AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

A HASS Communications-Intensive Course

Course mission: to explain and evaluate past and present United States foreign policies. What caused the United States' past involvement in foreign wars and interventions? Were the results of U.S. policies good or bad? Would other policies have better served the U.S. and/or the wider world? Were the beliefs that guided U.S. policy true or false? If false, what explains these misperceptions? General theories that bear on the causes and consequences of American policy will be applied to explain and evaluate past and present policies.

The history of United States foreign policy in the 20th century is covered in detail. Functional topics are also covered: U.S. military policy, U.S. foreign economic policy, and U.S. policy on human rights and democracy overseas. Finally, we will predict and prescribe for the future: what policies should the U.S. adopt toward current crises—e.g., in the Balkans, the Taiwan Straits, Central Africa, and the former Soviet Union? What should be the U.S. stance on global environmental and human rights questions?

This is a HASS Communications Intensive course, and so helps fulfill the HASS CI requirement. Communications intensive subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences require at least 20 pages of writing divided among 3-5 assignments. Of these 3-5 assignments, at least one should be revised and resubmitted. HASS CI subjects further offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression, through presentations, student-led discussions, or class participation. In order to guarantee sufficient attention to student writing and substantial opportunity for oral expression, the maximum number of students per section in a HASS CI subject is 18, except in the case of a subject taught without sections (where the faculty member in charge is the only instructor). In that case, enrollments can rise to 25, if a writing fellow is attached to the subject.

This is an undergraduate course, but is open to graduate students.

Format and Requirements: Class format: two 1-hour general meetings and one 1-hour discussion section meeting per week. Class starts promptly at 11:05, ends at 11:55. Grades are based on section participation (15%), two 8-page papers (40%), final exam (30%), and two quizzes (15%). Students must also complete three ungraded response papers that react to class readings or lectures. The five writing assignments will total 20 pages. One of the 8-page papers must be submitted in draft for comments for rewrite. There will be a public speaking exercise in section. Sections will include 10 students or fewer. Thus this course conforms to the mechanical requirements for all HASS communication-intensive courses.

* Discussion sections: students are expected to complete required readings before section and to attend section regularly. Section attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absence from section will be penalized.

Sections will include a public speaking exercise, in the format of "congressional hearings" where you are asked to frame and defend to the group a viewpoint on a foreign policy issue.

* Papers: students will write two short ungraded response papers that react to course readings and lectures, and two longer papers on questions arising from the course material. The two response papers each will be two pages long (doublespaced—not 1.5 spaced, please). The longer papers will be 8 pages. One 8-page paper assignment asks you to explain a past case of American conduct—what accounts for American behavior? A second 8-page assignment asks you to evaluate a past American policy: was the policy appropriate, or would another policy have produced better results?
The first ungraded response paper is due the week of Sept. 24-28; the second is due the week of Oct. 15-19. The first 8-page paper is due at 11:00 a.m. (class time) on Thursday, November 8. The second is due at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 4. Your TAs are willing to comment on rough drafts of your papers. Moreover, we require that you submit a draft of at least one of your 8-page papers before its due date in order to get comments for rewrite. So, please leave yourself time to get comments on drafts of the 8-page papers from your TAs before you submit final drafts.

Your two response papers should advance an argument about the reading or lectures. Your argument can dispute argument(s) advanced in the reading or lectures; can concur with argument(s) advanced in the reading or lecture; can assess or explain policies or historical events described in the reading and lectures; or can relate current events in the press today to ideas or events in the readings or lectures. We encourage evaluation of policies or ideas covered in the reading or lecture. Are they right or wrong? Good or bad? Somewhere in your paper—preferably at the beginning—please offer a 1-2 sentence summary of your argument. Both papers should be about two typed pages (double spaced, with standard one-inch margins on left, right, top and bottom). They will not be graded but are mandatory and must be completed to receive full credit for class participation.

Late papers will be penalized unless extensions are granted well in advance of the paper deadline. Extensions will not be granted except in emergency situations.

Your papers may be improved by keeping up with current international affairs during the semester. Three publications offer especially excellent coverage: the New York Times, the Economist (a weekly), and the Far Eastern Economic Review (also a weekly).

Your papers and public speaking may also be improved by seeking help from MIT's writing and Communications Center (14N-317, 253-3090, http://web.mit.edu/writing). They give good writing advice and have useful practice facilities for public speaking.

