

Political Science 4093
Political Science Capstone
Fall 2007

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
The Department of Political Science

America's Foreign Policy Mission: Power or Paradise?

Course Description: This course engages students in the ongoing debate about the opportunities and limitations of American power in an increasingly chaotic and unpredictable world arena. Particularly since the events and global consequences of September 11th, in addition to America's two wars against Iraq, concerns have been raised about the nature of American leadership in foreign policy. The euphoria and celebration following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has given way, little more than fifteen years later, to skepticism and protest as the nation engages in a global war on terror. Throughout forty years of Cold War rivalry, American policy-makers were guided by strategic doctrine, supported in crisis situations by allies, and quite often made use of traditional diplomacy inside, and outside of, international organizations. Now—on issues ranging from global warming to installing democratic regimes in the Middle East—American leaders are criticized for being arrogant unilateralists, for having forsaken practical politics for ideological crusades, for fanning the fires about a clash of civilizations, for infringing upon the civil liberties of Americans while combating foreign enemies, and for exhibiting a lack of sophistication or skill in managing regional balance arrangements. Clearly a number of presidential administrations have had difficulty in creating lasting agreement on the values and doctrines that should guide American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Why has this been the case? Are the reasons to be found within the workings of the international system? Or might explanations be found inside the workings of the American political system?

Today's foreign policy prospects, however, cannot be evaluated apart from historical events that shaped American expansion and involvement in world politics for over two hundred years. American diplomats and statesmen from the era of the Founding Fathers, up to the Civil War and Spanish American War, took up the cause of engagement in, or withdrawal from, the rivalries of nations. Expansionism, idealism, and manipulating power rivalries were all part of the American foreign policy record from the very beginning of the republic.

While our overview of early American diplomacy will be selective (and geared to foreign policy issues), a considerable amount of time will be devoted to twentieth century conflicts (especially after 1940) that defined America as a superpower. The administrations of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush all invoke lessons that reach back to Franklin D. Roosevelt and even Woodrow Wilson. More importantly, to what extent did these three presidential administrations provide a strategic road map to meet the new challenges of the twenty-first century?

Course Requirements: The course is oriented around the readings and class discussion. It is expected that every student will do all of the reading and attend every class meeting. A number of video/film presentations will be incorporated into the format of the course. A record of

attendance will be maintained. The grade will be based on a midterm essay examination (40%), a comprehensive final essay examination (40%), and one 15 page paper (20%). Any student who misses more than one week of class (i.e., two class meetings)–due to unexcused absences–will be subject to a grade penalty. Three points will be subtracted from the final course grade for every unexcused absence that exceeds the one week (or two class) grace period. Absences are excused with documentation of serious illness or university-approved travel.

Course Paper: The paper will take the form of a review essay of the various texts used in the course. Students will be provided with a list of review questions from which they may choose one. Questions will require students to think critically, to compare and contrast arguments presented by the various authors on issues of strategy, foreign policy conduct, and the nature of international politics. **The paper will be due in my office no later than High Noon on Monday, December 3.** Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. The paper must be fifteen complete pages of text, double-spaced, have one inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font. No paper should exceed sixteen pages. Poor grammar and punctuation will adversely affect the final grade assigned to the paper.

Readings & Books

- Washington's Farewell Address 1796 (<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>)
- Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place In The World From Its Earliest Days To The Dawn Of The Twentieth Century*
- Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands A Pagan Ethos*
- Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*
- Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*
- Francis Fukuyama, *America At The Crossroads: Democracy, Power, And The Neoconservative Legacy*
- Thomas Friedman, Wednesday/Sunday Op-Ed Column in *The New York Times*

Accommodations Policy

The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodations in this course should speak with the professor as early in the semester as possible. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The Office of Disability Services is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 405/325-3852 or TDD only 405/325-4173.

Academic Misconduct Policy

Integrity in all aspects of scholarship is essential to the University's mission. The Academic Misconduct Code sets forth the rights and responsibilities of all students on the Norman Campus regarding academic integrity, and provides the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected

misconduct. Academic misconduct is defined as any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. It specifically includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, destruction of property, and bribery or intimidation, as well as assisting others or attempting to engage in such acts. **It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the definitions, policies and procedures concerning academic misconduct; and unfamiliarity with the code alters none of a student's rights or responsibilities thereunder.** The Academic Misconduct Code is printed with the Student Code and is also available at <http://www.ou.edu/provost>.

Course Outline

1. August 21: America: City Upon a Hill or Dangerous Crusader State
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, Introduction & chap. 1.
2. August 23: The Foreign Policy of the Revolution
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chap. 2 & 3.
3. August 28: Washington's Counsel For the Ages: Realism, Liberalism, Idealism
-Washington's Farewell Address 1796.
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chaps. 4.
4. September 4: "Peaceful Expansion" and the Monroe Doctrine
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chaps. 5 & 6.
5. September 11: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and Civil War
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chaps. 8 - 10.
6. September 18: Reclaiming a Pagan Ethos for an Anarchic World
-Kaplan, *Warrior Politics*, chaps. 1- 6.
7. September 25: Pagans and Warriors
-Kaplan, *Warrior Politics*, chaps. 7 - 11.
8. October 4: **MID-TERM ESSAY EXAMINATION**
-Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, Introduction & Chapter 1.
9. October 9: US Grand Strategy in Perspective
-Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, chaps. 2- 5.
10. October 18: Clashing Historical Visions At the End of the Cold War
-Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, chap. 6 & 7.
-Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, chaps. 1 & 2.
11. October 23: Bush I and the Pitfalls of Conventional Imagination
-Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, chap. 3.

12. October 25: Clinton and the Impotence of Good Intentions
-Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, chap. 4.
13. October 30: Bush II and Catastrophic Leadership
-Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, chap. 5.
-Fukuyama, *America At The Crossroads*, chap. 1.
14. November 6: The Neoconservative Legacy in U.S. Foreign Policy
-Fukuyama, *America At The Crossroads*, chaps. 2 & 3.
15. November 13: International Legitimacy and Nation Building
-Fukuyama, *America At The Crossroads*, chaps. 4 & 5.
16. November 20: Geopolitics in American Foreign Policy: Offshore Balancing
-Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, chap. 8
17. November 27: Rethinking the Role of Morality and Hegemony in American Foreign Policy
-Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chap. 11.
18. December 3: **REVIEW ESSAY DUE BY HIGH NOON**
19. December 4: American Foreign Policy Leadership In The Future
-Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, chap. 6.
-Fukuyama, *America At The Crossroads*, chap. 7.
20. December 6: Final Class Meeting
21. December 12: **FINAL ESSAY EXAMINATION (8 - 10 AM)**