

RECENT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Syllabus

Fall 2006
PSC 9150-001

Dr. Thompson
CRN # 23400

Substantial attention will be given to U.S. institutions and processes as they pertain to foreign policy formation. The course will also examine the U.S. position in the international system after the Cold War, as well as consider the debate over the country's appropriate role in post-9/11.

Participation. The first part of the course will concentrate on reading assignments and weekly discussions (50% of the final grade). The outline of topics and required readings are all found in this syllabus. Students are expected to do the reading in advance and take an active part in the discussions. Among other things, the professor's lectures are designed to cover points not mentioned in the readings, to sew together disparate points in the readings, provide background history to help students understand the readings, and to offer contending points of view about topics under consideration. Students, for their part, will be called upon to summarize the previous class lecture and comment on the assigned class readings. Class discussions will move quickly from factual **memory** (recall of the material) to **evaluation** (how does it rate when compared to others?).

Research Paper. Students need to research and write a 20-page double-spaced research paper that examines a current U.S. foreign policy issue (50% of the final grade). The format of the first page (single spaced with title) will follow that of the attached "policy memo." This policy memo is due on September 14. The first ten pages, due on October 19, address the student's proposed solution to the selected problem. The solution must take into account historical factors, must assess the technical/factual and political nature of the problem, and must grapple with such barriers to the proposed solution as adversaries' policies, and difficulties and/or opportunities suggested by various authors. The second 10-page conclusion should suggest reasons why the proposed solution would work. This final (20-page) research paper with bibliography is due on December 7.

Late submission of any paper will be docked one grade for each class day late, i.e., an "A" will become an "A-" if submitted on the class day after the assigned day, the "A-" will become a "B+" on the second day late, etc.

TEXTBOOKS :

Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy, 6th edition*
Bennett & Shambaugh, *Taking Sides: American Foreign Policy, 3ed edition*
Walt, *Taming American Power*

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GRADES

In addition to the grading system explanation found in the Villanova University Bulletin and the Student Handbook, final grades in this course are calculated according to all four points in each grade level. Number #1 and #2 from the research paper; #3 from class participation; and #4 from the overall student evaluation.

Midterm grades are only an indication of a student's progress and never remain on any official record. Thus, the final grade takes all four factors into consideration.

The calculation of class participation is based on the (called upon) student's summary of the previous class lecture and comments on the assigned readings for the opening of the class. Class discussions will move quickly from factual **memory** (recall of the material), through **translation** (what is the meaning of this information?), **interpretation** (how is this material to be decoded?), **application** (where is another example of this decoding to be found?), **analysis** (evidence for supporting the proposed argument?), **synthesis** (suppose another scenario, then how might the argument change?), to **evaluation** (how does it rate when compared to others?).

(Level of Academic Aptitude)

A = Excellent

Synthesis & Evaluation

1. Scholarship is strong and exceeds course requirements.
2. Personal initiative shows independent resourcefulness.
3. Constant and spontaneous cooperation in all activities.
4. Individual improvement is distinguished and growing.

A-

B+

B = Above Average

Application & Analysis

1. Scholarship is accurate and complete.
2. Personal initiative is good when stimulated.
3. Meets all requirements and is cooperative.
4. Individual improvement shows progress when stimulated.

B-

C+

C = Average

Memory & Interpretation

1. Scholarship barely meets course assignments.
2. Initiative is uncertain and apparent only at times.
3. Cooperation generally neutral but not objectionable.
4. Individual improvement has very definite marks lacking.

C-

F = Failure

Any violation of academic integrity for the research paper will receive the penalty of "F" for the paper. Any question or discussion of a student's final grade must be conducted entirely in writing and/or office visit. No phone messages or notes pinned on the office door will be considered as a serious inquiry or request for final grade evaluation.

CONTENT

August 24

INTRODUCTION to course substance and requirements.

*Why did you choose to take this course? How prepared are you?
Where do you go to be aware of American foreign policy ?*

Discussion of basic concepts: politics, state, government, media,
foreign policy, war, peace, security, realism, and globalism.

Reading: Hastedt, chs. 1, 2.

August 31

METHODOLOGY

Why is it important to know different theories and methodologies ?

Discussion of the approaches offered by realist, idealists, and
others to address a better understanding of foreign policy.

Reading: Hastedt, chs. 11, 12

September 14

HISTORICAL POLICY ANALYSIS

How did Vietnam change U.S. foreign policy ?

Discussion of foreign policy decisions from Nixon to Bush '43.

Reading: Hastedt, chs. 3, 4, 5.

DUE : first section of the Research Paper, i.e., the “policy memo.”

September 21

POLICY PRESUMPTIONS

How does America differ since 9/11 ?

Discussion of the 9/11 impact on foreign policies.

Reading: Hastedt, ch. 6; Study Guide editorials.

September 28

BUSH '43's FOREIGN POLICY

Is it a question of semantics to know who makes foreign policy?

Discussion of the President's formal and informal power sources, and who sets the agenda.

Reading: Hastedt, chs. 8, 10, 13, 14

October 5

CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Should we accept a cookie-cutter policy from Congress?

Discussion of formal and informal Congressional power, and who sets the agenda.

Reading: Hastedt, chs. 7, 9

October 19

DOMESTIC POLITICS

How is the U.S. managing the conflict between national security and civil liberties?

Reading: Issues, #14, 15, 16

DUE : second section of the Research Paper, i.e., the proposed solution.

October 26

ASSESTS and WEAKNESSES

Is co-operation among enemies a workable strategy?

Discussion of the strategies to accommodate America's power.

Reading: Walt, chs. 1, 3, 4.

November 2

NATIONAL SECURITY ALTERNATIVES

What is the U.S. trying to accomplish with its foreign policies?

Discussion of *realpolitik* and humanitarian approaches to foreign policies.

Reading: Issues, # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

November 9

AMERICA'S POTENTIAL FUTURE

What is the U.S. trying to accomplish for the future?

Discussion of America's future policy alternatives.

Reading: Hastedt, ch. 18; Walt, ch. 5.

November 16, 30

STUDENT DISCUSSION of RESEARCH PROJECTS

December 7

DUE : FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (20 pages)