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Course Information

Course Number: INTA 605

Course Title: American Foreign Policy

Section: TBD

Time: Tuesday, 6:15pm – 8:55pm

Location: Classroom 4

Credit Hours: 3 credit hours

Instructor Details

Instructor: Professor Yuval Weber

Office: 7th Floor, L St NW side

E-Mail: weber@tamu.edu

Office Hours: Available in-person or video by appointment

Course Description

This course aims to provide students with the conceptual and critical tools to understand and analyze the origins, institutions, and policy challenges of contemporary American foreign policy. In assessing the transition away from the post-9/11 focus on non-state actors, irregular warfare, and counterterrorism towards a “return” to great power or strategic competition and the challenges posed by adversary states, we will evaluate how American policymakers and institutions have addressed core questions about American statecraft since the founding of the Republic. Namely, how has the national interest been defined? How engaged should the United States be in international affairs and the merits of isolationism, restraint, and internationalism? What are the rules and institutions of international affairs that best promote U.S. materials interests and moral values? How have the internal processes and equities within the various branches of U.S. government developed to permit or constrain the President from pursuing idiosyncratic foreign policy approaches?

The answers to these questions—and the theoretical debates and bureaucratic battles that shaped those answers—will help students understand the parameters of American power abroad, the domestic and institutional motivations and limitations to foreign policy, and the challenges posed by specific rivals to the international and regional interests of the United States.

The course proceeds in three broad sections: the conceptual bases and history of American foreign policy, the institutions of American foreign policy, and the contemporary challenges of American foreign policy. We will find that policymakers have long understood the tensions between the national security state and individual civil liberties, between the costs and benefits of an active role abroad versus relative disengagement, and perhaps most importantly, between formal and informal commitments to other states.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the history of U.S. foreign policy.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of major schools of thought of the International Relations discipline.
- Critically analyze contemporary and historical international events and issues as they relate to U.S. foreign policy.
- Apply theories of foreign policy and international relations to decisions by historical and contemporary state leaders.
- Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

One book is required for all students:

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present.* W.W. Norton, 1994.

Other articles and chapters assigned will be accessed electronically through the course website. Other items will be downloaded from the Internet using links indicated in the outline by topic.

Coursework and Grading

Grades are based on pre-class writing assignments (30%), in-class participation (10% comprised of 5% in-class assignments and 5% engaged participation in discussion), two response papers (30% comprised of two 15% papers each), and CHOICE of a final in-class exam (30%) or a Congressional Research Service-style policy report.

- **Pre-class writing assignment (30%)**

Prior to each class meeting—except for two for the response papers outlined below—each student will answer 1-2 questions with each answer being no shorter than 100 words and no longer than 250 words. These questions will be disseminated by email or course website and can take several forms: they may be provocative questions for students to grapple with the theoretical or policy issues for that week, or they may be asked to take positions and argue for or against a particular notion, or they may be asked to speculate on the contemporary or future significance of a reading.

For our Tuesday evening class, the questions will generally be posted the previous Wednesday. The deadline for the responses will be 48 hours ahead of time on Sunday evening by 6:30pm. Many of the questions will be used to form debates in class, so feel free to put down your best and hottest takes.

Full credit will be given to answers that 1) answer the question and 2) provide logical reasoning or evidence to support that answer.

- **In-class participation (10% -- 5% for in-class assignments and 5% for engaged participation in discussion)**

During each of the class meetings, we will have group and individual exercises and quizzes through a variety of modalities. Some of those exercises and quizzes will be graded for correctness and others for successfully completing them.

During each of the class meetings, the bulk of the time together will be in discussion. If you have done the reading and are ready to discuss, that is clearly obvious to me, your colleagues, and yourself, and will be evaluated according to Department and University rubrics. If you have done the reading but are not ready to discuss, there will be other opportunities to participate but you will have limited the discussion. If you have not done the reading and are not ready to discuss, that is also clearly obvious to me, your colleagues, and yourself.

- **Reflection Papers (30% -- 15% each)**

Over the course of the semester, each student will prepare two “reflection papers” of no less 1250 words and no more than 1500 words (exclusive of notes and citations) due Week 8 and Week 15 by the beginning of those class meetings. There will be pre-class writing assignments those weeks.

Topics/Questions for the reflection papers will be distributed by the instructor ahead of time.

