

PS 374 US Foreign Policy An Introduction

Does the United States have a ‘national interest’? If so, what is it? How is it determined? What is US policy on major world issues? Political Science 374, US Foreign Policy, examines these issues by exploring the historical roots of current institutions and policies which together constitute “US foreign policy.” The multiplicity of actors and the porous policy-making process mean that change is slow and that policy reacts primarily to major world events. We examine several periods of history with attention to both policy continuity and policy change over the historical breaks, then use this knowledge of history to understand current policy and make projections about future policy.

The typical student in PS 374 is an upper-division political science major with at least one previous political science course. PS 160 Intro to World Politics or PS 111 Intro to American Politics are particularly appropriate, but any course which exposes students to American political structures or global issues, and introduces them to scholarly literature in political science, will suffice.

The objectives for this course emphasize the historical underpinnings of current and future policy. It is thus organized around three themes: Genesis and Evolution, Actors and Processes, and Policies, Issues and Themes. The study of patterns in US foreign policy during previous eras of economic expansion and bust, and during periods of peace and war, provides a basis for understanding the roots of current policies. Likewise, responsibility for US foreign policymaking is dispersed across the political system to a great degree, and special interests have access to the process to an extent that no other state can match. The resulting set of policies reflects a unique confluence of parochial interests and priorities of national-level institutions. American policy towards future threats and emerging challenges will be made by this same system, and our understanding of these processes will help us to predict future policy.

Consistent with the course’s emphasis on the historical roots of policy and institutions, and their effect on the modern policy-making process, the first paper assignment asks students to integrate a number of historical document sources to explain the formation of a particular piece of postwar foreign policy. Students will use declassified documents from the National Security Archive collections and from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, and other sources such as policymaker memoirs, to reconstruct the politics of a specific instance of policy change. The second paper, on the other hand, then asks students to argue for the adoption of a particular new stance in US foreign policy. This paper takes the form of a policy memorandum addressed to the president, similar to those in the *Foreign Relations* series, and will ask them to address the interests of other institutional actors and domestic interests involved in the policy process. The set of policies discussed in class is explicitly selective to allow maximum room for student paper topics.

Students who complete PS 374 will have an understanding of path dependence and veto points in policymaking, thanks to the emphases on historical roots and institutional structures, respectively. They will also have an ability to use historical documents and primary sources to make an argument. Finally, the policy memorandum promotes concise, targeted writing, similar to what many entry-level professional jobs require, while asking students to integrate the insights they have gained across the term.

Political Science 374
US Foreign Policy
TERM YYYY

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Does the United States have a ‘national interest’? If so, what is it? How is it determined? What is US policy on major world issues? This course examines these issues by exploring the historical roots of current institutions and policies which together constitute “US foreign policy.” The multiplicity of actors and the porous policy-making process mean that change is slow and that policy reacts primarily to major world events. We examine several periods of history with attention to both policy continuity and policy change over the historical breaks, and then consider the policymaking structures involved in US foreign policy. We then use this knowledge of history and institutions to understand current policy and make projections about future policy.

Objectives

Specifically, after the completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify key organizations, actors and their interests in the US foreign policy formation process.
- Identify key themes of US foreign policy in the post-World War II period, the Cold War period, the détente era, the “Cold War II” period, and the post-Cold War period, with particular attention to continuities and discontinuities in policy over the breaks.
- Explain the effect of the Vietnam War and the 9-11 attacks in shifting American perceptions of the US role in the world, and articulate the changes in US foreign policy which resulted from these events.
- Discuss current US policy towards major world regions and issues: Chinese growth, European security and integration, terrorism, Russia, nuclear proliferation, the Middle East, the global environment, international development, and international public health.

This course has a required prerequisite of one prior political science course. PS 160 Introduction to World Politics, or PS 111 Introduction to American Politics, are both particularly appropriate but not specifically required. Ability to read and understand scholarly literature is assumed.

