

PLTC 276 – American Foreign Policy

Class Meetings

Winter Semester 2023

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:10 - 2:30 PM

Location: Dana 206

Contact Information

Instructor: Chris Price (cprice@bates.edu)

Office: 163 Pettengill Hall

Student Hours: Tues and Thurs, 3PM – 5PM

Course Description

What should the US do about the Russian invasion of Ukraine? Should the US military continue to be stationed in the Middle-East? How should the US engage in trade and financial relations with potentially protectionist rivals such as China, the European Union, and Japan? Questions like these are commonly discussed in newspapers, television, and the internet, and debates over the direction of American foreign policy are a mainstay in academic journals on International Relations and political campaigns.

After an introductory meeting outlining the course, we will look at five main topics: (1) What differentiates theories of Foreign Policy from theories of International Relations, (2) the sources of policy priorities, (3) the American Foreign Policy decision making process, (4) A brief overview of the history of American Foreign Policy, and (5) current policy challenges.

We will examine these topics using a mix of readings, lecture, discussion, presentations, and writing assignments. This course is a step up from introductory lecture courses, and will build your ability to critically evaluate readings, rather than reading an assigned textbook. The assignments are focused on providing you an overview of mainstream scholarship on the sources and conduct of foreign policy, building your capabilities to synthesize and evaluate arguments, and improving your ability to productively express your opinion on contentious political issues. The expectation is that this course is comprised of roughly three hours of in-class instruction and six hours of outside class work per week.

Learning Objectives:

- Recall and classify major arguments about sources of American Foreign Policy
- Evaluate theories using counter-factual reasoning and evidence
- Present critical opinions on social and political facts to others, verbally and in writing

Summary Course Calendar:

Week	Topic	Due
1	Introduction	
2	Theories of Foreign Policy and International Relations; Origins of US Foreign Policy (1776 – 1865)	
3	Power and Principle; US Foreign Policy, Expansion and Empire (1865 – 1914)	
4	Strategy and Improvisation; Engaging in the Global World, World War 1 – Post-Cold War (1914 -1989)	
5	Presidents; The US and Afghanistan	1 st Short Paper: February 11, 6PM
6	The Military; Near Peer Competition	
7	No Class – February Recess	
8	The Diplomats; Democracy Promotion	
9	The Spies; Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	
10	The Congress; Trade and Tariffs	2 nd Short Paper: March 17, 6PM
11	The Economists; Financial Crises in 1997 and 2008	
12	NGO’s and Special Interests; Climate change	
13	Public Opinion; Humanitarian Intervention	Final Project Initial Memo: April 7, 6PM
14	Final Projects	Final Project Presentation: April 13, 1PM
15	Reading Period and Final Project	Final Project Memo: April 21, 6PM Final Project Reflection Apr 24, 9AM

Class Structure:

This class meets for two eighty-minute sessions each week.

Each meeting will consist of a mix of lecture and discussion. The first session of the week will be focused on theory, looking largely at academic and practitioner articles or book excerpts. I will post lecture slides before each class, but you should attend this session having at least skimmed the required reading, ready to ask any major questions you have about the subject.

The second meeting each week will make sure there are no outstanding questions on the theory for that week, and then shift to a workshop format. In this session, you will work in small groups applying theories to specific cases, by examining readings which make an argument about a specific element of US foreign policy, presenting to your peers, or taking part in a practical exercise. I will provide group assignments and materials for these once I have verified the number of students in the course and their interests.

Course Materials:

All course materials will be posted on the course site, to minimize the cost to students. Articles should also be available to you via your library account, and I will work with the library to make sure that where possible, books are available electronically. There is no requirement for you to buy the books, but they are available for purchase online either via their press site or retailers.

I may end up changing readings or topics due to unforeseen circumstances. If this happens, I will notify the class via email and update the syllabus on the Lyceum site.

Choosing readings for a syllabus is an inevitably subjective task, and the presence or absence of authors is dependent on historic and social processes. This syllabus is informed by those of Professors Ann Rivlin (University of Wisconsin – Madison), Felicity Vabulas (Pepperdine, previously at the University of Chicago), and Chris Chiego (Naval Post-Graduate School, previously at Haverford College).

Assessments and Grading:

My grading model is based on work either meeting, partially meeting, or not meeting expectations. For graded assessments, I will evaluate your performance against a rubric laying out these expectations, which I will provide to you in advance.

My expectations are that each of you is capable of achieving an A in this course, and throughout the assessment process I will let you know how your work can be improved. I do not use a curve in grading, as I believe curving grades creates perverse incentives for students to undermine their peers.