- **FINAL CHOICE A: Congressional Research Service-style report (30%)**

The first choice for the final grade of the semester will be a Congressional Research Service-style report on a topic of the student’s choosing that will be no less than 1500 words and no more than 2500 words. “The Congressional Research Service (CRS) serves as shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. CRS experts assist at every stage of the legislative process — from the early considerations that precede bill drafting, through committee hearings and floor debate, to the oversight of enacted laws and various agency activities. CRS approaches complex topics from a variety of perspectives and examines all sides of an issue. Staff members analyze current policies and present the impact of proposed policy alternatives.”

Your task for this assignment is to summarize very concisely a foreign policy topic, outline the existing external conditions shaping U.S. policy options, and lay out without bias or rancor the potential policy pathways the U.S. government might pursue to fulfill the national interest. A bit more colloquially, the Congressional Research Service is often asked to prepare reports along the lines of: “We’re about to tackle _____, and I need you to become an expert now. Please write me a memo that outlines current US policy on _____ and how we have developed this policy over time. In short, tell me what our policy is, how we developed that policy, and what the international situation on this issue is right now. I need to understand what our realistic future policy options might be.”

Students electing this option will turn in their papers whenever the University schedules the final exam. They will not sit for the final exam.

- **FINAL CHOICE B: Final exam (30%)**

The second choice for the final grade of the semester will be a final exam that covers the course material and will be given whenever the University schedules the final exam

Late Work Policy

- Pre-class assignments are considered late after 12:00pm on the day of the class meeting but will be accepted for half credit. Pre-class assignments will not be accepted after the beginning of class.
- In-class assignments are not eligible to make up. Excused absences on class days will obviate the requirement on that class day.
- Written products will be penalized one letter grade per day following deadlines.

Course Schedule

Please note that all readings subject to change but will be communicated to you as quickly as possible. I will be adding numerous recommended (not required) readings throughout the semester.

In addition, should world events or the news cycle take our class in a new direction, we're going to ride that wave! In that regard, I expect students to keep track of ongoing international and national news so that we can have informed discussion of current events.

Week 01 | August 30, 2022 | Course Introduction

America First or American Leadership?

- Morgenthau, Hans. 1950. "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions." *American Political Science Review* 44 (4): 833-854.
- Posen, Barry R., and Andrew L. Ross. "Competing visions for US grand strategy." *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1997): 5-53.
- Brooks, Stephen G., G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth. "Don't come home, America: the case against retrenchment." *International Security* 37, no. 3 (2012): 7-51.

Week 02 | September 6, 2022 | What defines the national interest(s)?

Is there a single US national interest or are there competing national interests?

- De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno, and Alastair Smith. 2011. *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapters 4-5.
- Trubowitz, Peter. *Defining the national interest: conflict and change in American foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press, 1998. Chapter 1.
- Rogowski, Ronald. "Political cleavages and changing exposure to trade." *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1121-1137.
- Fisher, Patrick. "Generational cycles in American politics, 1952-2016." *Society* 57, no. 1 (2020): 22-29.

Recommended

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapters 1-3.

Week 03 | September 13, 2022 | American Empire and the Not-Yet Indispensable Power (1865-1920)

How did the United States become the dominant power of the Western hemisphere but choose not to become an explicitly imperial state? What were the limits (then) of America's extraterritorial power? Why did American influence not match its power?

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapters 6-10.

Recommended

- Zakaria, Fareed. *From wealth to power: The unusual origins of America's world role*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

Week 04 | September 20, 2022 | From Indispensable Power to Superpower (1920-1945)

Why did the experience of WWI not lead to greater US involvement in international affairs? What was different about WWII?

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapters 11-13.
- *Additional readings TBD*

Week 05 | September 27, 2022 | Cold War Begins: America Tries on Great Power Competition (1945-1952)

How did the United States and its interests and alliance decisions come to define “the Western world” and how did it conduct great power politics from a position of international leadership? Why did its leaders embrace indefinite conflict?

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapters 14-15.
- Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars, New Edition*. Princeton University Press, 2019. Chapter 6.
- Kennan, George F. *The Sources of Soviet Conduct by “X”*. *Foreign Affairs*, 1947.
- NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security. <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>

Recommended

- Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars, New Edition*. Princeton University Press, 2019. Preface to the New Edition, Preface to the Old Edition, Chapters 1-2.
- Thompson, Nicholas. *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War*. Henry Holt and Company, 2009.

