GOVT 324
U.S. Foreign Policy

Sue Peterson
Office hours: Wed. 10:30-12
Thurs. 2:30-4

Morton 5E
221-3036

Course Description and Objectives

This course explores influences on U.S. foreign policy and the process by which U.S. foreign policy is made. The course has three main objectives.

1) **theoretical**: The principal goal of the course is to explain US foreign policy—that is, why and how foreign policy happens. We will explore various explanations of foreign policy events and trends as well as input into the foreign policy process, including:

   - **international influences**, including the security dilemma, balance of power, and international institutions;
   - **societal factors**, such as political culture, elites, partisanship, interest groups, public opinion, and media;
   - **institutional constraints**, like Congress, the presidency, and executive agencies; and
   - **decision-making factors**, such as bureaucratic politics, leadership, character, and beliefs.

2) **analytical**: Students are encouraged use their theoretical knowledge to critically evaluate—that is, to judge the quality of—both the substance and process of U.S. foreign policy. When the congressional and executive branches struggle excessively for control of foreign policy and/or when information is misinterpreted at the organizational or individual levels the quality and content of decision-making may suffer. This course encourages students to think about what U.S. foreign policy should be and what the best process is for producing sound policy.

3) **empirical**: This is not primarily a history course, but it seeks to acquaint students with important historical and contemporary foreign policy events, issues, and trends. That is, it seeks to improve students’ knowledge of the actions the United States has taken on the global stage.

Overall, the course seeks to combine theoretical knowledge with information about past historical cases to suggest ways of preventing misjudgment and miscalculation in U.S. foreign policy. It also asks how the foreign policy-making process can be structured to provide high quality information and analysis.
Course Requirements and Policies

Grades: Students are required to attend all classes, complete readings before the class for which they are assigned, participate in class discussions, and submit all assignments in a timely manner. All students should read a daily online or hard copy news source, such as the New York Times, Washington Post, or Foreign Policy on a daily basis. Monitoring the foreign policy media provides a common pool of knowledge for class discussion and test questions, as well as furnishing resources for the paper assignments.

Graded assignments include: three papers and a series of in-class quizzes. Detailed paper assignments will be posted on BlackBoard.

Paper #1: Response Paper: All students must write a 1-2 page response to one of the following readings: Rosato and Schuessler; Huntington; or Mearsheimer and Walt. The paper should very briefly summarize the author’s argument and, in more detail, outline an argument in response to it. The essay is due at the beginning of class on the day for which the chosen reading is assigned.

Paper #2: Policy Brief: The second paper assignment is a 2-3 page policy memo on a US foreign policy issue, outlining the issue and possible responses and advocating what you believe is the best response. The paper is due no later than the start of class on October 31.

Paper #3: Final: This paper, which examines a recent or contemporary U.S. foreign policy issue, event, or decision, should be no longer than 10 pages. It should use one of the major theoretical explanations examined in this course to explain U.S. behavior in the selected case, and it should explain why that explanation is superior to the next best explanation. The paper is due by 5 pm on Monday, December 9.

Quizzes: There will be an unspecified number of (usually) unannounced ("pop") quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will cover the assigned readings and may cover current events in world politics. Students who are absent on the day of the quiz without an excuse from the Health Center or Dean of Students Office, or who arrive late to class after the quizzes have been collected, cannot take the quiz.

All students must submit paper assignments in hard copy and are responsible for retaining a hard copy of their papers until they have received a grade from the instructor.
Course grades are based on four requirements:

- Participation: 10%
- Quizzes: 25%
- Paper #1: 10%
- Paper #2: 20%
- Final/paper #3: 35%

Numeric grades translate into letter grades in the following manner:

- 100-94: A
- 93-90: A-
- 89-87: B+
- 86-84: B
- 83-80: B-, etc.

Absences: If you will miss class or require an extension because of a religious holiday or school-sanctioned activity, you must notify me in writing during the first two weeks of classes. If you will miss multiple classes because of illness or other personal issues, please contact the Dean of Students Office.