Your final grade will be assigned based on your achievement on the full set of assessments listed below.

Participation - 22% (22 x 1%):

This course depends on informed discussion and interaction with your peers. While participation grades can be a source of concern to shyer students, I am grading participation based on you being present, on time, having done the reading, and interacting respectfully with your peers. I am not grading participation based on the number of points you make, nor am I looking for specific answers to larger discussion questions, as for many of these topics there is not a clear ‘right’ answer.

Outside Connection to Class Emails - 9% (3 x 3%)

Three times during the semester, you should send me a brief email describing something about American Foreign Policy, and how you think it relates to this class. These outside sources can be based on a current event such as a news article or broadcast, an opinion on foreign policy debates such as a podcast or op-ed, or references to historical events such as a book or film. The goal is to see connections from the narrower cases and theories we are talking about in this course to the wider world.

These do not have to be long (<250 words), but should include the following points:

- A link to the source you are responding to
- A brief description of which topic or debate you thought was relevant to
- Any questions or disagreements you had with that author's conclusion

I will have students present some of these to the class throughout the semester, so you should pick something which you feel comfortable explaining briefly to a large audience.

Reading Reaction Email - 9% (3 x 3%)

Three times during the semester, you should e-mail me a reaction you had on one of the readings for Tuesday. These do not have to be long (< 250 words), and can cover any of the following points:

- Shortcomings in empirics or issues of logic you identify in the paper
- Questions you have but cannot answer about the authors empirics
- A case you know about which is not explained by the author's theory despite meeting scope conditions.
- Normative concerns you have about the implications of the author's analysis

I will use these points to help develop discussion questions for class, as well as to gauge your involvement with the class readings.

You can submit these starting after our first class, but they need to be submitted prior to 6 PM the Monday before we will cover the reading in class to get full credit. The reason for this deadline is to make sure I have time to integrate these questions or responses into the class materials for the next day.

Short Papers (2 x 10%):

In weeks 4 and 9, I will post a choice of prompts to the course website by 6PM Friday, and I will expect you to write a 750 to 1250 word short paper answering the question, due at 6 PM Friday the following week. This is not a major research project, but an opportunity to show your ability to synthesize the material covered in class and improve your writing skills. I will provide further guidance on formatting, how to submit, my grading rubric, and resources on writing on the course website by the third week of class.

Final Project – Simulation

The capstone project for this course is a simulation project on American foreign policy making. In this simulation, I will assign individuals to small groups, with each individual assigned a specific role in the foreign policy establishment at the start of week 13. I will also provide each group with the basics of a foreign policy problem, and am expecting them to come to a consensus response to the problem, keeping in mind our discussion on different actors and examples of foreign policy.

I will provide further guidance, rubric, resources, and materials later in the term, but will break up the assessment in the following ways:

Initial Response (10%):

By the end of Week 13, I am expecting each individual to provide a brief memo (1-2 pages) which will summarize their understanding of the problem, the interests and preferences of the role they have been assigned, and further information they think is critical to the decision-making process.

Group Presentation (10%):

Each Group will provide a brief (5-10 minute) presentation on the last day of class. This presentation will provide a statement of the problem they faced, their decision on what to do about it, and why they chose that approach.

Group Memo (10%):

By 6PM April 21st, I am expecting a brief (3-5 page) paper by the group outlining their final decision, and why they chose this policy.

Final Project Reflection (10%):

By April 24th, each of you will individually write a short (2-3 page) paper discussing your role as part of the group during the simulation. You will discuss what your initial position was, how you interacted with other actors to come to the final policy, why you chose these positions, and any shortcomings you saw in the process or final conclusion.

Grading Standards:

Above	Below or Equal To	Letter Grade
98	100	A+
93	98	A
90	93	A-
88	90	B+
83	88	B
80	83	B-
78	80	C+
73	78	C
70	73	C-
60	70	D
0	60	F

Class Policies:

Absences: I understand that like in any professional workplace, there may be occasions where you find you have a schedule conflict or are unable to attend class. As such, you all have two unexcused absence throughout the semester, and I will allow further excused absences for reasons identified by the Office of Student Affairs.

Regular attendance is a good predictor of positive learning outcomes, and important for productive small group discussions, which will often build on prior material. As such, if you miss class, please make arrangements to talk with me so that I know you are caught up on the material for that week.

Academic Integrity: Both the College and myself take academic integrity quite seriously. Throughout this course, the expectation is that in written work you will recognize the sources you used, and that unless an assignment is explicitly stated as a collaborative one, your work is yours and yours alone.

