

300.746: US Foreign Policy
Winter Semester 2024
Thursday, 11:15-12:45, SE U10 (RU42UG1.U10)

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:00-12:00 (by appointment)

Office Location: Room 2036, Rudolfskai 42

Course Description

What factors explain US foreign policy, and how has it changed over the years? This seminar aims to provide participants with a comprehensive introduction to the actors, processes, and strategies that shape the United States' engagement with the world. In this seminar, we will start by discussing important actors in the policymaking process, scrutinizing the role of the president, Congress, interest groups, and the public in shaping foreign policy processes. We will study the process by which US foreign policy decisions are made and familiarize ourselves with theories and empirical evidence used to explain various foreign policy decisions. In doing so, we will delve into different foreign policymaking areas—such as diplomacy, foreign aid, sanctions, and defense. Using this foundation, we will then analyze select US policy decisions concerning prominent foreign countries, including Libya, China, and Russia.

Course Objective

By the end of this course students will:

- Gain an introduction to empirically and scientifically studying US foreign policy
- Examine processes, dynamics, and challenges associated with US foreign policy making
- Apply theoretical approaches to analyze (current) real-world events
- Learn to engage in group discussions, as well as provide and receive constructive criticism

Course Requirements

1. Attendance: You can miss 2 sessions without an excuse. If you miss 3 sessions unexcused, then you will have to submit a compensation “*Kompensationsleistung*” that will be determined by the lecturer. To be excused, students need to email the lecturer the reason(s) **before** the beginning of the respective class.
2. Participation (10% of the grade): You are expected to actively participate in class discussions. To be able to do so, you should read the required readings in advance of

each session. You are expected to be able to summarize the main points of each required reading in your own words and to argue for your own opinion. You are expected to bring a digital or paper copy of the required readings to class. You are strongly encouraged to offer suggestions and email material to me to circulate in class.

3. Group presentation (10% of the grade): In groups of two, you will present a journal article related to one of the formulated questions guiding a class session (suggestions can be found in the syllabus). The presentation should (1) cover the core arguments and empirical evidence presented in the paper, (2) establish connections to the required readings of the respective session, and (3) introduce two discussion questions that we will pick up afterwards. The presentation should be a **maximum of 12 minutes long**. I will cut you off after 12 minutes to have time for the Q&A and discussion round.
4. Essay I (35% of the grade): You will write essay (I) that consists of no more than 2000 words that answers a question that I will distribute to the class on 21 November. Your essay should engage, draw on, and cite assigned readings, as well as other course materials.

I will evaluate your essay by assessing your comprehension of the readings and course material, your ability to connect and integrate different readings, the structure and expression of your argument, and the empirical evidence you use to support your points. The deadline for the essay is **5 December at 23:59 pm**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard. You need to submit Essay I to pass this course.

5. Simulation (10%): This session will involve a brief simulation of the process behind the implementation of a US policy proposal or a UNSC session, set by the course instructor. Your task is to prepare a memo that is no longer than two pages that outlines (1) the pros and cons of this policy proposal from the perspective of your role, (2) states your position and (3) strategy for this policy process. The deadline for the memo is **30 January at 10:00 am**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard.
6. Essay II (35%): You will write essay (II) that consists of no more than 2000 words that answers a question that I will distribute to the class on 30 January. Your essay should engage, draw on, and cite assigned readings, as well as other course materials.

I will evaluate your essay by assessing your comprehension of the readings and course material, your ability to connect and integrate different readings, the structure and expression of your argument, and the empirical evidence you use to support your points. The deadline for the essay is **15 February at 23:59 pm**, and it should be uploaded to Blackboard. You need to submit Essay II to pass this course.