Late Assignments: You are expected to take the quizzes and submit the papers at the times indicated. Failure to take a quiz at the scheduled time will result in a zero for that quiz. Rescheduling a quiz or receiving a paper extension because of an absence requires notice from the Health Center or the Dean of Students Office. No late papers will be accepted for paper #1, which must be submitted at the start of class on the day the reading is assigned. Papers 2 and 3 must be submitted in class on the day they are due, and late assignments for these papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e., from an A- to a B+) for each day or fraction of a day late. No student can pass this course without completing all assignments. All students are responsible for saving a copy of their papers.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code when completing all course assignments and in all aspects of their participation in this course. Violations of the Honor Code, and particularly plagiarism in any form, will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about how and when to cite material or what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. It is your responsibility to seek clarification of these issues before submitting any assignment.

Disability Services: Persons with documented disabilities requiring accommodations to meet the expectations of this course should contact the Dean of Students Office immediately. If you feel it is important for me to know that you have a diagnosed disability that will require accommodation, the Dean of Students Office must notify me in the first two weeks of classes or as soon as possible after
If your diagnosis or required accommodations change during the semester, it is your responsibility to notify me immediately.

**Required Texts:**

You may purchase the following books from the William and Mary bookstore or try to find less expensive or used copies on the internet.


**I. What is Foreign Policy and How Do We Study It? (September 3, 5)**


McCormick, DS, “Introduction”

McCormick, AFP, chap. 1


**SEPT. 6: LAST DAY TO ADD OR DROP A CLASS WITHOUT A “W”**

**II. International Influences on Foreign Policy (September 10, 12)**


II. Societal Influences on Foreign Policy

A. Political Culture, Elites, Partisanship, Interest Groups (September 17, 19, 24)

McCormick, AFP, chap. 11 (54 pp)


James M. McCormick, “Ethnic Interest Groups in American Foreign Policy” (DS 67-87)

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Israel Lobby” (DS 89-103)

B. Public Opinion, Media, and Elections (September 26, October 1, 3)

McCormick, AFP, chap. 12 (54 pp)

Adam J. Berinsky, “Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict” (DS 123-138)

Miroslav Nincic, “External Affairs and the Electoral Connection” (DS 139-155)


III. The Institutional Framework

A. Presidential Powers (October 8, 10)

McCormick, AFP, chap. 7 (47 pp)

Michael Nelson, “Person and Office: Presidents, the Presidency, and Foreign Policy” (DS 179-188)

Louis Fischer, “Presidents Who Initiate War” (DS 189-208)
OCT. 12-15: FALL BREAK

B. Congress (October 17, 22, 24)

McCormick, AFP, chap. 8 (44 pp)

James M. Lindsay, “The Shifting Pendulum of Power: Executive-Legislative Relations on American Foreign Policy” (DS 223-238)

OCT. 25: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH A “W”

OCT. 31: PAPER #2 DUE IN CLASS

C. Executive Agencies (October 29, 31, November 5)

McCormick, AFP, chaps. 9-10 (84 pp)

I.M. Destler, “How National Security Advisors See Their Role” (DS 209-222)

Robert Jervis, "Why Intelligence and Policymakers Clash” (DS 267-284)

IV. Decision-Making: Bureaucracies, Groups, and Individuals

A. Bureaucratic Politics and Civil-Military Relations (November 7, 12)


*Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” Foreign Policy (Summer 1972): 159-179.

Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, “American Veterans in Government and the Use of Force” (DS 105-122)

Steve Smith, "Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position: The Case of the American Hostage Rescue Mission" (DS 345-360)

Jon Western, “Sources of Humanitarian Intervention: Beliefs, Information, and Advocacy in U.S. Decisions on Somalia and Bosnia” (DS 399-416)
B. Individual Decision Making: Leadership Style, Character, and Beliefs (November 14, 19, 21)


McCormick, AFP, chap. 5, (pp.176-202 only), chap. 6 (36 pp)


*Thomas Wright, “Neocons vs Realists is so 2008,” *Foreign Policy*, (February 11, 2013) (2 pp)


*Dominic Tierney, “‘Pearl Harbor in Reverse’: Moral Analogies in the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* (summer 2007).

**NOV. 27 – DEC. 1: THANKSGIVING BREAK**

V. Catch-up, Wrap-up, Review (December 3, 5)

**DEC. 9: FINAL PAPER DUE**

**THIS SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.**