If you have questions about how to cite the works of others, please see the Writing Center website, where you can find information about citation methods and formats.

The University's full policy on academic integrity can be found here, and applies to this course.

Accessibility: It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me so we can explore ways to overcome these. Students may also wish to work with the Office of Accessible Education and Student Support to formalize accommodations. Please visit their website for contact and additional information. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Accessible Education, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

Deadlines and Extensions: The assignment due dates are set well in advance and are meant to provide you flexibility to budget your time. If something comes up which meets the requirements for an excused absence, please let me know as soon as possible so we can arrange an extension.

For all other cases, late assignments will be penalized by 5% (approximately the plus or minus of a grade) for every 48 hour period they are not turned in. There are two reasons for this: (1) to make sure that I can provide feedback to the class in a timely manner, and (2) fairness to your peers, who may also have done better if they had additional time to work, but have felt unable to put off a deadline.

Equity, Inclusion, and Respect for Others: During the semester, we will have discussions which include thinking about race, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, and violence. Any of these topics alone is likely to raise strong responses, and even with the best of intentions, it's not unlikely someone will make an ill-considered remark when talking about them at length. I ask that we all do our best to be respectful of others, and that you please let me know if there are any issues which come out of class discussion which you believe need to be resolved. If you are uncomfortable talking to me, please use any of the resources available at the [College's Office of Equity and Inclusion](#).

I stand behind the College's statement on [Diversity](#):

Everyone is different; at Bates, we embrace and learn from that difference.

At Bates, we acknowledge and celebrate the plurality of identities, social positions, cultural perspectives and individual abilities that contribute to human difference. We believe in the emancipating potential of education to help all members of our community promote, respect and embrace diversity – broadly defined – and to preserve and advocate for human dignity. As we avow in the Bates mission statement, “With ardor and devotion — *Amore ac Studio* — we engage the transformative power of our differences, cultivating intellectual discovery and informed civic action” to prepare leaders who are “sustained by a love of learning and a commitment to responsible stewardship of the wider world.”

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices are now ubiquitous, and there will be particular times in class that will take advantage of them. However, they are often designed in ways that will take your attention away from what is going on around you, particularly in class. I thus reserve the right at any point in the course to ask you to put away your devices, and would ask that you put phones on airplane mode during class to avoid being distracted by notifications.

Grading Disputes: I will make every effort to be transparent and to be accurate in grading your assignments. However, in cases where you believe there is an error in grading, I will carry out re-grading by the following process:

- No earlier than 24 hours after you received the grade and no later than one week after, please send an email to me detailing which portion of the assignment you believe was incorrectly graded, as well as your reasoning for why, citing the rubric.

- I will then regrade the item with the rubric, and will adjust the grade accordingly. If there was an error, I will adjust the grade up; If there was no error, I will explain why the item was graded the way it was; and if it appears that there are additional issues with your answer, I may downgrade and will explain why

Student Hours: What are student hours? They are a time for you to talk with me about any concerns or issues you have with the class, as well as to ask other questions about topics relating to the study of politics which may not be germane to the whole class. Please take advantage of these, as they can help head off problems, lessen concerns, and give me a better sense for how you are doing in the course and at Bates in general.

I have set aside Tuesday and Thursday afternoons (3 – 5PM) for student hours for this class, which are the best times to meet with me. I will do my best to honor appointments outside of these hours, and to respond to emails promptly, but realize that I will reply slower in the evening and weekends. If you make an appointment for a set time, I will honor that appointment over students who have not.

I am committed to your success in meeting the College’s high standards, and this commitment is not limited to our class meeting and student hours. Although it is most effective to set a time in advance, I am available outside of class for student meetings between 9 AM and 5 PM most weekdays, either in person or via zoom. Outside of these hours, I’m available by appointment or by email (cprice@bates.edu), which I check regularly during the day and evening.

Student Resources: Even in the best of times, students often face challenges that they will need help with outside of class; these are not the best of times. Bates College has a number of resources available to support you, covering physical and mental health, academic and peer support, and conflict resolution. Please take advantage of them.

Other Unforeseen Issues: For all other policies not enumerated here, my default will be College policy as listed in the Bates College Student Handbook.

Detailed Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1 - Introduction

Guiding Questions:

Do you understand the structure of the course? Do you have questions about what is expected? What are your interests and the questions you have about foreign policy? What items are unclear in the syllabus?