Important Dates

5 December 2024	Essay I
30 January 2025	Simulation
15 February 2025	Essay II
[Insert date]	Group presentation

Other Information

- Expectations: Handle all your coursework diligently. Invest time to read all required literature, actively participate in class, pay attention to the written assignments, and group presentations. Ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. Please be respectful to each other. Any disrespectful, disruptive or hateful comments may result in an academic penalty. All cell phones are to be turned off or silenced during class.
- Accommodation: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please let me know if you have a documented disability, so I can provide the accommodations you may need.
- Late submissions: Please note that late submissions will be penalized by subtracting 10% of the grade for each day of delay. This includes weekends and holidays. I only make an exception to this if you have a medical certificate.
- Plagiarism: Please note that all work you submit to the university for assessment must be your own work. Plagiarism will result in a “nicht genügend” on your course work and possibly in formal disciplinary procedures.
- Use of AI: According to the university's legal department, the usage of generative AI to write papers is illegal and will result in a “nicht genügend”. You can use AI to improve writing, but not to generate substantive parts of the work.
- Course schedule: The schedule and readings are subject to change. All changes will be announced by email and updated on Blackboard in advance. It is your responsibility to keep up with the current changes. Reading assignments are given by date and should be completed prior to the respective class.

Course Plan

Section I: Introduction

Session 1 (3 October 2024): Course structure and requirements

Session 2 (10 October 2024): IR theories and US foreign policy

What is foreign policy? How do different theories explain US foreign policy decisions? To what extent is US foreign policy characterized by either isolationism or internationalism? Are exceptionalism and imperialism two sides of the same coin?

Required readings

- Deudney, D. & Meiser, J. (2008). American exceptionalism. In M. Cox & D. Stokes (Eds.), *US Foreign Policy* (pp. 21-37). Oxford University Press. (Chapter 2).
- Snyder, J. (2004). One world, rival theories. *Foreign Policy*, (145), 52-62.

Further readings

- Hudson, V. M., & Day, B. S. (2019). *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H. W., Sapin, B., Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H. W., & Sapin, B. (2002). *Decision-making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (pp. 21-152). Palgrave Macmillan US.

Section II: Foreign policy actors & processes

Session 3 (17 October 2024): President and the executive branch

How does the constitution divide responsibility for foreign affairs between the president and Congress? Are there “two presidencies”? What is the president’s advantage in foreign policymaking?

Required readings

- Brettschneider, C., & Calvelli, A. G. (2024). The US Presidency: Power and Constraint. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 27.
- Meese, M. J., Nielsen, S. C., & Sondheimer, R. M. (2018). *American national security*. JHU Press. (Chapter 4: Presidential Leadership and Executive Branch).

Presentation

- Drezner, D. W. (2020). Immature leadership: Donald Trump and the American presidency. *International Affairs*, 96(2), 383-400.
- Skidmore, D. (2012). The Obama Presidency and US Foreign Policy: Where's the Multilateralism? *International Studies Perspectives*, 13(1), 43-64.

Further readings

- Brzezinski, Z. (2010). From hope to audacity: Appraising Obama's foreign policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 16-30.
- Liu, S. (2023). Personalization of Trump and Xi in the US–China trade conflict news: Comparison between the US and China. *International Communication Gazette, Online First*, 383-400.
- Margon, S. (2018). Giving up the high ground: America's retreat on human rights. *Foreign Affairs*, 97, 39–45.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2015). *Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy* (pp. 33-76). Princeton University Press. (Chapter 2: A Theory of Presidential Power and US Foreign Policy).

Session 4 (24 October 2024): Congress

How does Congress work? What role does Congress play in foreign policy? How is party polarization affecting the role of Congress in foreign policy?

Required readings

- Bryan, J. D., & Tama, J. (2022). The prevalence of bipartisanship in US foreign policy: An analysis of important congressional votes. *International Politics*, 59(5), 874-897.
- Meese, M. J., Nielsen, S. C., & Sondheimer, R. M. (2018). *American national security*. JHU Press. (Chapter 5: Congress).

