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Office Hours: [By appointment](#)

PSCI 1404
Spring 2024
Classroom: PCPE 200
Meeting time: TuTh 10:15-11:14 AM

American Foreign Policy

This course explores the use and non-use of military force in American foreign policy with a particular focus on the post-Cold War period. The United States has long played an active role in international politics, and since the end of the Cold War, it has frequently turned to the use of force to advance its interests on the world stage. How does the United States make decisions about when and how to use force? How well has the use of force achieved U.S. foreign policy objectives?

We will examine the domestic actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process as well as the international challenges and constraints on the use of force. We will also analyze the success and failure of military operations since the end of the Cold War. Because the decision not to use force tells us something about the politics of military force, we will also investigate the foreign policy alternatives to the use of force.

Teaching assistant and recitations

Teaching assistant

Tom Etienne
tom.etienne@asc.upenn.edu
Office hours: See recitation syllabus

Recitations

Thursday 1:45–2:44 PM in DRLB 4N30
Thursday 3:30–4:29 PM in DRLB 4E19
Friday 12:00–12:59 PM in PCPE 203

What this course is and is not about

This course offers a survey of important topics in American foreign policy. There are no prerequisites other than an interest in the subject. All students are welcome to take the course.

There are many ways to teach U.S. foreign policy. My approach is to provide you with theoretical frameworks and analytical tools to help make sense of why the United States behaves the way it does when it comes to the use of force. While we will apply those frameworks to historical examples and recent or ongoing conflicts, this course does not offer a history of U.S. foreign relations and is not intended to be a forum for primarily discussing current events.

This course largely focuses on explaining the use of force and studying its consequences rather than debating its normative merits. In other words, we will seek to understand why the United States uses force when it does and who shapes those decisions. I recognize, however, that there are a number of moral and ethical issues surrounding the use of violence as an instrument of foreign policy, as well as disagreements about how the United States should conduct its foreign affairs. My

hope is that equipping you with theory and evidence about the use of force in U.S. foreign policy will better prepare you to consider and debate these difficult normative questions.

Required reading

There are no required books to purchase for this class. All readings are available online via the library or on the Canvas website. The readings consist primarily of academic journal articles, book chapters, and policy articles, but occasionally include newspaper articles and essays/blog posts.

I have deliberately tried to keep the reading at a manageable level: usually two selections per lecture, rarely three, sometimes one. You are therefore expected to read everything that has been assigned. Reading should be completed prior to the lecture for which it has been assigned (and if you fall behind, ideally before each week's recitation).

To aid your reading comprehension, I have put together a reading guide with with general strategies for tackling the materials assigned in this class.

Evaluation

My approach to evaluating your learning is to administer a variety of lower-stakes assessments on a relatively more frequent basis. This is intended to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of course material in a variety of formats and under different conditions, while also reducing the impact of any single evaluation on your overall grade. The drawback to this approach is that you will be assessed more frequently (which means more grading for us). If you want to coast all term with no evaluations other than a paper worth 40% and a final worth 60%, this is not the course for you.

1. Regular attendance and participation in recitation (20%)

Recitation attendance *and* active participation is mandatory. That said, this should be a freebie for you. Your teaching assistant will provide a separate recitation syllabus detailing recitation-specific policies. Recitations begin during the week of January 23 and end during the week of April 22.

As for lecture, I will not take attendance but you are expected to attend. Hint: examinations will make use of material from lecture that is not written explicitly in the slides.

2. Take-home short answer quiz (15%)

This is an open-note take-home quiz that assesses your comprehension of the sources of American foreign policy. The quiz is due on February 9. We will return grades before the drop deadline.

3. In-class written examination (20%)

This is a closed-note in-class examination on February 29. We will return grades during the week of March 18 in advance of the grade change deadline.

4. 6-8 page paper (20%)

You will complete one paper responding to an essay prompt that asks you to apply what you have learned thus far. The prompt will be announced no later than April 5, two weeks in advance of the paper deadline. The paper is due on Friday, April 19.

I will deduct a third of a letter grade for every 24 hours that your paper is late. In other words, if you would have received an A- for turning in the paper on time, you will receive a B+ if it is late. The penalty is imposed the moment you enter a new 24-hour window. Naturally, you should weigh the costs of penalty against the anticipated benefit of extra time, noting that you have at least two weeks from the time the paper is distributed *and* are relieved of reading and class attendance on April 11 (approximately one week prior to the paper's due date).

5. Final examination (25%)

The final exam will take place during the final exam period. The exact date and time will be announced in class. The exam is comprehensive in its coverage of course material.

