**Political Science 363**

***US Foreign Policy***

**Section 601 (summer 2017) – Updated 7-10-2017**

Class time: MTWRF 11:00 AM to 12:35 PM

Location: CBA 105

Instructor: Jonathan Andrew Jackson

Office: 517 Oldfather Hall

Office hours: MTWTF 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM or by appointment

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**Introduction**

As the world’s only superpower (for the moment), the United States occupies a unique position in world affairs. No other nation wields as strong an influence over matters across the globe. While changes in political leadership can affect how the US conducts foreign policy (witness the withdrawal from the Paris Accords by President Trump), such decisions are constrained by political and historical realities, as well as interactions with other states.

This class is designed to help students increase their understanding of why the United States behaves as it does on the world stage. As such, it pulls from both the Americanist and international relations subfields of political science to help us understand US foreign policy decisions. This does not involve a broad theoretical approach to foreign policy in general, although we will discuss theory. Nor is this a class on particular foreign policy issues, although several will be used to illustrate points and you are encouraged to bring examples into class discussions. Instead, this class is designed to help you develop the tools you need to analyze US foreign policy from theoretical, historical, and political perspectives to understand why it behaves as it does on the world stage. While this class is focused on the US, developing those tools will help you be better able analyze the foreign policy decisions of other nations.

As most of these course will be conducted in a seminar format, please bring that day’s reading materials to class for reference.

There are three required texts for the class:

* Kaufman, J. P. (2017). A Concise History of US Foreign Policy, 4th Edition. Rowman & Littlefield.
* Houghton, D. P. (2013). A Citizen’s Guide to American Foreign Policy: Tragic Choices and the Limits of Rationality. Routledge.
* Forsythe, D. P., & McMahon, P. C. (2016). American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: US Foreign Policy, Human Rights, and World Order. Routledge.

There will also be several articles and book chapters posted on Blackboard (this is likely the last class you will take at UNL using Blackboard). See the schedule at the end of this syllabus for details.

**Course Requirements**

All students are expected to do the assigned readings and work, attend class, and participate in class discussions. The themes of those assignments will be a major part of our quizzes and the final exam. A major portion of our classes will be conducted as seminars, so keeping up with readings, attendance, and class participation are vital.

Each student will “adopt a nation” early in the course. As we progress through the course, you should apply what we cover to relations between the USA and your nation. Doing so continuously will help you as you write research paper and provide you with ready examples for our class discussions. Choose your nation wisely: while you may believe that Bhutan is a fascinating place, getting a suitable amount of interesting research materials on USA-Bhutanese relations could be a challenge. If you are an international student, you are encouraged (but not required) to choose a nation other than your home country.

There will be a total of 1000 points for the course. Grades will be made up of class participation, a research paper, two reaction papers, 4 quizzes, and a final exam. They will be weighed as follows:

* Participation: 200 points
* Reaction papers & seminar discussant 100 points (50 points each)
* Research paper 200 points
* Quizzes 300 points (75 points each)
* Final exam: 200 points

The points for each assignment will added together and the decimal point shifted one to the left to get the final grade. For example, a total of 756 points for all assignments represents a final grade of 75.6. I round up to whole numbers when reporting final grades on MyRed. For example, 79.2 will be rounded up to an 80 (a B-).

**Participation**

The bulk of the participation grade will be for attendance. Every student starts the course with 180 participation points (90%), but loses 10 points for each unexcused absence. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. If you come to class late, it is your responsibility to sign in at the end of class.

Lively discussions and engagement in the readings will greatly improve your ability to understand course content. As this is a 300-level seminar course, it is assumed that students will do all assigned readings before class and come prepared to fully participate in class discussions. Substantial participation in class discussions will be periodically noted and points added to your participation grade. Since participation will be noted periodically, the only way to assure that your participation will be credited will be to participate consistently. Any participation points over 200 will be counted. That is the only extra credit that will be given in the course. I know that some students are less comfortable speaking in class than others, so the class is designed so that speaking is means of improving your grade rather than avoiding a poor grade (with an exception noted below).

Additionally, you will lose 20 points for failing to participate in in an online practice quiz on Blackboard that is designed to familiarize you with the testing system before you take your first quiz.

**Reaction papers & seminar discussants**

Each student will act as a discussant twice during the course. There will be two such student discussants on each of the seminar days. Those two students are expected to give a brief overview of the day’s readings (no more than five minutes each) and provide questions to stimulate discussion. They will be graded on a similar scale to that of the reaction paper (see below).

In addition, the two discussants for that seminar are to post a short reaction paper based on the day’s readings. The papers will be a maximum of two full pages (Times New Roman, 12 point font). You will post your reaction paper on the class’ Blackboard page by 6:00 PM of the evening before the class you are to help lead. Of course, you may post them early.

In the reaction paper, you are to briefly summarize and evaluate the designated readings on that topic. What arguments do you find persuasive? Why? What arguments are weak? Why? What should the writer have covered but did not?

