

PSCI 460/560
American Foreign Policy
Fall Semester 2003

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AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Basically this course consists of two major components: 1) a background survey of the main themes in and the historical evolution of U.S. foreign policy; and 2) an in-depth probe into the foreign policy-making process. In each instance we will put special emphasis on **evaluating** U.S. policy, presenting in the process various perspectives on the motives behind specific U.S. actions and on America's general role in world affairs.

The survey/evolution section will provide the general background necessary to undertake the more detailed examination of the making and implementation of current U.S. foreign policy. Here we will devote attention to some of the main trends or traits that have historically characterized U.S. foreign policy as well as looking at the impact of the radical transformations occurring on the international scene in the late 1980s and early 1990s which resulted in what we now call the "Post-Cold War World". We will likewise probe some of the cultural/political values that have undergirded U.S. policy as well as some of the controversies that have swirled around them.

To understand (and therefore be in a position to evaluate) any governmental policy, one must first have some in-depth knowledge of the process and dynamics involved in its formulation and execution. This leads to such questions as: which governmental institutions are vested with primary decision-making authority?; which individuals or groups exercise predominate influence within and among these institutions?; to what extent do non-governmental interest groups mold and shape American foreign policy?; do the President and his immediate advisors wield too much power in formulating and implementing foreign policy?; what impact does (should) the mass media have on the policy process?; and are foreign policy-makers (sufficiently?) responsive to public opinion as they set the nation's course in foreign affairs? Anyone who ever hopes to be well-informed on U.S. foreign policy must confront these issues; indeed, in practically any policy analysis, one cannot intelligently evaluate any governmental action without factoring into the equation some consideration of the process that produced it and the various mechanisms utilized

to implement it.

Although the course will in a sense provide a broad survey of U.S. foreign policy and will delve in some detail into certain contemporary problems, it must be stressed that the main focus of the course is neither detailed diplomatic history nor current events. The texts and the instructor will, of course, provide the basic information which is necessary to have a solid background regarding the specifics of the relations that the U.S. has had with other countries, but the primary emphasis in the course will not be on describing these developments, but rather on **analyzing** them (i.e., determining why the U.S. has pursued a particular course of action) and **evaluating** them (i.e., making value judgements about the course of action pursued).

To keep abreast of current developments in U.S. foreign policy, you should read (at least on Sunday) a national newspaper such as the **NEW YORK TIMES** or the **WASHINGTON POST**. You also might want to look at some of the leading weekly news magazines (e.g., **TIME, NEWSWEEK, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORTS**). Such current events will be important in the course--they will often serve as examples used to illustrate points contained in the classroom or reading material, they may very well be the focus of major class discussions, and it is quite likely that familiarity with current events will be necessary to do a good job on the exams. Therefore you should keep yourself well-informed regarding contemporary issues and developments in U.S. foreign policy.

Required Texts:

Jeral A. Rosati, **The Politics Of United States Foreign Policy**, Third Edition, paperback (Wadsworth Publishers, 2004)

Robert J. Lieber, **Eagle Rules? Foreign Policy And American Primacy In The Twenty-First Century**, paperback (Prentice-Hall, 2002)

There may be additional readings provided via copied handouts. These handouts are most likely to deal with case studies that will be used to illustrate various contemporary issues and problems that we are exploring.

Exams/Grades:

Undergraduates--

Each person will do three take-home essays over the course of the semester. Your grades on these essays will be averaged and that average grade will account for 70 percent of your overall course grade.

Each person will write a term paper, the topic to be selected in consultation with the instructor. The term paper will serve as the substitute for a final exam. Details regarding the papers will be provided later. Your grade on the paper will account for 30 percent of your overall course grade.

Graduate Students--

Each person will do three take-home essays over the course of the semester (same questions as for the undergraduates). Your grades on these essays will be averaged and that average grade will account for 50 percent of your overall course grade.

