Introduction

Most Americans know that the United States is the most powerful country in the world, but relatively few understand just how powerful. The United States spends more than three times as much on its military as does China, and spends nearly seven times as much as Russia. In fact, the United States spends roughly the same amount on its military as the next sixteen biggest spenders combined\(^1\) And, during our current age of austerity and distrust of government spending, the Pentagon spends roughly one out of every four dollars of government revenue.

But, none of this is necessarily the case; for most of its history, the United States has maintained only a minimal armed forces, or has lacked a professional military entirely. The growth of military power and the use of force are both subject to political decision-making, just like any other political issue. This course will survey the development of American attitudes and behavior with respect to the use of violent force over the country’s history.

Course Objectives

I have two separate and complementary goals for this course. First, I hope that your understanding of the historical scope of American foreign policy will improve. This includes a familiarity with the key people and events whose contributions led to the American diplomatic and military establishment as it exists in the present day. In particular, your understanding of how America used military force and coercion against its adversaries long before the attack on Pearl Harbor will improve.

Second, and I think most importantly, I hope that you will come to understand war as an inherently political process. One cliché definition holds that politics determines “who gets what, when, where, and why.” Ultimately, politics is the study of choice: what decisions face political actors, which options those actors choose, and how the choices of many different political actors produce outcomes in the real world. We don’t often discuss war in those terms, but by the end of the semester I expect that you’ll be extremely familiar with another, if lesser-known, chestnut: that war is the pursuit of politics by other means.

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\(^1\)All figures taken from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
Course Pre-requisites

This class does not have a formal prerequisite listed in the course catalog, but I strongly recommend that all students have taken POLSCI 160 (Introduction to World Politics) before registering for this course. The material in this course builds on and extends some of the theoretical explanations for why wars begin and end that you will have seen in PS 160. A basic familiarity with quantitative social science will also be helpful to you, whether that familiarity was developed in the study of international, comparative, or American politics.

Books & Reading Schedule

The following books are required, and will be available at campus bookstores:


I have placed both the Ray and LaFeber books on reserve at the undergraduate library. However, there is only one copy reserved of each, and with around 80 registered students in the course they may not always be available in a timely fashion.

Any assigned readings that do not appear in either of the textbooks will be available in .pdf format on the course CTools site.

Grading

Your command of the material in this course will be measured via a research paper, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a series of (nearly) weekly quizzes. The percentage breakdown between these components is as follows:

- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final exam: 30%
- Research Paper: 20%
- Quizzes: 25%

Exams

There will be two exams in this course: a midterm and a final. The final exam will not be strictly cumulative (e.g. most questions on the final exam will concern material that was presented and discussed in class after the midterm exam,) but I reserve the right to ask questions that draw broadly upon main themes from throughout the course. You will be responsible for all material from required readings and from lectures. The exams will be comprised of both short answer and essay questions.
The midterm exam will be held during our normal class period on February 27th. The final exam will be held during the university-determined exam period: Thursday, May 2nd, from 8 AM - 10 AM.

Let me put that in much larger font, and centered:

THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE ON THURSDAY, MAY 2ND, FROM 8:00 AM TO 10:00 AM

Research Paper
Part of your grade will be measured by a research paper, in which you will examine a current (or past) security-related issue facing the United States and another sovereign state actor and identify:

- Who the relevant adversaries are,
- Who the relevant domestic constituencies are,
- The likelihood that military force will be used (or why it was used, if fighting is ongoing),
- And the likelihood that the problem will be resolved in the United States' favor (or why it was).

This paper will run no more than 10 pages, double-spaced with 1-inch margins, and due on Friday, March 22nd at 5 PM on the course Ctools site. We will discuss the paper assignment in greater detail the week of January 28th.

Discussion & Participation
Students are expected to have done the assigned readings for the day, and be prepared to comment intelligently on them. Periodic moments of reflective silence are OK, but I do reserve the right to cold call as a means of jump-starting discussion.

Quizzes
There will be 10 quizzes given over the course of the term, which you will complete outside of class via CTools. Quizzes will generally post on Thursday afternoons (i.e. after our last meeting of any given week), with responses due by Sunday evening. These quizzes will cover material from both the previous week’s reading assignments, as well as in-class presentation and discussion. While these quizzes are not meant to be onerous, they are meant to give you an additional incentive to attend class regularly, given that they will include questions that you will only be able to answer if you have attended class that week and been an active and engaged participant.
Late Work and Grade Grievances

All assignments will be due on a specific day and time. Any work returned after this time will suffer a **one letter grade deduction** for each day, or portion thereof, that it is late.