Reaction papers will be graded on the following scale:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 23-25 points | Excellent: Student provides writes clearly stated ideas that are drawn from the readings and engages the arguments of the authors; compellingly demonstrates a thorough mastery of the topic and shows meticulous analysis. |
| 20-22 points | Good: Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the issues in the articles and shows strong analytical ability.  |
| 18-19 points | Adequate: There are no major omissions or errors of fact or method. Student demonstrates a grasp of the readings and presents generally well-written answers. **This is the “normal” grade for papers will no significant errors.**  |
| 15-17 points | Needs Work: Student omits pertinent facts or fails to give a proper account of the readings; analysis is incomplete or not compelling but is otherwise adequately written. |
| 11-14 points | Rudimentary: Student demonstrates only a perfunctory effort of understanding the readings; relevant facts are omitted or ignored; arguments of the authors are ignored or misrepresented. |
| 1-10 points | Incoherent: There is something written, but it is difficult to figure out what it is or how it relates to the assignment. |
| 0 points | Nothing written |

Reaction Paper Dos and Don’ts

(*Slightly modified from a list I stole from Dr. Elizabeth Theiss-Morse… but with attribution*!)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do* Focus on one main ideas
* Draw on and try to integrate all of the articles
* Develop an argument
* Push your argument, try to answer the tough questions
* Offer compelling criticisms
* Offer ideas for other questions to consider
* Note gaps, omissions or mistakes in the articles
 | Do Not* Just summarize
* Just give your opinion on a topic (If you cannot articulate an argument for what you think, then it is just an opinion.)
* Pick a bunch of little points to address
* Critique the writing style
* Say how an article was long and/or boring and/or difficult
* Ignore relevant parts of the articles
* State the obvious
 |

**Research paper**

The research paper will be 8-10 full pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced, 1-inch margins). That page count does not include the required reference section. You do not need a title page. You are not required to follow a particular writing style (although I prefer APA) as long as you are consistent. I prefer parenthetic citations to footnotes or endnotes.

You are to write on United States relations with a particular nation. Areas to cover include (but are not limited to) the history of relations between the USA and your selected nation, domestic politics in both nations that impact those relations, and strategic considerations that influence those relations.

You will be expected to use (and properly cite) at least ten sources to support your paper. As this is a 300-level course, you should consider using academic journal articles in addition to general sources. Dictionaries and Wikipedia are not acceptable sources, although you are free to use a Wikipedia post to search for original sources.

You should present your nation/topic to your instructor by Friday, July 14. The paper is due by Monday, August 7 at 11:59 PM. You will submit your paper via SafeAssign on Blackboard.

More details on the paper assignment will be provided.

**Quizzes and Final Exam**

There will be four quizzes at the end of each of the first four weeks of the course. They will be a mixture of multiple-choice, true-false and short answer (1-5 sentence) questions. They will be taken at home on Blackboard and will be open-book and open-note. However, since they will only be open for 30 minutes, you should not attempt to look up each answer. Instead, be sure to review your notes ahead of time so you can quickly answer most questions and then look up those for which you are less sure about your answer. Each weekly quiz will be available by 6:00 PM on Thursday and will remain available until 11:59 PM that Saturday.

The final exam will be comprehensive. It will be in-class, online, closed-book, closed-note. Please bring your **fully-charged** laptop computer or other device to class on the day of the exam. If you bring a tablet to take the exam, I recommend that you bring a keyboard attachment to facilitate typing. If you do not have a laptop or other device, please see your instructor well before the exam date so arrangements can be made. The time limit for the final exam will be 60 minutes.

The goals of the exams are to gauge the level of understanding the student has of the material covered. They are designed to encourage proper study skills, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning.

**Grade Scale**

The grade scale for this course will be:

A = 93-100 B- = 80-82 D+ = 67-69

A- = 90-92 C+ = 77-79 D = 63-66

B+ = 87-89 C = 73-76 D- = 60-62

B = 83-86 C- = 70-72 F = 0-59

As noted previously, the points for each assignment will added together and the decimal point shifted one to the left to get the final grade. For example, a total of 756 points for all assignments represents a final grade of 75.6, rounded to 77: a C.

**Class Policies**

**Make-up** **assignments**

Should you miss a scheduled quiz, you will be assigned zero points for that quiz unless you provide a valid excuse to the instructor. That would include a doctor’s note/bill or a cast on a newly broken arm. Non-valid reasons include, but are not limited to, being busy or forgetting to take the quiz. You are also expected to submit your paper on time.

**Incompletes and Withdrawals**

Students will only be given an “I” (incomplete) for valid reasons, such as verified military deployment or illness, and only if the student has made substantial satisfactory progress in the course. To withdraw from a course, follow UNL procedures; your instructor will not do it for you.

**Laptops and other electronic devices**:

Please put away all electronic devices at the beginning of class except those being used for the class. Turn your phone off or put it on silent (not vibrate) mode, and put it away. The inappropriate use of electronic devices is distracting to you and rude to the instructor and other students.

We will start with allowing the use of laptops, but the instructor reserves the right to later ban their use except for those students with a documented disability. Even when laptops are used exclusively to take class notes, they virtually eliminate eye contact and limit students’ mental engagement with the material. You are a student, not a stenographer.