Each person will submit a research proposal to the instructor. These proposals will lay the foundation for the major research paper requirement that is listed in the next section. Details regarding the format and content of the research proposals will be provided later, although essentially the proposals will follow the general outlines of a MA Thesis proposal. The proposal will provide a mechanism for consulting with the instructor to assure that your research paper project is both ambitious and realistic. These proposals will account for 10 percent of your overall course grade,

Based on the research proposal requirement noted above, each person will submit a major research paper. Your grade on the research paper will account for 40 percent of your overall course grade.

The grading in this course will operate on a 100-point scale, with the grade breakdown being as follows:

A	90-100
B+	85-89
B	80-84
C+	75-79
C	70-74
D+	65-69
D	60-64
F	Less Than 60

In the case of a borderline average when all of your grades for the course have been computed, various non-graded considerations may be utilized to determine whether you will receive a higher or a lower grade for the course. The three primary considerations here are: (1) attendance--if you miss more than 10 percent, which translates into three class sessions, of the scheduled classes without a valid (i.e., approved by the instructor) excuse, it is extremely unlikely that a borderline grade will be raised to the next level [NOTE: There has almost inevitably been a high

correlation in my courses between class attendance and student performance; if you miss a lot of classes, it is almost certain that you will not perform very well on the essay exams which constitute the largest component of your overall course grade]; (2) participation in class discussions--quality participation will increase the likelihood that a borderline grade will be raised to the next level; and (3) a pattern of significant improvement or decline in your grades over the course of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

KEY: JR = Rosati, THE POLITICS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
RL = Lieber, EAGLE RULES?

I. Introduction

A. Introduction to the Course and Its Material

Read: JR, chapter 1

II. A General Overview of the Evolution of U.S. Foreign Relations and the Policy-Making Process

A. The Historical Background: Some Basic Dynamics and General Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy

Read: JR, chapters 2 and 14

B. The Contemporary Context: The Emergence of the Post-Cold War World

Read: JR, chapter 3 and pp. 546-551
RL, chapter 1

C. Various Theoretical Perspectives on the Foreign Policy-Making Process

Read: JR, pp. 532-545

III. Governmental Actors and the Policy-Making Process

A. Introduction: Power and Influence in the Foreign Policy Arena--Differing Views on How Foreign Policy is **Really** Made

Read: JR, chapter 10

B. The Executive Branch: The Inner Circle of the Foreign Policy Establishment

1. The President as the Key Actor: Potential Versus Constraints

Read: JR, chapter 4

Case Studies:

Europe--Contending with the Emergence of a Major New International Power Center

Read: RL, chapter 4

Russia--The Problem of Dealing with a Chaotic Former Adversary

Read: RL, chapter 5

2.The National Security Council: The President's Main Advisory Body

Read: JR, chapter 5

Case Study:

Developing Strategies for Dealing with "Rogue States"

Read: RL, chapter 8

3.The State Department: The Changing Fortunes of Foggy Bottom

Read: JR, chapter 6

Case Studies:

Managing U.S. Relations with "Low-Priority" Areas--Latin America and Africa

Read: RL, chapters 6 and 10

4.The Defense Department and the Intelligence Community: Beneficiaries of the Cold War

Read: JR, chapters 7-8

Case Studies:

Confronting the Security Issues of the 21st Century

Read: RL, chapters 11-13

5.Economic Agencies: Managing the Emerging System of Global Interdependence

Read: JR, chapter 9
RL, chapter 14

C.The Legislative Branch: The Imperial Presidency and Other

Controversies

Read: JR, chapter 11
RL, chapter 3

Case Studies:

Sorting Out Various Controversial Dimensions of Evolving
US/Chinese Ties

Read: RL, chapter 9

Revisiting the Question of the US Relationship with International
Organizations

Read: RL, chapter 16

D.The Supreme Court and Others: Bit Players on the Foreign Policy
Stage

Read: JR, chapter 12

IV.External Actors and the Policy-Making Process

A.The General Public and Foreign Policy: Public Opinion, the
Media, and Elections

Read: JR, chapters 13, 17, and 15
RL, chapter 2

B.Interest Groups: Potential Conflicts Between National and
Private Interests

Read: JR, chapter 16

Case Study:

The Jewish Lobby and US Policy Toward the Middle East

Read: RL, chapter 7

V.Summary and Conclusions