Thursday, January 12th

- Read the Syllabus

Week 2 – Theories of Foreign Policy and International Relations

Guiding Questions:

What divides the study of Foreign Policy from the study of International Relations? What basic terms are used to describe relations between nations? What are the tradeoffs between historical and social scientific approaches to the study of Foreign Policy? What are some of the key elements of US Foreign policy from its foundation to the Civil War?

Tuesday, January 17th

- McDougall, Walter A. 1997. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776*. New York, NY: Mariner. 1-14.
- Snyder, Jack. 2004. One World, Rival Theories. *Foreign Policy* 145 (Nov-Dec): 52-62.
- Zakaria, Fareed. 1998. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. P 3-18.

Thursday, January 19th

In small groups, we will look at readings from histories of US Foreign Policy from Founding to the Civil War. Groups and assignments will be based on interests as reported in First Class meeting.

Week 3 – Defining Policy Priorities: Interests and Values

Guiding Questions:

What are the goals of American Foreign Policy? Where do they come from? What challenges exist in defining ‘a national interest’ or ‘national values’? How do these priorities change across time? What motivated American Foreign Policy from the end of the Civil War to the start of the First World War?

Tuesday, January 24th

- Morgenthau, Hans. 1950. “The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions.” *American Political Science Review* 44 (4): 833-854.
- Rice, Condoleezza. 2008. “Re-Thinking the National Interest.” *Foreign Affairs* 87(4): 2-14, 16-26.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie. 2011, March 30. “Interests vs. Values? Misunderstanding Obama’s Libya Strategy”. *The New York Review of Books*.

Thursday, January 26th

In small groups, we will look at readings from histories of US Foreign Policy from the Civil War to the First World War. Groups and assignments will be based on interests as reported in First Class meeting.

Week 4 – Strategy, Contingency, and Policy

Guiding Questions:

What is Grand Strategy? What is a Doctrine? Who defines them, and how important are they? How consistent is US Foreign Policy across time? What are the tradeoffs between flexibility and focus in Foreign Policy?

Tuesday, January 31st

- Drezner, Daniel W. 2011. Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy: Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times. *Foreign Affairs* 90(4): 57-68.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. 2018. *On Grand Strategy*. New York, NY: Penguin. Excerpts, Pages 1-22.
- Graham Allison. 1969. Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis. *American Political Science Review* 62(3): 689-712.

Thursday, February 2nd

In small groups, we will look at readings from histories of US Foreign Policy from the First World War to the end of the Cold War.

Week 5 – The Presidency and Foreign Policy

Guiding Questions:

What are the legal rules and powers of the President in making foreign policy? How do Presidents balance domestic and foreign priorities? What factors limit presidential involvement in foreign policy? How do theories of Presidential power fit with recent foreign policy decisions?

Tuesday, February 7th

- Howell, William G. 2011. Presidential Powers in War. *Annual Review of Political Science* 14: 89-105.
- Rice, Susan. 2019. *Tough Love*. New York: Simon and Schuster. pages 342-351; 384-395.
- Shallus, Jacob. 1787. The Constitution of the United States. Retrieved 9-January from { <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript> }, Articles 2 and 3.

Thursday, February 9th

In small groups, we will look at how different presidents approached the US war in Afghanistan, comparing how personal, institutional, and systemic pressures affected Presidential decision making on the war in Afghanistan.

Due:

First Policy Memo, 6PM Friday, February 11th

Week 6 – Military: The Department of Defense

Guiding Questions:

What elements make up the US Defense Establishment? How does the Military contribute to the making of American Foreign Policy? What institutional interests does the Military establishment have? How do Military and Civilian decisionmakers interact, and what challenges exist in this relationship?

Tuesday, February 14th

- Feaver, Peter D. and Richard H. Kohn. 2000. The Gap: Soldiers, Civilians and Their Mutual Misunderstanding. *National Interest* 61 (Fall): 29-40.
- Gates, Robert M. 2014. *Duty*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 116-148.
- McMaster, H.R. 1997. *Dereliction of Duty*. New York: Harper Collins, 323-334

Thursday, February 16th

In small groups, we will look at how the US Government approaches potential military competitors, with a focus on Russia and China.

Week 7 - Spring Break

February 21st and 23rd

- No Class - Enjoy your break!

Week 8 – Diplomats: The Department of State

Guiding Questions:

What do diplomats do in the modern world? What are the strengths and limitations of America's Diplomatic corps? What institutional interests exist in the Department of State, and how do they impact foreign policy making?