Any student found to be inappropriately using a laptop or other electronic device, or who refuses to show or turn off their electronic device when requested, will be dropped a full letter grade for the class.

**Disability Policy**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration. Their phone number is 472-3787.

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is expected throughout the course. Plagiarism and cheating, as defined by the UNL Student Code of Conduct, are not allowed. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism (taking parts of a paper that you had previously written and using it in a current assignment without noting that it had come from the earlier work). The result of such acts may include a zero for the assignment or failure of the entire course. Major violations will also be reported to the student’s department chairperson and to the Judicial Office.

**Respect**

Please show respect for the opinions of your fellow students. Students should feel free to express their views without fear of condemnation or harassment inside or outside the classroom. Likewise, students should not seek to use the free and open exchange of ideas as a license to provoke or denigrate others. Clearly, there is a balancing act involved, but it can be achieved if students engage each other and the instructor in a spirit of goodwill.

**Schedule** (subject to change as needed)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings & Notes** |
| 7-10 | Introduction & the rise of the state | * Syllabus
* Weber: Politics as a vocation
* Montevideo Convention
* Short readings on the state
 |
| 7-11 | Foreign policy theories | * Kaufman: Chapter 1
* Walt (1998) One world, many theories
 |
| 7-12 | Making foreign policy decisions | * Houghton: Chapter 1
* Farhan (2004) Impact of the Political Context on Foreign Policy Decision-Making (skim)
 |
| 7-13 | The diplomatic world into which the USA was born | * Kennedy: Intro & Chapter 1
 |
| 7-14 | S1 Knowing (or not knowing) US foreign policy | * Houghton: Chapter 2
* Foreign policy elites really are smarter than the rest of us (2014)
 |
| 7-17 | S2 Differing orientations of modern US foreign policy | * What a Real Liberal Foreign Policy Would Look Like
* America Needs a Truly Conservative Foreign Policy
 |
| 7-18 | S3 Early US foreign policy | * Kaufman: Chapter 2, pp 31-41 (civil war)
* Washington’s Farewell Address
* Monroe's Seventh Annual Message to Congress
* Lincoln Looks South of the Border
 |
| 7-19 | S4 Early stages of hegemony | * Kaufman: Chapter 2, pp 41-56 (S-A war)
* Kaufman: Chapter 3
* Teddy Roosevelt’s corollary to the Monroe Doctrine
* Kissinger: The Hinge
 |
| 7-20 | S5 Hegemony and cold war | * Kaufman: Chapter 4
* Kaufman: Chapter 5, pp 117-128 (skim)
* Knutsen: Challenges, responses and nuclear weapons (skim)
 |
| 7-21 | S6 US foreign policy in the 21st century | * Kaufman: Chapter 5, pp 128-140 (optional)
* Kaufman: Chapter 6
* Kaufman: Chapter 7, pp 163-184
* Mallaby (2002) The Reluctant Imperialist
 |
| 7-24 | S7 Presidential inputs on foreign policy | * Ray: Chapter 5, pp 95-102
* Houghton: Chapter 3
 |
| 7-25 | S8 Congressional inputs on foreign policy | * Ray: Chapter 5, pp 102-116
* Houghton: Chapter 4
 |
| 7-26 | S9 Interest group influences on US foreign policy | * Ray: Chapter 7, pp 153-163
* Houghton: Chapter 5
 |
| 7-27 | S10 Media framing of US foreign policy | * Ray: Chapter 7, pp 163-169
* Houghton: Chapter 6
 |
| 7-28 | S11 Public opinion and US foreign policy | * Ray: Chapter 7, pp 169-182
* Walt (2014) Survey Says
 |
| 7-31 | S12 Fundamental orientations of modern US foreign policy revisited | * Houghton: Chapter 7
* Forsythe & McMahon: Introduction
 |
| 8-1 | S13 American exceptionalism and US human rights policy | * Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 1
* Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 2
 |
| 8-2 | S14 Humanitarian intervention “if” or “when”? | * Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 3
* Bajoria (2013) The Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention
 |
| 8-3 | S15 When the US is seen as the bad guy on human rights | * Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 4
* Amnesty International report on the United States of America 2016/2017
 |
| 8-4 | S16 Legal restraints on the pursuit of human rights | * Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 5
* Texas Shouldn't – BUT JUST DID – Execute a Mexican National
* Oyez: Medellin v. Texas
 |
| 8-7 | The future of US foreign policy in a complex world(Research paper due by 11:59 PM) | * Kaufman: Chapter 8
* Forsythe & McMahon: Chapter 5
 |
| 8-8 | Balancing the fundamental orientations of modern US foreign policy | * Forsythe & McMahon: Conclusion
* Houghton: Chapter 8
 |
| 8-9 | So, how does all this relate to US policy on Syria? / Final exam preview | * Kaufman: Chapter 7, pp 185-187
* Other readings TBA
 |
| 8-10 | Final Exam | * Everything; all of it
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