

# Formulation and Conduct of U.S. Foreign Policy

## Basics

*Instructor:* Tobias Heinrich (heinrict@mailbox.sc.edu – www.theinrich.net)

*Time and place:* POLI 340, University of South Carolina, Fall 2014.

*Class:* Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10.05–11.20am, Gambrell 151.

*Office hours:* Thursdays, 1-2pm in Gambrell 333. I will usually be available for a bit right before and after class as well. You can also schedule alternative times with me through email.

## Outline

This course offers a *focused* view on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The focus comes through conscientious omissions and choices with regard to the content of the course. Most crucially, this is neither a course on diplomatic history, nor about on whatever media outlets happen to be covering at this minute. Further, the course will not treat the United States' foreign policy as anything inherently exceptional, but rather as an important case among all states' foreign policies.

What does the course cover? Foreign policy of any state is presumed to come out of the interplay between various actors who seek to influence the statal policy over some issue. Using this perspective, we will consider (1) who these actors are, (2) which issues they might seek to affect, and (3) what the resulting statal policies might be. The analytical approach will be a general one (ie. it might as well be used to understand Iceland's foreign policy) which we apply to the case of the United States' foreign policy.

If you actively and meticulously participate in this course, you will learn

- how to coherently think in a structured way through political issues and how policy toward it gets made;
- about a broad range of activities of U.S. foreign policy;
- how to predict the outcomes of complex political interactions;
- to think more like a (social) scientist and much less like a journalist or talking head.

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Date of this syllabus: August 20, 2014.

## Required Materials

The following book will be required in class:

- Stephen E. Ambrose & Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (1998).<sup>1</sup>

Further, the instructor will provide the rest of the material (journal articles, book chapters, and some news articles) via email or Blackboard. An important note on the readings: The course will rely at times on some complicated material that may involve difficult statistics and game theoretic models. I do not expect you to fully understand these sections of papers; however, the expectation is that you are able to get what the addressed issue is, what the previous work thought on the topic, what the novel take of the paper is, and what the implications are. How the author reaches the conclusions is not that important in the context of this class. At times, lectures will walk you through details of the readings.

## Grades and Grading

Your grade will be comprised of several contributions. The details for each assignment will be provided in class when the assignment is given. Mainly but not entirely, these are:

- **Test 1** aims at the grasp of core concepts introduced since the beginning of class. The test is mostly multiple choice with some short answers sprinkled in. More details will be provided before the test is given on September 30.
- In **Test 2**, students predict the future. The test is mostly short answers. The test will take place before or after Fall Break.
- **Test 3** will take place toward the end of the semester. It will cover anything invoked during the semester.

Everything in this class will be graded on a scale of 0-100. However, not each item is worth the same: **Tests 1** and **2** have weights of 4, and **Test 3** a weight of 5. The grade is simply the weighted average.<sup>2</sup>

As **Test 1** is the first time that work is graded in this class, students have a simple, no-questions-asked option to downweight **Test 1**. If a student declares via email to the instructor that he/she wishes to have **Test 1** count only half, then the grade of **Test 1** will only have a weight of 2 in the calculation of the final grade. This has to be declared before **Test 2** is handed out, and the decision is not reversible.<sup>3</sup>

There are two more ways for grades to occur, namely voluntary short presentations and quizzes. On occasion, there will be opportunities for voluntary short presentations that take place during class time. One such assignment might be to summarize a significant scholar's research or look into some specific case and introduce it for the class. These voluntary extra credit opportunities to have a weight of 1.<sup>4</sup> If multiple students volunteer, I will use statistical software to draw a person randomly. A no-show for the voluntary short presentation will lead to a zero.

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<sup>1</sup>The 9<sup>th</sup> (2011) edition is also okay.

<sup>2</sup>If you have grades  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  on **Tests 1** through **3**, respectively, your grade at the end is:  $\frac{4x+4y+5z}{4+4+5}$ .