Week 06 | October 4, 2022 | Cold War Ends, Unipolarity Begins and Ends: (1953-2020)

How did America build a hierarchical order of allies and partners? How did it survive strategic blunders under conditions of bipolarity? How did the Cold War end peacefully? Could unipolarity have run indefinitely? What are the lasting impacts—if any—of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks?

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W.
-

Norton, 1994. Chapters 16-19. **SKIM**

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750-Present*. W.W. Norton, 1994. Chapter 20. **READ**
- Fukuyama, Francis. "The end of history?." *The National Interest* 16 (1989): 3-18.
- Krauthammer, Charles. "The unipolar moment revisited." *The National Interest* 70 (2002): 5-18.
- Pressman, Jeremy. "Power without influence: the Bush administration's foreign policy failure in the Middle East." *International Security* 33, no. 4 (2009): 149-179.
- Paul K. MacDonald, "America First? Explaining Continuity and Change in Trump's Foreign Policy", *Political Science Quarterly* 133:3 (2018), pp. 401-434.
- Friedman, Uri. "The New Concept Everyone in Washington Is Talking About." *The Atlantic*. August 6, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/08/what-genesis-great-power-competition/595405/>
- *Additional readings TBD*

Week 07 | October 11, 2022 | NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Week 08 | October 18, 2022 | Washington's Watchers: Ideology, Interests, and Foreign Policy Observers

- Special Guest: Professor David McCourt (UC-Davis)
- *Readings TBD*

Week 09 | October 25, 2022 | Institutions: Presidency

- Neustadt, Richard. 1960. *Presidential Power*, Chapter 3: "The Power to Persuade."
- Wildavsky, Aaron. 1966. "The Two Presidencies Thesis," *Transaction* 4: 7-14.
- Kaufmann, Chaim. "Threat inflation and the failure of the marketplace of ideas: The selling of the Iraq war." *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 5-48.
- Howell, William G. 2011. "Presidential Powers in War." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 14: 89-105.
- *Additional readings TBD*

Week 10 | November 1, 2022 | Institutions: Congress

- Louis Henkin, "Foreign Affairs and the Constitution," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1987/1988, 284-310.
- James M. Lindsay, "Deference and Defiance: The Shifting Rhythms of Executive-Legislative Relations," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2003), pp. 530-546.
- Ornstein, Norman F. and Thomas E. Mann. 2006. "When Congress Checks Out." *Foreign Affairs*, November/December.
- Howell, William G. and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2007. "When Congress Stops Wars: Partisan Politics and Presidential Power." *Foreign Affairs*, September/October

Week 11 | November 8, 2022 | Institutions: Executive Branch

- Kevin Marsh, "Obama's Surge: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis of the Decision to Order a Troop Surge in the Afghanistan War", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10:3 (2013), pp. 265-288.
- Deborah D. Avant, "Are the Reluctant Warriors Out of Control? Why the U.S. Military is Averse to Responding to Post-Cold War Low-Level Threats", *Security Studies* 6:2 (Winter 1996/97), pp. 51-90.
- Joshua Rovner, *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 1-35.
- Elizabeth N. Saunders, "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisors and Information in Group Decision Making", *International Organization*, 71:S1 (2017), pp. S219-S247.
- Clarke, Duncan. 1987. "Why State Can't Lead." *Foreign Policy* (Spring): 128-142.
- William J. Burns, "The Lost Art of American Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2019, 98-107

Week 12 | November 15, 2022 | Institutions: Interest Groups and Public Opinion

- Trevor Thrall and Erik Goepner, *Millennials and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Next Generation's Attitudes toward Foreign Policy and War (and Why They Matter)*, (Washington, DC: CATO Institute, 2015).
- Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 17-45.
- Dursun Peksen, Timothy M. Peterson and A. Cooper Drury, "Media-driven Humanitarianism? News Media Coverage of Human Rights Abuses and the Use of Economic Sanctions", *International Studies Quarterly* 58:4 (2014), pp. 855-866
- Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 33-51, 77-120.
- William M. LeoGrande, "Pushing on an Open Door? Ethnic Foreign Policy Lobbies and the Cuban American Case", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16:3 (July 2020), pp. 438-456.