Tuesday, February 28th

- Baker, James A. 1995. *The Politics of Diplomacy*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons. 260-274.
- Burns, William J. 2019. The Lost Art of American Diplomacy. *Foreign Affairs* 98(3): 98-107.
- Thompson-Jones, Mary. 2016. *To the Secretary*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 71-81.

Thursday, March 2nd

In small groups, we will look at how the US Government has approached the policy of democracy promotion.

Week 9 – Spies: The Intelligence Community

Guiding Questions:

How is the American Intelligence Community organized? What tasks are these missions capable of doing, and what are their limitations? What institutional interests do these actors have? How have these changed over time?

Tuesday, March 7th

- Guest Speaker on Department of State
- Zegart, Amy and Michael Morell, 2019. Spies, Lies, and Algorithms. *Foreign Affairs* 98(3): 85-96.
- Gates, Robert M. 1996. *From the Shadows*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 135-143; 198-208.

Thursday, March 9th

In small groups, we will look at the intelligence communities and their part in the wider US policy goals on restricting the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons.

- Everyone: Miscik, Jami. 2017. Intelligence and the Presidency: How to Get it Right. *Foreign Affairs* 96(3): 57-64.
- Instructions for specific group readings are posted in Lyceum.

Posted: Essay Prompt 2, 6:00 PM, Friday March 10th.

Week 10 - Congress

Guiding Questions:

What role does Congress play in setting Foreign Policy Priorities? How has this changed since the end of the Cold War? How do legislators balance domestic and foreign interests? How do they balance national and partisan interests?

Tuesday, March 14th

- Jacobs, Lawrence R. & Benjamin I. Page. 2005. *Who Influences US Foreign Policy?* *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 107-123.
- Howell, William G. and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2007. When Congress Stops Wars: Partisan Politics and Presidential Power. *Foreign Affairs* 86(5): 95-107.
- Ornstein, Norman F. and Thomas E. Mann. 2006. When Congress Checks Out. *Foreign Affairs* 85(6): 67-82.

Thursday, March 16th

We will look in greater depth about issues of international trade and tariffs, and engage in structured disagreement.

Due: Second Policy Memo, 6PM Friday, March 17th.

Week 11 – Economic Actors: The Treasury, the Fed, and the Department of Commerce

Guiding Questions

Where is the overlap between domestic and foreign economic interests? How does the executive branch manage the potential for economic crashes and booms from abroad? How do foreign policy makers balance security and economic concerns?

Tuesday, March 21st

- Lew, Jacob L. and Richard Nephew. 2018. The Use and Misuse of Economic Statecraft. *Foreign Affairs* 97(6): 139-149.
- Tooze, Adam. 2018. *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. New York, NY: Viking. Chapter 3, Pages 72-90.

No Class – Enjoy Spring Break!

Thursday, March 23rd

Week 12 – Special Interests and NGO’s

Guiding Questions:

How different are the effects of civil society and special interest groups from public opinion? How do these groups affect American Foreign Policy? What are some limitations on their involvement with policy making? How has this changed across time?

Tuesday, March 28th

- Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink. 1999. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics." *International Social Science Journal* 51 (159): 89-101.
- Newhouse, John. 2009. Diplomacy, Inc.: The Influence of Lobbies on US Foreign Policy. *Foreign Affairs* 88(3): 73-92.
- Snyder, Sarah B. 2018. *From Selma to Moscow*, New York: Columbia University Press, Pages 148-167.

Thursday, March 30th

We will examine the role that civil society and business interest groups have played in US diplomacy over Climate Change.

Week 13 – Public Opinion

Guiding Questions:

What role does the American public play in the formation of foreign policy? What are some of the institutional biases of the American public? How has this changed over time?

Tuesday, April 4th

- Gelpi, Chris. 2010. Performing on Cue? The Formation of Public Opinion Toward War. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(1): 86-116.
- Western, Jon. 2005. *Selling Intervention and War*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 175-219.

Thursday, April 6th

In small groups, we will look at how public opinion affects the US government’s efforts abroad to protect civilians from famine and war.

Due:

Initial Position Memo, 6PM Friday, April 7th.

Week 14 – Simulation

Working in assigned roles within small groups, you will mimic the foreign policy process and craft a response to a simulated foreign policy crisis.

Tuesday, April 11th

Dedicated space and time for team work

Thursday, April 13th

Final Briefs by Each Group

Week 15 - Finals Week

Friday, April 21st

Final Group Memo Due, Lyceum, 6PM

Monday, April 24th

Reflections on Final Project due, 9 AM