<sup>3</sup>If the downweighting option is chosen, then analogously to the previous footnote, the final grade is  $\frac{2x+4y+5z}{2+4+5}$ .

<sup>4</sup>Continuing the previous footnotes: If you do a voluntary short presentation and get grade  $u$  on it, then your grade is at the end is  $\frac{4x+4y+5z+u}{4+4+5+1}$  and, if the downweighting was chosen,  $\frac{2x+4y+5z+u}{2+4+5+1}$ .

Last, there may occasional quizzes which serve as a graded reward for attendance. If a quiz receives a grade that would lower your final grade, then the grade of that quiz will be dropped. That means that it will receive a weight of 0 whereas if it increases your final grade, the weight is 1. This calculation will be performed at the very end of the semester and not before. If for whatever reason a student is missing class, the opportunity to improve the grade is gone. However, the absence will not cause harm to the grade, but merely will fail to enable to improve the grade.<sup>5</sup>

I will use the following grading scale to map the final grade-points to letter grades. A 92-100, B+ 87-91, B 80-86, C+ 77-79, C 70-76, D+ 67-69, D 60-66, and F 0-59. Standard rounding rules apply. If you choose to turn in your work late, then you will lose five points every 12 hours.

Assignments and examination work are expected to be the sole effort of the student submitting the work. Students are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Honor Code and should expect that every instance of a suspected violation will be reported. Students found responsible for violations of the Code will be subject to academic penalties under the Code in addition to whatever disciplinary sanctions are applied. Cheating on a test or copying someone else's work, will result in a zero for the work, possibly a grade of F in the course, and, in accordance with University policy, be referred to the University Committee for Academic Responsibility and may result in expulsion from the University.

You are expected to be in class on time and be there every time as attending class is an integral part in learning the material. Further, missing class when your classmates carry out their presentations is simply rude. That said, no attendance will be taken so that there is no formal disadvantage from not showing up aside from losing the opportunity to improve grades via quizzes. I firmly believe that missing classes will adversely affect your learning and thereby your grade.

Reading the assigned material and attending class are crucial and not substitutable for each other. Some material in the readings are starting points for the content of the lectures; others will be dissected meticulously in lectures. There will also be lectures without any previous grounding in readings. Your learning and thereby your grade will require close attention to lectures and readings.

Politics is inherently a social phenomenon, and thereby discussions about it are as well. I encourage every student to voice objections, questions, critique, and dissatisfaction with the presented material as well as to instructor's and other students' views on the material. There are only three prerequisites: the comments have to be thought-out before voiced, be respectful, and must not aim to disrupt the course for disruption's sake.

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Office of Student Disability Services: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email [sasds@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sasds@mailbox.sc.edu), or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.

The syllabus may be changed by the instructor, in particular readings for the dissections of what non-academics write and for Part III will be announced in class. If unclear about anything,

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<sup>5</sup>Suppose there are grades  $x = y = z = 75$  which lead to a weighted average grade of 75. If the quiz was less than 75, then 75 is the final grade. If the quiz was, say, 90, then the final grade of  $\frac{4*75+4*75+5*75+90}{4+4+5+1}$  rounds to 76.

just ask. It merits repetition: if in doubt about anything on this syllabus or in general, talk to the TA or instructor early.

## Course Schedule

### Part I: Preliminaries

The initial part of the course sets the stage for everything that follows. Students will learn the demarcation of topics as well as the approach that will be taken throughout. It also explores the questions what foreign policy is anyways.

*Thursday, August 21.* Howdy, y'all. And what are we doing here? Also: Setting up a first group project on the question, "What is foreign policy?".

*Tuesday, August 26.* A lecture on what won't be lectured in this course.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Introduction and Chapters 1 & 2.

*Thursday, August 28.* Answers to "What is foreign policy?" Presentations of the results from the group project.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 3.

*Tuesday, September 2.* What is science? What is social science?

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 4.