Getting in touch

If you have questions about the course, get in touch! I hold regular in-person office hours during the semester, often but not always on Thursdays. You can sign up here: <https://calendly.com/melissamlee/officehours>. If you have class during my office hours, please send me an email and we can find a different time to meet. Tom also holds regular office hours and encourages you to reach out with questions.

I am also happy to answer questions via email and will do my best to respond within a reasonable time, excluding weekends and spring break. Please understand that I cannot guarantee responses to emails sent within 48 hours of the due date of an assignment.

Academic integrity

You are responsible for understanding Penn's [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and abiding by the Code in letter and in spirit.

While you are encouraged to discuss course material with other students, all written work must be your own. You must acknowledge others' ideas with proper citation. The use of generative AI in any form is not permitted in this course and therefore the use of such tools will be considered a violation of academic integrity. More to the point, there is really no reason to use AI. The online quiz is open-book and open-note, meaning that all the correct answers are in the readings and material from class, and the required paper has components that make it not conducive to the use

of AI. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, it is always, *always* better to ask me and/or consult this [guide](#) on plagiarism from the Penn Libraries.

If you find yourself struggling for any reason, talk to me so that we can make a plan for how you can successfully get through the course. No student should ever feel the need to violate the Code in order to finish the term.

Technology policies

tl;dr: be cool, don't be uncool.

You are permitted to use your laptop or tablet in class only for purposes directly related to class (e.g., note taking). A growing body of research shows that laptop multitasking [interferes with your own learning](#), as well as the [learning of those around you](#). By contrast, research also suggests that taking notes by hand is superior for [processing information](#) from class. Our class is small enough that we are all going to notice, so please be respectful of me and your fellow classmates by refraining from non-class-related activities during class. As long as everyone behaves responsibly, devices are permitted, but I reserve the right to revoke this privilege at any time.

Dates to know

February 9: Take-home quiz.

February 27: Drop period ends.

February 29: In-class examination.

March 22: Grade type change deadline.

April 2: Last day to withdraw.

April 5: Paper assignment distributed.

April 19: Papers due.

Exam period: In-person final examination.

Schedule and readings

January 18: Course overview

No reading.

PART I: INPUTS IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

January 23: The national interest

The White House. 2002. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002*, pp. iv–vii (preface) and 1–3. Skim the rest.

The White House. 2022. *National Security Strategy, October 2022*. 1–13 and 23–36.

January 25: The president

Marc J. Hetherington and Michael Nelson. 2003. “[Anatomy of a Rally Effect: George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism](#).” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 36(1): 37–42.

Elizabeth N. Saunders. 2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1–19.

January 30: The bureaucracy and the Blob

Tyler Jost, Joshua D. Kertzer, Eric Min, and Robert Schub. 2023. “Advisers and Aggregation in Foreign Policy Decision-Making.” Accepted for publication at *International Organization*. 1–11.

Patrick Porter. 2018. “[Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment](#).” *International Security* 42(4): 9–46.

February 1: Congress

William G. Howell and Jon Pevehouse. 2007. *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 3–32.

Patrick Hulme. 2023. “[A Not-So-Imperial Presidency](#).” *Lawfare* (March 9, 2023).

February 6: Public opinion

Alexandra Guisinger and Elizabeth N. Saunders. 2017. “[Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues](#).” *International Studies Quarterly* 61(2): 425–441.

Joshua D. Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2017. “[A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy](#).” *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 543–558.

February 8: The media

Matthew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter. 2019. “[Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in the Age of Social Media](#).” *Journal of Politics* 81 (2): 747–756.

PART II: THE SEARCH FOR A NEW FOREIGN POLICY

February 13: Unipolarity and the Gulf War

Charles Krauthammer. 1990. “[The Unipolar Moment](#).” *Foreign Affairs* 70(1): 23–33.

John Zaller. 1994. “Strategic Politicians, Public Opinion, and the Gulf Crisis.” In *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 250–276.

February 15: Somalia

Stefano Recchia. 2020. “[Pragmatism Over Principle: US Intervention and Burden Shifting in Somalia, 1992–1993](#).” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43(3): 341–365.

Chester A. Crocker. 1995. “[The Lessons of Somalia: Not Everything Went Wrong](#).” *Foreign Affairs* 74(3): 2–8.

February 20: The collapse of Yugoslavia

Susan L. Woodward. 1995. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. 73–145.

February 22: The collapse of Yugoslavia (continued)

Ivo H. Daalder. 2000. *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. 1–21.

