

Formulation and Conduct of U.S. Foreign Policy

Basics

Instructor: Tobias Heinrich (heinricht@mailbox.sc.edu – www.theinrich.net – Gambrell 333)

Time and place: POLI 340, University of South Carolina, Spring 2018.

Class: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2.20–3.35pm, WMBB Nursing 133.

Office hours: Having taught this course five times, barely anyone ever comes to an office hour. Let's be dynamic about this. I will usually be available before and after class for quick chats. For anything longer, I can generally talk after class and am happy to schedule an appointment through email.

Teaching assistant: Thomas Cushman (cushmato@email.sc.edu). Office hours Tuesdays, 10.00–12.00 in Gambrell 353.

Outline

This course offers an analytical approach to the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The goal is to learn to think about policies by engaging with and actively carrying out novel, unique research. Ideally, everyone wrestles with questions and issues that are often only spoken in lectures.

The content is also extremely focused via the conscientious omissions and choices. Most crucially, this is neither a course on diplomatic history, nor about whatever media outlets happen to be covering at this minute. Further, the course will not treat 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. After a broad overview of these foundations in the first half of the course, we will carry out a research project as a large class exercises. This latter activity will serve as an application of the materials from the first half of the course.

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

Date of this syllabus: January 16, 2018.

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

Required Materials

All materials (journal articles, book chapters, news articles) will be provided on Blackboard. 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 on a technical level is not that important in the context of this class. At times, lectures will walk you through details of the readings.

Grades and Grading

The grade will be comprised of several contributions. The details for each assignment will be provided in class when the assignment is given. Some overview nonetheless:

- **Test 1** covers ideas about science, social science, research, and basic concepts of political science. Like the other tests, it will be given on Blackboard. [Given on February 5, 3.30pm and is due February 7, 2pm. Weight is 5.]
- **Test 2** is about actors and issues in foreign policy. [Given on March 28, 3.30pm and is due April 2, 1pm. Weight is 8.]
- The topic of **Test 3** is about everything we've done. [Given between April 25, 3.30pm and is due April 30, 1pm. Weight is 8.]
- There will be frequent **Quizzes**, generally consisting of 3–4 short questions. Except 15 of these. The grade for the quizzes will be the average of the best 70% of quizzes. [Weight is 8.]
- The **Actor Thoughts** are your chance to formulate questions of interest to you. During *Part II* of class, you can submit up to two thoughts or questions relating (mainly) to each previous lecture. The questions are due within 24 hours of the end of class. A well thought-out question is one that applies concepts and ideas from that day of the class to an issue of interest and subsequently generates (some) novel insight. You may not merely ask some complicated, open-ended questions; you have to also

provide some initial stab at answering it. Good questions get 100, sloppy ones 50. The grade is the average of your 12 best ones. [Weight of 4.]

- In our prediction project, you will develop the attributes for one **Major Actor** in a small group. The evidence and rationale behind your choices need to be written up and subsequently presented (and defended) in class. [Weight of 2.]

The final grade is simply the weighted average of all grades. Everything in this class will be graded on a 0–100 scale and carries a weight as indicated above.

As **Test 1** is the first time that (longer) 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 to have **Test 1** count only half, then the grade of **Test 1** will have only half of the original weight in the calculation of the final grade. This has to be declared before **Test 2** is given, and the decision is not reversible. And no, this not available for any other assignment.

There will be no extra-credit at all. There are plenty of opportunities in the class to better one's grade. Consider this: since there are so many different grades, any extra credit that would change anything to a noticeable degree would have to be so big that it would exceed the scope of typical extra credit projects.

An unexcused absence from a presentation for which you are scheduled (see **Major actor** briefing) entails an automatic zero for the associated grade (ie. the write-up).

I will use the following grading scale to map the final grade-points to letter grades. A 93-100, B+ 87-92, 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 ten points each and every 6 hours. Further, tests may get curved strictly in favor of the students; when and how this happens is at the discretion of the instructor.

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. Don't do it.

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. That said, no attendance will be taken so that there is no formal, direct disadvantage. The exceptions to this are that if you miss many quizzes, then your grade will be affected; and if you miss a class for which you are scheduled to (co-)present, you get a zero. I firmly believe that missing classes will adversely affect

your learning and thereby your grade in indirect ways. A casual inspection of grades in previous iterations of this course suggests that this is indeed the case.