Assessment

Your grade in this course is determined by your performance on two brief papers, an essay-format midterm exam, and a take-home final exam. In addition, participation in class discussion and activities comprises one-fifth of your grade. “A” work contains well-developed ideas supported by evidence from appropriate sources, is well-written, and meets all criteria and requirements specified in the assignment or exam question.

Assignments	Value	Due
In-class assignments, participation, and mini-homeworks	20%	Various dates
Midterm Examination	20%	Day 16
Primary Document Investigation (3-5 pgs)	15%	Day 10
Policy Memorandum (5-8 pgs)	20%	Day 26
Take-Home Final Examination	25%	Day 28

You are expected to come to class prepared, with any assigned reading or homework completed before the start of class. You are also expected to participate in in-class activities, including but not limited to discussion and paper workshopping. In addition, you are required to screen two films for this course, *Thirteen Days* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. I will arrange for optional group screening opportunities but ultimately you are responsible for screening them.

Policies: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL INFORMATION IN THIS SYLLABUS.

Required Materials: This course ...

Communication: Email is by far the best way to reach me for brief questions and/or to arrange an appointment. I normally respond within one business day. I have regularly scheduled office hours, and I encourage you to make use of them. In addition to the hours listed above, I am *usually* around all day Monday and Wednesday after class time if you'd like to make an appointment. Check CTools Announcements for the most recent posting about office hours. I am also happy to make appointments for any time outside my scheduled classes.

Academic Integrity, Citation, and Plagiarism: As we will discuss on several occasions, academic honesty – giving credit where credit is due – is a key element in creating credible work. Always acknowledge ideas and text that are not your own. *Any presentation of others' ideas or words as your own constitutes plagiarism, and is grounds for referral to the Dean's Office and the Academic Board.* When in doubt, add a citation. There is no such thing as having 'too many cites,' but having too few cites is called plagiarism.¹ We will review citation styles and methods in class, but you are responsible for citing throughout the term. Any standard method of citation (MLA, Chicago, APA) is acceptable. See our CTools site for style sheets.

Special Needs: If you have a medical or other condition or circumstance which could interfere with your ability to achieve your best performance in this class, including any which may entitle you to extended testing time or other accommodations, *please consult with me as soon as possible* to make appropriate arrangements. SSD documentation must be received *at least two weeks* prior to the exam to obtain accommodations.

Attendance: After two unexcused absences (absence without documentary evidence of family emergency or medical attention for illness), expect a grade penalty. I reserve the right of final determination of the excusability of an absence. Students with family responsibilities, athletic commitments, or religious conflicts should indicate these *as soon as possible*; without

¹ This statement originates with Prof. Cindy Bair van Dam at American University, I believe; at a minimum, she was the first to say it to me. A statement like this constitutes acknowledgement that the expression is not my own.

sufficiently prior notification from the student, University policy does not obligate instructors to accommodate these conflicts.

Due Dates and Extensions: Expect assignments to be due at the start of class on the indicated day. *Missing class on the day an assignment is due is NOT sufficient reason to presume an automatic extension. Late work will be penalized at least one grade.* Extensions are granted only in cases of medical or religious conflict or other major situation. Syllabus Addenda, which will be distributed regularly and posted on CTools, should be considered the final word on due dates.

Schedule of Course Topics

I will provide a detailed ‘Syllabus Addendum’ every two to three weeks containing details of reading assignments, due dates, and class material requirements. The Addenda always supersede any information here or on previous Addenda. I will distribute copies in class and also post the documents to our CTools site.