Week 13 | November 22, 2022 | Transnational Politics

- Irwin, Douglas A. "The Truth About Trade." *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): 23.
- Charles P. Kindleberger, "Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1981), pp. 242-254.
- Patrick Porter, "A World Imagined: Nostalgia and Liberal Order", CATO Institute, Policy Paper No. 843, June 5, 2018.
- Bolton, John R. "Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?" *Chi. J. Int'l. L.* 1 (2000): 205.
- Monti Narayan Datta, "The Decline of America's Soft Power in the United Nations", *International Studies Perspectives* 10:3 (August 2009), pp. 265-284.
- Michael E. Flynn, Carla Martinez Machain, and Alissandra T. Stoyan, "Building Trust: the Effect of US Troop Deployments on Public Opinion in Peru", *International Studies Quarterly* 63:3 (September 2019), pp. 742-755.

Week 14 | November 29, 2022 | Asia-Pacific and China

China: Any Other Outcome Except Another Cold War?

- "China's National Defense in the New Era"
<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/specials/whitepaperonnationaldefenseinnewera.pdf>

- Dennis Blasko, "Steady as She Goes: China's New Defense White Paper," *War on the Rocks*, August 12, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/08/steady-as-she-goes-chinas-new-defense-white-paper/>
- Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, "How China Sees America: The Sum of Beijing's Fears", *Foreign Affairs*, 91:5 (September/October 2012), pp. 32-47.
- Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro, "Donald Trump's Peace Through Strength Vision for the Asia-Pacific", *Foreign Policy*, November 7, 2016.
- Oriana Skylar Mastro, "The Stealth Superpower: How China Hid Its Global Ambitions", *Foreign Affairs* (January-February 2019), pp. 31-39.
- Mitter, Rana. "The World China Wants: How Power Will-and Won't-Reshape Chinese Ambitions." *Foreign Aff.* 100 (2021): 161.
- Correspondent, Special. "The Resistible Rise of Xi Jinping." *Foreign Policy* (2017).
- Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia", *International Security* 45:2 (Fall 2020), pp. 7-50.
- *Additional or different readings TBD*

Week 15 | December 6, 2022 | | Europe and Russia

Why Are the Russians So Angry and What's Their Endgame?

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Foreign Policy Concept*, 2021.
- Weber, Yuval. "When War is Preferable to Peace: Russia, the Post-Cold War Settlement, and the Kremlin's Policy Toward Ukraine." *Journal of Post-Soviet Politics and Policy*, 2021.
- Gunitsky, Seva, and Andrei P. Tsygankov. "The Wilsonian bias in the study of Russian foreign policy." *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 6 (2018): 385-393.
- Gottemoeller, Rose, Thomas Graham, et al., "It's Time to Rethink Our Russia Policy," *Politico*, August 5, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/08/05/open-letter-russia-policy-391434>
- Kramer, David. "No, Now Is Not the Time For Another Russia Reset," *Politico*, August 11, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/08/11/russia-reset-response-open-letter-393176>
- *Additional or different readings TBD*

Learning objectives: By the end of the session, students will be able to explain and evaluate Russia's sources of dissatisfaction with the international order alongside official Washington's (in)ability to assess Russian conduct and policy.

Week 16 | DATE TBD | Final Exam OR Final CRS-style Report Due

Final papers due in line with University and School policies on final examinations.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in

most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Makeup Work Policy

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines. The fact that these are university-excused absences does not relieve the student of responsibility for prior notification and documentation. Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)). Please also note that "the instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)). Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code; failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence. Falsification of documentation is a violation of the Honor Code.

(See [Student Rule 24](#).)

- Participation in an activity that is required for a class and appears on the university authorized activity list at <https://studentactivities.tamu.edu/app/sponsauth/index>
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day. NOTE: Prior notification is NOT required.
- Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
 - Injury or illness of three or more class days: Student will provide a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider within one week of the last date of the absence (see Student Rules 7.1.6.1)
 - Injury or illness of less than three class days: Student will provide one or both of these (at instructor's discretion), within one week of the last date of the absence:

- (i.) Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at <http://attendance.tamu.edu> or
 - (ii.) Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.
- Required participation in military duties.
 - Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
 - Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor with prior notification and proper documentation. In cases where prior notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.
 - On rare occasions, the instructor might have to miss a class due to administrative or academic responsibilities out of town. This will be exceedingly rare, but if it does occur, the instructor reserves the right to reschedule class at a time when the vast majority of students are available for the make-up class and will convey the material to students unable to attend the make-up during office hours. The instructor may also schedule a virtual class at the same time as the regular class meeting time as an alternative to rescheduling the class meeting.