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.

There is strong evidence that the use of laptops not only affects your grade negatively, but also that the laptop (mis)use for Facebook, Instagram, et al. during class drags down others' grades as well.¹ We will vote in class on the laptop policy for this class.²

- No electronics at all.
- All electronics allowed.
- One side of the class room may use electronics, the other side may not.

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.

In light of debates around "micro-aggression", let me be clear: I cannot rule out that class discussions will challenge students' pre-existing beliefs; I would argue that I would fail my job if discussions did not challenge pre-existing beliefs. Also, foreign policy inevitably touches upon "unpleasant" issues (torture, war, corruption, etc.) Consider this syllabus an omnibus trigger warning for the entire semester.

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, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.

¹See Susan Dynarski, "Laptops Are Great. But Not During a Lecture or a Meeting.", *New York Times*, November 22, 2017; and Joseph Stromberg, "Why you should take notes by hand — not on a laptop", *Vox.com*, URL: <https://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop>.

²Majority wins. If no majority is obtained, then option with lowest vote count is dropped and voting is repeated. If all fails (ie. a tie in the last vote), randomization will be used.

Course Schedule

The specific dates on the syllabus may be changed by the instructor to accommodate unforeseen events (snow?) and the pace of progress. If unclear about anything, just ask and ask early. Don't hesitate.

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 question what foreign policy is anyways.

January 17 Howdy, y'all. And what are we doing here? Also: Setting up a first group project on the question, "What is foreign policy?" Voting on laptop policy.

January 22 A lecture on what won't be covered in this course.

- Learn how to calculate the grade in this course; teach yourself to calculate a weighted average of a few numbers.

January 24 Answers to "What is foreign policy?" Presentations of the results from the group project. Also: Setting up group project for the question, "What do you already know about studying foreign policy?"

January 29 What is science? What is social science?

January 31 Answers to "What do you already know about studying foreign policy?" Presentations of the results from the group project.

Part II: Actors of (and issues in) foreign policy

This part of the course introduces some of the major actors and issues in U.S. foreign policy. Students will learn how to assess what drives the actors in foreign policy, and gain an understanding of how the actors would approach issues.

February 5: The executive.

February 7: The legislative.

February 12: The people and the media.

February 14: The people, legislators, and executive.

February 19: The bureaucracy.

February 21: The interest groups and firms, Part I.

February 26: The interest groups and firms, Part II.

- Helen V Milner and Dustin Tingley, 2015. *Sailing the Water's Edge*, Chapter 3. On Blackboard.

February 28: The courts.

- Susanne Schorpp and Rebecca Reid, 2017. “The differential effect of war on liberal and conservative judges on the US Courts of Appeal.” *Journal of Law and Courts*.

March 5: Actors controlling money: central banks and markets.

March 7: Foreign and international actors.

March 19: Looking sideways: A complex issue and many actors: terrorism.

- Shana K. Gadarian, 2010. “The politics of threat: How terrorism news shapes foreign policy attitudes.” *The Journal of Politics* 72(2).
- Burcu Savun and Brian J Phillips, 2009. “Democracy, foreign policy, and terrorism.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(6).

March 21: Looking sideways: (unintended) domestic (side) effects of U.S. foreign policy.

March 26: Looking sideways: psychology of presidents and the use of military force.

- Maryann E Gallagher and Susan Hannah Allen, 2014. “Presidential personality: Not just a nuisance.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10(1).

March 28: Buffer session.

Part III: Project – Predicting the Future!

This section will prepare students to know the future. Relying on the framework by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, we combine assumptions taken from public resources and from what we generally know about actors to forecast the future. Which outcome we will predict in class will be determined by a vote.

April 2: Making predictions. Deciding on the topic.

- 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>.

April 4: Defining and refining what we want to predict.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioneer's Game*, Chapter 4 on Blackboard.

April 9: The ability to influence the future: what one wants, can do, and would bother to do.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioneer's Game*, Chapter 5 on Blackboard.

April 11: Assessing our actors' power. Debating and voting on who's got the power.

April 16: Presenting actors, Part I.

April 18: Presenting actors, Part II.

April 23: Presenting actors, Part II.

April 25: Looking at our predictions!

April 30: ... and it's a wrap! Last day of class.