | **A Question of Balance: Institutions and Processes** |
| **Class meetings:** | September 27, October 2, 4 |
| **Topics/themes:** | • Executive branch and Congress 
• Bureaucratic and civil-military 
• Regions, classes, sectors and groups |
2. Charlie Savage articles on executive privilege:  
   • PBS Frontline, interview with Charlie Savage, July 10 & August 7, 2007;  
   • Charlie Savage, “Obama’s War on Terror May Resemble Bush’s in

Recommended reading:
- Peter Trubowitz, “Regional Shifts and US Foreign Policy,” in USFP textbook.

SECTION FIVE

Identity, Culture and Purpose

Class meetings: October 9, 11

Topics/themes:
- National identity and nationalism
- American exceptionalism and national purpose
- Religion and foreign policy
- Ethnic lobbies

Required reading:
2. Daniel Deudney & Jeffrey Meisner, “American Exceptionalism,” in USFP
### Recommended reading:

- David Rothkopf, “Is the US Incapable of Conducting a Moral Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy* (October 11, 2011).

### OCTOBER 16: “Thirteen Days” (movie) – room TBA

### SECTION SIX

**Power and vs. Principles**

**Class meetings:**

October 18, 23, 25

**Topics/themes:**

- What are the bases for US engagement with the world?
- How are clashes between interests and morals reconciled?

**Required reading:**

3. Walter Russell Mead, “The Carter Syndrome,” *Foreign Policy*
(January/February 2010).

4. Syria Debate [subject to change/updating]:
   - Tony Badran, “Obama Can Stop the Killing in Syria,” *Foreign Policy* (June 14, 2011);
   - James P. Rubin, “The Real Reason to Intervene in Syria,” *Foreign Policy* (June 4, 2012);

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<tr>
<th>Recommended reading:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• George Washington, “Farewell Address” (1796).</td>
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<tr>
<th>SECTION SEVEN</th>
<th><strong>Global Power, Regional Challenges</strong></th>
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| Class meetings: | October 30, November 1, 6, 8, 15  
**NOTE:** November 13 is a “study day” – no lecture |
| Topics/themes: | • The Western Hemisphere  
• Europe  
• Asia (esp. China)  
• The Middle East  
• Africa |
2. Robert A. Pastor, “Beyond the Continental Divide,” *The American Interest* |
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<th>Foreign Policy Simulation</th>
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<th>US Foreign Policy Faces the Future</th>
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<td>Class meetings:</td>
<td>November 27, 29</td>
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| Topics/themes: | • Another “American century” or relative decline?  
• 21st century challenges |
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**Recommended reading:**

- “Grading Obama’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy* (January 23, 2012).
- Zbigniew Brzezinski, “After America,” *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2012).

**SECTION TEN REVIEW**

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**REMINDER**

**TERM PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6**

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