* Quizzes: two short (15 minute) quizzes will be given. Quiz dates are October 4 (Thursday) and November 15 (Thursday). Three short (define-and-identify) questions will be asked on each quiz.
* Final exam: a list of study questions will be circulated before the final. The final exam questions will be drawn from this list. Students are encouraged to study together to prepare their answers. The final will also include short-answer questions that will not be distributed in advance.
* Films: the 17.40 film society. Two optional evening film-showings will be organized during the term. Films on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War will be shown. Dates and places TBA.

Books to purchase, available at the MIT COOP bookstore:

Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (1971)

These books are also on reserve at Dewey library (building E-53, on Wadsworth Street). All other readings will be available as photocopied course notes, and can be purchased from the Technology Copy Center, in the basement of building E-52 (also on Wadsworth Street).

Also at the Coop, in the section for another course (17.432), should be a book that will improve your papers:

Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and

Turabian is not required for 17.40 but you will want to own a copy. She has the basic rules for how to format footnotes, etc. Learn and obey them.

Readings in books available in the COOP bookstore are denoted below with a "B"; coursenotes readings are denoted below with a "CN"; readings that are handed out in class are denoted below with an "H".

Some of the "further reading" (see p. 9, below) are on reserve at Dewey library, for your consultation should you want to do further reading for your paper assignments. These are denoted with a pound ("#") sign.

Assigned readings average 85 pages per week over 14 weeks. However, note that readings are heavier for some weeks. You should plan ahead and budget your time so you can complete the heavy readings.
CLASS TOPICS

I. THEORIES AND STRATEGIES

Sept. 6: Introduction.

No readings assigned.

Sept. 11: Overview of American Foreign Policy Since 1914.

H 1. Tables from Paul Kennedy, Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, and Kenneth Oye, ed., Eagle in a New World. Class discussion will focus on tables 6, 17, 18, 31, 35, 4-1, and chart 2 on pages 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, and 20 (handwritten numeration), so study these seven with more care; the rest can be skimmed.

Sept. 13, 18, 20: Theories of American Foreign Policy.

CN 1. Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense and the Causes of War," manuscript, pp. 1-36. Your instructor's summary of the argument, made famous by Robert Jervis, that war is more likely when conquest is easy. A key related argument: international conflict arises largely from the "security dilemma"--the tendency of states to threaten others' security by their efforts to secure themselves.

Can the U.S. prevent war by making conquest hard in world trouble-spots? Have America's past conflict with others arisen from the security dilemma?

CN 2. Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, chapter 2 ("Explaining Alliance Formation"), pp. 17-49. Walt presents competing hypotheses on how states choose their friends. Which hypotheses are valid? Do your answers matter for the kind of foreign policy you would recommend?

CN 3. Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1976), pp. 58-84. Some ("spiral model" advocates) say international conflict is best resolved by the carrot, while using the stick merely provokes; others ("deterrence" advocates) would use the stick, warning that offering carrots ("appeasement") leads others to make more demands. Who's right? Probably both—but under what circumstances? And how can you tell which circumstances you face?

CN 4. Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 171-173, 731-733. Does the American foreign policy elite share America's wider democratic values? We learn here that George Kennan thought women, blacks, and immigrants should be denied the vote; Kennan and Dean Acheson saw little wrong with the white minority governments in Rhodesia and South Africa; and John McCloy adopted the cause of Iran's Pahlevi family. Not your typical League of Women Voters views.


II. AMERICA'S MAJOR WARS: WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, COLD WAR, & KOREA

Oct. 4, 11, 16, 18: World War I and World War II.


Oct. 23, 25: Cold War Origins & Conduct; the Korean War.

A. Cold War origins and conduct:

B. Korea:

B 1. Paterson, Clifford and Hagan, American Foreign Policy, pp. 266-275.

III. INTERLUDE: U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY; U.S. FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY


Nov. 6, 8: American Foreign Economic Policy, 1945-1999.


CN 5. Review again Samuel Huntington, "America's Changed Strategic Interests," assigned above for Sept. 26--see his remarks on the importance of economic primacy.

IV. COLD WAR CRISSES: BERLIN, TAIWAN STRAITS, AND CUBA 1962

Nov. 13, 15: The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis; other Cold War Crises.


CN 3. Fred Kaplan, "Kennedy and Cuba at 35," *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 12, 1997, pp. D1-D3. Later revelations about the Cuban Missile Crisis. JFK was the most dovish official in the government. He secretly traded the U.S. Jupiter missiles in Turkey for the Soviet missiles in Cuba. He was willing to give even further if needed. What if someone else had been president?

For more on the Cuban Missile Crisis you can visit an excellent website on the crisis put together by the National Security Archive at www.nsarchive.org/nsa/cuba_mis_cri. Documents can be seen, tapes can be listened to, and intelligence photos can be viewed at this site. And for more sources on the crisis see a website from Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, www.cubanmissilecrisis.org.

V. AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD


B 2. Herring, *America's Longest War*, chapters 4 and 7 (pp. 121-157, 242-283). A more detailed account, from a middle-of-the-road perspective, of the key decisions to escalate and de-escalate the war. Herring's book is the most prominent general history of the war.


CN 4. Sol W. Sanders & William Henderson, "The Consequences of 'Vietnam'," *Orbis*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 61-76. The authors re-evaluate the propositions at issue in the debate over the war, concluding that postwar events show that the hawks were right and the doves wrong.


of the better-known CIA Cold War covert operations.


VI. THE ROAD AHEAD: CURRENT CRISIS AND FUTURE POLICIES

December 6, 11: The Cold War's demise; current crises; the future of American foreign policy.


CN 4. Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., "Preventing War in the Taiwan Strait," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 77, No. 4 (July/August 1998), pp. 6-11. Taiwan could suck the U.S. into a Taiwan-PRC conflict unless the U.S. restrains Taiwan now.

CN 5. "Tables by Hannes Adomeit." Some alarming demographic data on the former USSR.


FURTHER READING

Readings denoted below with a "##" are on reserve at Dewey library.

**Historiographical surveys on American foreign policy:**


**Bibliographies on American foreign policy:**


For more bibliographies see also:

*Foreign Affairs*: this journal's "Recent Books on International Relations" section reviews most important books on U.S. foreign policy.

*American Historical Review*: more than half of this journal is devoted to useful book reviews, many of books on U.S. foreign relations.


Jerald A. Combs, *The History of American Foreign Policy*, 2 vols. (NY: Knopf, 1986); this text also has useful bibliographical notes at the ends of chapters.

**Websites to consult:**

[www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/research-g/us-policy.html](http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/research-g/us-policy.html). This site is a research guide to internet resources on American foreign policy. See other websites referenced there.

**Textbooks and surveys:**


Howard Jones, *The Course of American Diplomacy: From the Revolution to the*
Present, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Dorsey, 1988)
George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (NY: New American Library, 1951)

Historical document & essay collections:

Journals:

Diplomatic History. The main journal covering American diplomatic history.
Journal of Cold War History. A promising new history journal.
American Historical Review. A general historical journal that gives good coverage to American diplomatic history.
Foreign Policy. A prominent if irritatingly undocumented journal of current policy.
Foreign Affairs. The first and most famous journal of American foreign policy opinion. Published by the Council on Foreign Relations. For many decades it offered yawnsome pontifications by senior officials who repeated conventional wisdoms. In the 1970s, and also more recently, it has shown marked signs of life.
Security Studies. Another journal of military and foreign policy.
The National Interest. The leading conservative foreign policy journal.

Press & radio on world affairs:
The Economist. A British weekly newsmagazine. The best single printed news source on current world affairs.
BBC World Service. Good world news coverage, aired in Boston at 9:00-10:00 a.m., 7:00-7:30 p.m., 10:00-10:30 p.m., and 12:00-1:00 a.m. daily on WBUR (90.9 FM radio). Less fun than KISS 108 but better for your brain.

Readers on current policy questions:
John T. Rourke, Taking Sides, 4th ed. (Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin, 1992)

Theories of International Politics & of American Foreign Policy:
Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., International Politics: Enduring

K.J. Holsti, The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985)

Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979)


Charles W. Kegley, Jr., and Eugene R. Wittkopf, eds., The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence (NY: St. Martin’s, 1988)

Peace Movements:


Foreign lobbies, propaganda, and the press as influences on American foreign policy:

Jarol B. Mannheim, Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994)


J. Duane Squires, British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935)


American Grand Strategy:


Robert W. Tucker, A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise? (Washington, DC:

The United States and Human Rights:


The United States and democracy:


Foreign aid and NGOs:


The United States and World War I:

Thomas J. Knock, To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992)
J. Duane Squires, British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935)
Charles A. Beard, The Devil Theory of War: An Inquiry into the Nature of History and the Possibility of Keeping Out of War (NY: Vanguard Press,
1936)

**The United States and World War II:**

Selig Adler, *The Uncertain Giant, 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars* (NY: Collier, 1965)

**Origins of the Cold War:**

Soviet-American relations, the Cold War:

## John W. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, 12th ed. (NY: Praeger, 1992)
James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, United States Foreign Policy and World Order (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1989)
George F. Kennan, Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin (NY: New American Library, 1960)

Chinese-American Relations:

John Stoessinger, Nations in Darkness--China, Russia, and America, 5th ed. (McGraw, 1990)
Hsiang-tsee Chiang, The United States and China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988)
Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, The Coming Conflict with China (NY: A.A. Knopf, 1997)

The Korean War:

James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, United States Foreign Policy and World Order, pp. 142-190.

Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1960)


David Rees, Korea: The Limited War (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970)


U.S. National Security Policy:


John F. Reichart and Steven R. Sturn, eds., American Defense Policy, 5th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982)


Lynn Eden and Steven E. Miller, eds., Nuclear Arguments: Understanding the Strategic Nuclear Arms and Arms Control Debates (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989)


U.S. Foreign Economic Policy:


Cold War Crises: Berlin, Offshore Islands, and Cuba 1962:

Berlin, 1948 & 1958-1962:


Offshore Islands:


Cuban Missile Crisis:


The Indochina War:

-David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Crest, 1973)
Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn Young and H. Bruce Franklin, eds. *Vietnam and America, A Documentary History* (NY: Grove Press, 1985)
Peter A. Poole, *Eight Presidents and Indochina* (Huntington, NY: Krieger, 1978)


A bibliography is:


### The Spanish-American-Filipino War, 1898-1902:


Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (NY: Crowell, 1975)

Thomas G. Paterson and Stephen G. Rabe, eds., *Imperial Surge: The United States Abroad, the 1890s-Early 1900s* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1992)


Elinor Fuchs & Joyce Antler, *Year One of the Empire: A Play of American Politics, War and Protest Taken from the Historical Record* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973)

Histories of other American interventions in the Third World:

The interventions of 1900-1934:


Overviews of Cold War interventions:


Peter J. Schraeder, ed., *Intervention Into the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1992)


Overviews of covert operations:


Iran 1953:


Guatemala 1954:


Bay of Pigs 1961:


Dominican Republic 1965:


Jerome Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation: The United States and the*

Chile 1973:
U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, First Session, *Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Vol. 7: Covert Action*, pp. 144-203 ("Covert Action in Chile, 1963-73") (This is the Chile study of the "Church Committee Hearings.")

Angola 1975:

Central Americas in the 1980s:
Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, "Iran-Contra’s Untold Story," *Foreign Policy*, No. 72 (Fall 1988), pp. 3-30.

Reagan Doctrine, 1985-1991:

Persian Gulf War, 1991:
Analytical assessments of Third World intervention:

Richard Feinberg, The Intemperate Zone (WW Norton, 1983)

The end of the Cold War and the future of the World:

Paul Kennedy, Preparing for the Twenty-First Century (NY: Random House, 1993)
Michael Klare, Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy (NY: Hill & Wang, 1995)
SCHEDULE FOR 17.40

Sept.

Th 6: First day of class

T-F 11-14: First section meetings

M-F 24-28: First response paper due in sections (2 pages)

Oct.

Th 4: Quiz in class

M-F 15-19: Second response paper due in sections (2 pages)

Paper topics handed out

Nov.

Th 1: Outlines/rough drafts of first paper due in class

Th 8: First paper due in class (8 pages)

Th 15: Quiz in class

Tues. 27: Outlines/rough drafts of second paper due in class

Dec.

Tues. 4: Second paper due in class (8 pages)

Tues. 11: Last day of class
Section Presentations: What They Are

The U.S. Congress often asks experts to present their views on important public policy matters to hearing conducted in Congressional committees. In our sections you will also be asked to testify. As in a real hearing, you will give a short presentation and then you will be questioned by an opinionated and perhaps skeptical panel.

Your presentation will last five (5) minutes. If you run over you may be cut off. Your presentation should include (1) an argument, and (2) supporting evidence or reasoning. Your TA and your fellow students will then pose questions and ask you to address counter-arguments. Be prepared to defend your argument with deductive or historical evidence.

You choose the topic of your presentation. You can make an argument that reacts to an issue raised in class or in the course readings, or you can address a subject of special concern to you. Your presentation can overlap with your paper topic.

We suggest that you bring an outline of you presentation and either hand it out or put it up on the blackboard, to help your audience follow your argument.

We also suggest that you summarize your argument in a couple of sentences before marching through it. Again, this makes you easier to follow.

We will try to organize presentations so that there are two presenters for each section meeting in which presentations are made, and the two presentations are on the same topic. Things are most exciting if they disagree.

We recommend that you practice your speech a couple of times--to the mirror or, better still, to a friend--before giving it. You can also practice using the facilities of MIT's writing and Communications Center (14N-317, 253-3090, http://web.mit.edu/writing), and can get helpful advice from their staff.