Day	Topic
1	Organization and Overview
2	<i>Genesis and Evolution of US Foreign Policy</i> The Beginning: Founding Documents and Myths, War of Independence, Articles of Confederation
3	US Foreign Policy to the Civil War: Expansion and Economics
4	US Foreign Policy from the Civil War to 1938: Economic Integration, Political Isolation
5	World War II and Its Immediate Aftermath: From Infamy to Integration
6	The Cold War: Berlin and the Bay of Pigs
7	Vietnam, China, and Détente
8	Resurgence and End of the Cold War
9	The “Post-Cold War” Period to the Current: Iraq, Somalia, Yugoslavia, WTC, Iraq
10	<i>Actors and Processes in US Foreign Policy</i> The President’s Many Hats, and the Executive Office of the President Historical Document Investigation due
11	Congress and US Foreign Policy
12	Executive Agencies in the Foreign Policy Process
13	Public Opinion and the Media
14	Decision-Making
15	Policy-Making
16	Midterm Examination (in class)
17	Film Screening and Discussion: <i>Thirteen Days</i>
18	<i>Policies, Issues, and Themes</i> European Security and Integration: Why Those Topics are Connected
19	Russia: Friend, Foe, or Fluke?
20	China and Its Future
21	Nuclear Proliferation: North Korea and Iran
22	The Middle East: Is There an End in Sight?
23	Terrorism

24	International Public Health: AIDS, Hunger, and Other Epidemics in an Integrated World
25	International Economic Development: The Macro Approach.
26	International Economic Development: The Micro Approach. Policy Memorandum due
27	The Global Environment: Screening and Discussion of <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>
28	America's Role in the World: Where Do We Go From Here? Take-Home Final due

**PS 374 US Foreign Policy
Reading Schedule and Instructor Planning**

1	<i>Organization and Overview</i>
2	<i>Genesis and Evolution of US Foreign Policy</i> <i>The Beginning: Founding Documents and Myths, War of Independence, Articles of Confederation</i>
3	<i>US Foreign Policy to the Civil War: Expansion and Economics</i>
4	<i>US Foreign Policy from the Civil War to 1938: Economic Integration, Political Isolation</i>
5	<i>World War II and Its Immediate Aftermath: From Infamy to Integration</i>
6	<i>The Cold War: Berlin and the Bay of Pigs</i> Space race
7	<i>Vietnam, China, and Détente</i> The Domino Effect, Peace with Honor, Nixon goes to China, SALT, Helsinki (oil shock)
8	<i>Resurgence and End of the Cold War</i>
9	<i>The “Post-Cold War” Period to the Current: Iraq, Somalia, Yugoslavia, WTC, Iraq</i> Bottom-up foreign policy
10	<i>Actors and Processes in US Foreign Policy</i> <i>The President’s Many Hats, and the Executive Office of the President</i> Historical Document Investigation due White House, NSC websites.
11	<i>Congress and US Foreign Policy</i> Organized interests – AIPAC, Cuban-Americans; Helms-Burton and other extraterritorial law (Libya sanctions act); select committees/oversight and executive privilege; def-industrial complex
12	<i>Executive Agencies in the Foreign Policy Process</i> Dept of State, Dept of Defense sites; investigate 1 other dept with int’l presence (Customs, FBI, Treasury, Commerce, CIA, ITC?) -- Do I need a day on intelligence? 9/11 suggests yes.
13	<i>Public Opinion and the Media</i> Kull & Destler, FP stability, “Vietnam Syndrome,” polling practices
14	<i>Decision-Making</i> Janis and Jervis I’m thinking these two days have to go in favor of a day on security and intelligence and a day on US states in foreign policy

15	<i>Policy-Making</i> Allison
16	Midterm Examination (in class)
17	Film Screening and Discussion: <i>Thirteen Days</i>
18	<i>Policies, Issues, and Themes</i> <i>European Security and Integration: Why Those Topics are Connected</i> Jolyon Howorth?
19	<i>Russia: Friend, Foe, or Fluke?</i>
20	<i>China and Its Future</i>
21	<i>Nuclear Proliferation: North Korea and Iran</i>
22	<i>The Middle East: Is There an End in Sight?</i>
23	<i>Terrorism</i>
24	<i>International Public Health: AIDS, Hunger, and Other Epidemics in an Integrated World</i>
25	<i>International Economic Development: The Macro Approach</i> IFI's, the MCC, and top-down
26	<i>International Economic Development: The Micro Approach</i> Policy Memorandum due Microlending, sustainable development and fair trade
27	The Global Environment: Screening and Discussion of <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>
28	America's Role in the World: Where Do We Go From Here? Take-Home Final due