*Thursday, September 4.* Reading and understanding scientific evidence. Or: What's a regression?

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 5.

### Part II: Actors of Foreign Policy

This part of the course introduces some of the major actors in U.S. foreign policy. Students will learn how to assess what drives the actors vis-à-vis foreign policy, and gain an understanding how the actors would approach issues. Several core ideas of politics in general will be introduced, which will be applied to dissect non-academics' writings.

*Tuesday, September 9.* The executive.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 6.

*Thursday, September 11.* The parliament.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 7.

*Tuesday, September 16.* Dissecting what non-academics write about the executive and parliaments.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 8.

*Thursday, September 18.* The bureaucracy.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 9.

*Tuesday, September 23.* The people and the media.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 10.

*Thursday, September 25.* The interest groups and firms.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 11.

*Tuesday, September 30.* Dissecting what non-academics write about the bureaucracy, people, the media, interest groups, and firms.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 12.

## Part III: Predicting the Future!

This section helps students to know the future. Relying on the framework by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, we combine assumptions taken from public resources to forecast the future.

*Thursday, October 2.* Making predictions.

- Michael A.M. Lerner and Ethan Hill, “The New Nostradamus” in Good Magazine.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/p4axrqe>.
- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, “A Prediction for the Future of Iran” at TED.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/p75ktum>.

*Tuesday, October 7.* Defining what we want to predict and what does everyone want.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioner’s Game*, Chapter 4.

*Thursday, October 9.* The ability to influence the future, and who might bother to do so.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioner’s Game*, Chapter 5.

*Tuesday, October 14.* How are we predicting the future? Is our prediction fragile or firm?

*Thursday, October 16.* In-class presentations about the future.

*Tuesday, October 21.* Buffer session.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 13.

*Thursday, October 23.* No class as it's fall break.

*Tuesday, October 28.* Foreign policy in 2014 Elections. Setting up group project.

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapters 14 and 15.

## Part IV: Issues in Foreign Policy

This part studies a small slice of issues facing the world as well as the United States today, and that are the object of foreign policy. Students will learn why certain issues are salient to actors, what can and has been done about them, and what are some of the consequences. The following are the scheduled topics; ideas for alternatives will be certainly be considered.

*Thursday, October 30.* Drugs.

- Gary S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy. "Have We Lost the War on Drugs?" *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2013.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/mnmvxhh>
- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapter 16.

*Tuesday, November 4.* No class as there are elections.

*Thursday, November 6.* Group presentation on elections.

*Tuesday, November 11.* Trade.

- Margaret E. Peters, 2014 (?). "Trade, Foreign Direct Investment and Immigration Policy Making in the US." Forthcoming in *International Organization*.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/kbw9tt8>.

*Thursday, November 13.* Immigration.

- Michael A. Clemens, 2013. On Aid, Migration, and Poverty.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/par3e9z>.

*Tuesday, November 18.* Terrorism I. What is it, what are the sources?

- Ambrose & Brinkley, Chapters 17 and 18.

*Thursday, November 20.* Terrorism II. Response and consequences of “fighting terrorism.”

- Dana Priest, 2010 & William M. Arken. “A hidden world, growing beyond control”, Washington Post.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/35a8xqe>.
- Dana Priest, 2010 & William M. Arken. “National Security Inc.”, Washington Post.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/2vabgdv>.
- Dana Priest, 2010 & William M. Arken. “The secrets next door”, Washington Post.  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/2399hqq>.

*Tuesday, November 25.* Global warming.

- Michael M. Bechtel & Kenneth F. Scheve, 2013. “Mass support for global climate agreements depends on institutional design,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110(34).  
URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/nogkdax>.

*Thursday, November 27.* No class as it’s Thanksgiving.

*Tuesday, December 2.* Development abroad.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita & Alastair Smith, *Dictators Handbook*, Chapter 7.

*Thursday, December 4.* ... and it’s a wrap.