Michael Mandelbaum. 1999. “[A Perfect Failure: NATO’s War Against Yugoslavia](#).” *Foreign Affairs* 78(5): 2–8.

February 27: Non-intervention in Rwanda

Samantha Power. 2003. “[A Problem from Hell](#)”: *America and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Harper Perennial. 321–389.

February 29: In-class examination

PART III: THE FOREVER WARS

March 12: Terrorism and 9/11

Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. “[The Strategies of Terrorism.](#)” *International Security* 31(1): 49–80.

March 14: The invasion of Afghanistan

Carter Malkasian. 2021. [The American War in Afghanistan: A History.](#) New York: Oxford University Press. 53–102.

Optional: Malkasian 2021, 35–52, which provides background on Afghanistan under the Taliban.

March 19: The invasion of Iraq

Thomas E. Ricks. 2006. *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq.* New York: Penguin Press. 29–111.

March 21: Insurgency and counterinsurgency in Iraq

Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl. 2006. “[Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency.](#)” *Military Review* 86(2): 49–53.

Jacqueline L. Hazelton. 2021. “[The Hearts-and-Minds Myth: How America Gets Counterinsurgency Wrong.](#)” *Foreign Affairs* (July 15, 2021).

March 26: Counterinsurgency and international statebuilding in Afghanistan

Barbara Elias. 2020. *Why Allies Rebel: Defiant Local Partners in Counterinsurgency Wars.* New York: Cambridge University Press. 120–154.

Melissa M. Lee. 2021. “[How Not to Build a State.](#)” *Modern War Institute* (October 5, 2021).

March 28: Libya

Mikael Blomdahl. 2016. “[Bureaucratic Roles and Positions: Explaining the United States Libya Decision.](#)” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27 (1): 142–161.

Alan J. Kuperman. 2015. “[Obama’s Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure.](#)” *Foreign Affairs* 94 (2): 66–77.

April 2: Outsourcing intervention: proxy war in Syria

Eli Berman, David A. Lake, Gerard Padro í Miquel, and Pierre Yared. 2019. “[Introduction: Principals, Agents, and Indirect Foreign Policies](#).” In *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*, ed. Eli Berman and David A. Lake. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1–27.

April 4: The global war on terror

David Vine. 2020. [The United States of War: A Global History of America’s Endless Conflicts, from Columbus to the Islamic State](#). Berkeley: University of California Press. 286–312.

Eyal Press. 2018. “[The Wounds of the Drone Warrior](#).” *New York Times Magazine* (June 13, 2018).

April 9: Withdrawal and its consequences

Joshua D. Kertzer. 2021. “[American Credibility After Afghanistan: What the Withdrawal Really Means for Washington’s Reputation](#).” *Foreign Affairs* (September 2, 2021).

Anand Gopal. 2021. “[The Other Afghan Women](#).” *The New Yorker* (September 6, 2021).

April 11: NO CLASS

Use this time to work on your papers.

PART IV: THE RETURN OF CONSTRAINTS

April 16: China and the end of unipolarity

M. Taylor Fravel, J. Stapleton Roy, Michael D. Swaine, Susan A. Thornton, and Ezra Vogel. 2019. “[China is Not an Enemy](#).” *The Washington Post* (July 3, 2019).

Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner. 2018. “[The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations](#).” *Foreign Affairs* 97(2): 60–71.

Jessica Chen Weiss. 2022. “[The China Trap: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Perilous Logic of Zero-Sum Competition](#).” *Foreign Affairs* 101(5): 40–58.

April 18: Alliance commitments in Asia

Paul Poast. 2022. “[No Free Lunches: What the United States Gains from Its Alliances](#).” *Security Studies* 31(3): 520–526. [Article begins on page 520 of the linked piece.]

Thomas J. Shattuck. 2022. “[Believe Biden When He Says America Will Defend Taiwan.](#)” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (May 25, 2022).

Gregory B. Poling. 2023. “[The Transformation of the U.S-Philippines Alliance.](#)” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (February 2, 2023).

April 23: Sanctions, arms, and Ukraine

Tanisha M. Fazal. 2022. “[The Return of Conquest? Why the Future of Global Order Hinges on Ukraine.](#)” *Foreign Affairs* 101(3): 20–27.

Bryan R. Early. 2015. *Busted Sanctions: Explaining Why Economic Sanctions Fail*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 1–29.

April 25: Special session with Ambassador Alexander Vershbow

Reading TBA.

April 30: Conclusions

Kenneth A. Schultz. 2017. “[The Perils of Polarization for U.S. Foreign Policy.](#)” *The Washington Quarterly* 40(4): 7–28.

TBD: Final exam