374-01 US Foreign Policy

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Survey of Course

This course provides an overview of the contemporary controversies in American foreign policy as well as the diplomatic history of the United States. The course begins by focusing on the history of American diplomacy, especially the origins and evolution of the Cold War. We will then analyze the Post-Cold War foreign policies of President George H. W. Bush, President Clinton, and President George W. Bush. After the midterm we will assess whether the US will remain the sole superpower in the 21st century, is in relative decline, or can continue to shape much of world politics even if its power is in decline because of the legacy of the liberal values it has brought to the international system. We will then evaluate the foreign policy of President Obama. Has Obama’s foreign policy been successful or not? What should be the criteria used to analyze Obama’s foreign policy? Finally, the course will assess whether the US should be using drones to attack terrorists or whether this tactic is counterproductive. This course is intended to provide a historical and analytical framework from which students can develop their own understanding of the US role in world politics.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course. The first will test the history of US Foreign Policy, especially since World War II through President George W. Bush. This exam will be held in class on October 7th and will consist of multiple choice, identification, and essay questions. The test accounts for 20% of the final grade. The final exam will be due on Tuesday, December 16th. This exam will be a take-home essay test that will ask students to evaluate US-China Relations and US drone policy. This two and a half to four page single-spaced final exam accounts for 20% of the student’s final grade and should be submitted via email to white@xavier.edu.

Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in class discussion, and students are responsible for the readings the day they are assigned. Students are also encouraged to ask question that arise from lecture, readings, or current events. Regular attendance is required.
Assignments

Each student will be responsible for two two and a half to four page single-spaced papers and one in-class debate. Papers should be submitted via email to white@xavier.edu. Debates consist of teams or individuals who debate diverging historical interpretations or policy options. Students will select the issue they debate based on a lottery method. Students will write a paper on topics they do not debate. Some formal means of citation is required (footnotes or parenthetical citations with a bibliography) if students quote directly from a source or utilize readings beyond those required for the course. The first debate will assess the origins of the Cold War. The debate for this topic will be held in class on September 9th, and the papers for this assignment are due September 16th. The second topic for debate will be assessing whether the US is and will continue to be the dominant power in world politics. The debate for this class will be held on October 28th, and the papers for this topic are due November 4th. The final debate topic will be President Obama’s Foreign Policy. This debate will be held in class on November 11th. The paper for this topic is due on November 18th. Each paper and debate performance accounts for 20% of the student’s final grade.

Grading Policy

The following grade scale will be used in this course: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, and F = Below 60. There is no curving or dropping of grades in this class. For a reference to the standards for these grades, see the Department of Political Science Grading Guidelines provided below:

A- to A = Superior critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Detailed understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that develops important issues in a thoughtful way. Analysis of texts is without technical or factual errors. An excellent essay will significantly surpass the expectations of a good essay by demonstrating critical mastery of the logic, assumptions, and evidence of research sources. Excellent use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is frequent and thoughtful; shows a very good grasp of the issues.

B- to B+ = Good to Very Good critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Solid understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that reports important issues in some detail. Analysis of texts is generally without technical or factual errors. A good to very good essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, present a coherent argument, and make a persuasive case for its thesis using convincing evidence; it may also need to consider plausible and reasonable alternatives systematically. Good use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is regular and helpful; shows a solid grasp of the issues.
C- to C+ = *Adequate* critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Basic understanding of course readings. Generally competent writing that identifies important issues but leaves them insufficiently explained or examined. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in minor ways. An *adequate* essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, and present a coherent argument. Correct use of quotations and citation of texts.

*Class discussion* is occasional and generally adequate; may reveal some misunderstanding of the issues.

D- to D+ = *Inadequate* critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Poor or incompetent understanding of course readings. Below average writing that omits or misunderstands important issues. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in substantial ways. An *inadequate* essay may not have a clear thesis, or may not define and incorporate concepts appropriately, or it may not present a coherent argument. There may be ineffective use of quotations and inadequate citation of texts. *Class discussion* is infrequent; may reveal a lack of engagement with the issues or serious misunderstanding.

F = *Unacceptable*. No serious engagement of course readings. An *unacceptable* essay shows little or no serious attempt to understand important issues. Writing is unclear, or unorganized, or undeveloped to the degree that the essay is deemed a failure. Analysis of texts may contain egregious errors. There may be a failure to cite texts.

*Class discussion* is infrequent and ill informed; reveals no real understanding of even basic issues.

**Books and Readings**

The following book is required for the course and should be available at the University Bookstore. Other readings will be sent directly to each student through email.


**Schedule of Topics and Readings**

Aug. 26  Introduction to the Course

Aug. 28  The American Approach to Foreign Policy

  Hook and Spanier, Ch. 1.
Sept. 2-9  Why the Cold War?  Containment as the Dominant Theme of Postwar Foreign Policy
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 2-3.

Sept. 11  Living the Cold War in the Kennedy and Johnson Years
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 4.

Sept. 16  The Crisis of Containment under Nixon and Carter’s Human Rights Policy
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 5.
- Cold War Paper Due

Sept. 18  Renewal of the Cold War Under Reagan
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 6.

Sept. 23  The End of the Cold War under Bush 41 and the First Gulf War
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 7.

Sept. 25  Clinton’s Post-Cold War Foreign Policy
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 8-10.

Sept. 30  From Containment to Preemption:  The Foreign Policy of  George W. Bush
Hook and Spanier, Ch. 11-12.

Oct. 2  Study Day

Oct. 7  Midterm Exam

Oct. 14-28  American Primacy – Relative Decline or Persistence?

The following are required reading for this topic and will be emailed to you:
For a further elaboration of these readings, see the remainder of the Brooks and Wohlforth book and Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World.* (New York: Norton, 2008).

For further analysis of this argument see:


Oct. 30-Nov. 11

**Evaluating President Obama’s Foreign Policy**

Hook and Spanier, Ch. 13-14.


The following are optional readings:


- Papers on US Primacy due on November 4th
Nov. 13-25 The Future of US-Sino Relations: Competitors or Strategic Rivals?


- Papers due evaluating Obama’s Foreign Policy on November 18th

Dec. 2-9 Is the Use of Drones Defeating the Terrorists or Creating the Terrorists?


Dec. 11 The Future of US Foreign Policy


Dec. 16 Final Exam