Please take care to give yourself enough time ahead of a due date to turn your assignment in.

Grade grievances require a written memo outlining your case and rationale for a different grade (maximum of 2 pages, with standard formatting). This memo must be received within 2 weeks of the assignment or exam being returned, and *no sooner than* 48 hours of the assignment or exam being returned. Memos must be given to me with the original work in person, either during class or office hours. Bear in mind that it is possible that your grade will *decline* when being re-graded.

Academic Honesty and Conduct

I will not tolerate academic dishonesty or plagiarism in any form: this includes failures to appropriately credit or cite the use of others’ ideas or data, cheating on an exam or quiz, or any other violation of the University of Michigan’s standards of student conduct. Academic dishonesty is grounds for automatic failure in the course, if not more severe sanctions depending on the nature of the violation. Guidelines regarding academic honesty can be found at [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/). Additional resources on academic integrity and plagiarism are available at [http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/understanding-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity](http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/understanding-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity).

Other Course Issues

If you believe you need an accommodation for any manner of disability, please let me know as soon as possible and I will do everything I can to work with you and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to make the necessary arrangements. Any information you provide is private and confidential.

While I intend to allow students to use their laptop computers or tablets in class for the purposes of taking notes, please bear in mind that this policy is subject to change if students abuse this privilege by checking personal email, Facebook, Twitter, and so on during class. Please be considerate of both my time and your colleagues, since poor computer habits are a distraction to other students in the classroom as well.

CTools & E-Mail

I will make sure that all course materials and announcements (syllabus, reading schedule, handouts, study guides, etc) will be on CTools, so check there first to see if I have already answered your question. Otherwise, please contact me via e-mail with any question you might have. I will do my best to respond promptly – please allow me 24 hours during the week, and until Sunday night on weekends. **Please include the phrase “389” in the subject line of any email you send me!**

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2 Airport parking rules apply here.
Class Schedule & Reading List

Week 0 (1/9): Introduction

January 9  Introduction & Class Overview

Week 1 (1/14-1/16): Intellectual Foundations

January 14  Choice and War
Ray, pp. 13-19

January 16  Foreign Policy at The Founding
Ray, pp. 3-11
LaFeber, pp. 5-35

Week 2 (1/21-1/23): The United States as a Regional Power

January 21  No Class - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Symposium
Ray, pp. 37-59

January 23  The Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican-American War
LaFeber, pp. 83-91; 94-126

Week 3 (1/28-1/30): The United States as a Major Power

January 28  The Spanish-American War
LaFeber, pp. 193-227

January 30  Media, Politics, and Wars

Week 4 (2/4-2/6): The USA as a Great Power: World War I

February 4  World War I
LaFeber, pp. 284-330

February 6  The Offense-Defense Balance
Week 5 (2/11-2/13): The Inter-War Period

February 11  International Cooperation and Arms Control
LaFeber, pp. 334-363

February 13  Arms Racing

Week 6 (2/18-2/20): The “Awakening Giant?” Entering World War II

February 18  International Politics in the 1930s
LaFeber, pp. 382-406
Ray, pp. 86-114

February 20  Elites Leading Public Opinion
Berinsky, A. 2009. In Time of War. Ch. 3, 6

Week 7 (2/25-2/27): Review / Exam
February 25  Review Session
February 27  Midterm Exam

Week 8 (3/11-3/13): The Post-War Order

March 11  Embracing “Entangling Alliances”
Ray, pp. 152-170
LaFeber, pp. 457-495

March 13  Nuclear Deterrence
Week 9 (3/18-3/20): Falling Dominoes

March 18  The Korean War, and McCarthy
LaFeber, pp. 502-531
Ray, pp. 174-175

March 20  The Vietnam War
Ray, pp. 172-192

Week 10 (3/25-3/27): The Dark(er) Side of the Cold War

March 25  Politics of Covert Action

March 27  The Cold War in Latin America
Ray, pp. 223-253

Week 11 (4/1-4/3): Back to Civil-Military Relations—The Iran-Contra Affairs

April 1  Arms for Hostages
Ray, pp. 239-252.
LaFeber, pp. 718-730, 748-766

April 3  No Class

Week 12 (4/8-4/10): The Aftermath of the Cold War

April 8  From the Gulf War to the Occupation of Iraq

April 10  “The World’s Policeman”
Week 13 (4/15-4/17): Other Emerging Challenges

April 15 Counter-Terrorism

April 17 The Future of American Force in the World

Week 14: Wrap-Up

April 22 Final Review