

GOV 344 (38840)
American Foreign Relations
University of Texas, Fall 2014
TTH 930-11a, GAR 0.102
Updated: October 27, 2014

Faculty Information

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Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the theory and practice of American foreign policy, with a particular focus on the post-1945 era. We focus on systematic, scientific explanations for the why and the how of decisions over war and peace, alliances, trade, and foreign aid, and we will discuss both the international and domestic sources of these policies. The goal is to build a useful, practical base of knowledge for understanding both ongoing and future issues in American foreign relations. So this is *not* a history class, or even one about current events—though students will walk away from this course with a broad set of tools for thinking, speaking, and acting intelligently about foreign policy in the future. Specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to

- use the framework of preferences, incentives, and strategy to understand policy outcomes
- assess policy alternatives with rigorous logic and evidence
- perhaps most importantly, hold your own arguments to the same standards of logical thinking to which we hold the materials in the course.

The course begins with a brief primer in theories of war, international trade, and the international system. We then look at specific features of the American political system— institutions, public opinion, intra-branch politics—to explore how they shape the decisions

of policymakers who seek to gain and retain elected office. We then follow a more or less historical path from the Cold War to the present, considering specific applications of the theories of war and trade. We conclude by addressing the question of what, if anything, the past and present of American foreign relations can tell us about the future.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, though students are likely to perform better with some basic courses in political science as a background.

Grading

The following components make up the course grade:

- **20% first exam, 30 September.** Five short answer and ten multiple choice questions.
- **25% second exam, 6 November.** Five short answer and ten multiple choice questions.
- **35% third exam, 10 December (9a-12p).** Five short answer and ten multiple choice questions.
- **20% short assignments and quizzes.** Given randomly, quizzes for readings and short assignments for reaction or analysis.

I assign letter grades on a distribution—that is, a curve—rather than against an absolute numerical scale. Therefore, typical grading scales where a certain score produces a certain letter grade do not apply here. Quizzes are brief and are designed to evaluate whether students are keeping up with the readings and showing up to class on time; I give them at the beginning of class, and if you miss any part of it by being late, *then you forfeit those points*. There are no exceptions. Finally, assignments are typically short (1-2 pages) reaction or analysis pieces.

Course Policies

While I have no attendance policy, missing information in the lectures will pose a serious problem for your ability to perform well in the course, because (a) some of the readings are demanding on their own and need to be clarified in class and (b) lectures will very often contain information not found in the readings. Missing classes will also prevent you from earning a good quiz/short assignment grade, because quizzes and short assignments cannot be made up after the fact. Remember, again, that I give quizzes by asking questions at the beginning of class, and I will not re-ask a question (or re-give any part of the quiz) if you're late.

Missed exams can be excused and made up after the fact in cases of illness and personal emergency, but *only with proper documentation from the University*. Further, I do not give exams ahead of their scheduled dates. Exams missed due to a university sponsored event

or religious holiday may be excused, provided that the student informs me of the absence *at least two weeks in advance*. Vacation (e.g. leaving early for spring or semester break) and social engagements will not be excused. Check the exam schedule before making travel plans, because, again, I *do not* give makeup exams in advance. There are no exceptions.

Should you wish to challenge a grade you received on a specific question on an exam, you must do so within a week of receiving the grade. Otherwise, no challenges will be considered. After you challenge a grade, I—not the TA—will re-grade the entire exam, and the new grade will supplant the original one, whether higher or lower.

Finally, the readings and schedule of the syllabus are subject to change, but any such changes will be noted with an announcement either in class and/or via email, as well as an updated copy of the syllabus posted on the course's [Canvas](#) site.

University and Campus Policies

1. Students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

2. Accommodations for religious holidays.

By university policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

3. Academic dishonesty.

"Scholastic dishonesty. . . includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act" (Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*).

If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and [this website](#). Any student that violates this policy will fail this course and have the details of the violation reported to Student Judicial Services.

4. Emergency evacuation policy.

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to

do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with “Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley” written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Readings

Many course readings will be available online through the library’s e-journals system or [Canvas](#), unless otherwise noted. There is also one required text:

- Ray, James Lee. 2013. *American Foreign Policy and Political Ambition, 2nd Ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Students are expected to have completed readings by the day for which they are assigned.

Course Outline and Schedule

Session 1 (28 August). *no class*

Session 2 (2 September). *politics, science, and Newton’s Second Law*

- Ray, Ch. 1

Foundations

Session 3 (4 September). *the theory of war*

Session 4 (9 September). *the theory of trade*

Session 5 (11 September). *analyzing American foreign relations*

- Ray, Ch. 2

Session 6 (16 September). *a brief history of American foreign relations*

- Ray, Ch. 3

The United States as a Superpower

Session 7 (18 September). *power in an era of globalization*

Session 8 (23 September). *hegemony, reassurance, and strategic restraint*

- Ikenberry, G. John. 1998/1999. "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order." *International Security* 23.3:43-78. [[Canvas](#)]

Session 9 (25 September). *great powers and international institutions*

- Voeten, Erik. 2005. "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59.3:527-557. [[Canvas](#)]

Session 10 (30 September). *first exam*

Session 11 (2 October). *foreign policy institutions I*

- Ray, Ch. 5

Session 12 (7 October). *foreign policy institutions II*

- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2005. "Presidents, Congress, and the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59.1:209-232. [[Canvas](#)]

Session 13 (9 October). *public opinion and political parties*

- Ray, Ch. 7

Session 14 (14 October). *foreign policy institutions III*

- Ramsey, Michael D. 2003. "Presidential Declarations of War." *U.C. Davis Law Review* 37.2:321-377. [[Canvas](#)]

The Cold War

Session 15 (16 October). *the beginning of the Cold War*

- Ray, Ch. 4

Session 16 (21 October). *the world war that never happened*

- Gaddis, John L. 1986. "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System." *International Security* 10.4:99-142. [[Canvas](#)]

Session 17 (23 October). *nuclear weapons and strategy I*

- TBA

Session 18 (28 October). *nuclear weapons and strategy II*

- Powell, Robert. 2003. "Nuclear Deterrence Theory, Nuclear Proliferation, and National Missile Defense." *International Security* 27.4:86-118. [[Canvas](#)]

Session 19 (30 October). *the Korean War I*

- Stueck, Ch. 3 [[Canvas](#)]

Session 20 (4 November). *the Korean War II*

- Stueck, Ch. 4 [[Canvas](#)]

Session 21 (6 November). *second exam*

The United States in the World

Session 22 (11 November). *the United States and Europe*

- Ray, Ch. 8

Session 23 (13 November). *inter-American relations*

- Ray, Ch. 9

Session 24 (18 November). *the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa*

- Ray, Ch. 10

Session 25 (20 November). *the United States in Asia*

- Ray, Ch. 11

Session 26 (25 November). *the United States and the Middle East*

- Ray, Ch. 12

Session 27 (2 December). *the Afghan and Iraq Wars I*

- Ray, Ch. 13

Session 28 (4 December). *the Afghan and Iraq Wars II*

- Ray, Ch. 14