Presentation

- Carter, R. G., & Scott, J. M. (2004). Taking the lead: Congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs in US foreign policy. *Politics & Policy*, 32(1), 34-70.
- Tama, J. (2019). Anti-presidential bipartisanship in US foreign policy under Trump: The case of the International Affairs Budget. *Available at SSRN 3393170*.

Further readings

- Davidson, R. H., Oleszek, W. J., Lee, F. E., & Schickler, E. (2019). *Congress and its members*. CQ Press.
- Fowler, L. L. (2015). *Watchdogs on the hill: The decline of congressional oversight of US foreign relations*. Princeton University Press.
- Howell, W. G., & Pevehouse, J. C. (2007). *While dangers gather: Congressional checks on presidential war powers*. Princeton University Press.
- Schultz, K. A. (2017). Perils of polarization for US foreign policy. *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(4), 7-28.
- Scott, J. M., & Carter, R. G. (2002). Acting on the hill: Congressional assertiveness in US foreign policy. *Congress & the Presidency*, 29(2), 151-169.

Session 5 (7 November 2024): Interest groups

What are interest groups and what do they do? How do interest groups influence foreign policy? Are some interest groups more effective than others?

- Kim, I. S. and Milner, H. V. (2019). Multinational corporations and their influence through lobbying on foreign policy. *Working paper*.
- Newhouse, J. (2009). Diplomacy, Inc.: The influence of lobbies on US foreign policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 73-92.

Presentation

- Snyder, S. B. (2018). *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed US Foreign Policy* (pp. 116–147). Columbia University Press. (Chapter 5: Translating Human Rights into the Language of Washington: American Activism in the Wake of the Coup in Chile).

Further readings

- Fordham, B. O. (1998). Economic interests, party, and ideology in early Cold War era US foreign policy. *International Organization*, 52(2), 359-396.
- Haney, P. J., & Vanderbush, W. (1999). The role of ethnic interest groups in US foreign policy: the case of the Cuban American National Foundation. *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(2), 341-361.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2015). *Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy* (pp. 77–120). Princeton University Press. (Chapter 3: Follow the sand dollars: Interest groups and American Foreign Policy Instruments).
- Prasad, S. K., & Savatic, F. (2023). Diasporic foreign policy interest groups in the United States: democracy, conflict, and political entrepreneurship. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(3), 831-848.

Session 6 (14 November 2024): Public opinion

Does public opinion matter? Can public opinion influence leaders' foreign policy decisions? Which domestic actor would you say influences US foreign policy the most?

Required readings

- Jacobs, L. R., & Page, B. I. (2005). Who influences US foreign policy? *American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 107-123.
- Peez, A., & Bethke, F. S. (2023). Does Public Opinion on Foreign Policy Affect Elite Preferences? Evidence from the 2022 US Sanctions against Russia. *SocArXiv*. November, 25.

Presentation

- LeoGrande, W. M. (1998). From Havana to Miami: US Cuba policy as a two-level game. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 40(1), 67-86.

Further readings

- Canes-Wrone, B. (2010). *Who leads whom? Presidents, policy, and the public*. University of Chicago Press.
- Goldsmith, B. E., & Horiuchi, Y. (2012). In search of soft power: Does foreign public opinion matter for US foreign policy? *World Politics*, 64(3), 555-585.
- Kertzer, J. D., & Zeitzoff, T. (2017). A bottom-up theory of public opinion about foreign policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(3), 543-558.
- Knecht, T., & Weatherford, M. S. (2006). Public opinion and foreign policy: The stages of presidential decision making. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(3), 705-727.
- Saunders, E. N. (2015). War and the inner circle: Democratic elites and the politics of using force. *Security Studies*, 24(3), 466-501.

21 November 2024: No class

Section III: Foreign policy tools

Session 7 (28 November 2024): Foreign aid

What factors shape preferences for foreign aid by US policy makers? Why does the US provide aid to authoritarian governments? Is US foreign aid an effective tool for achieving foreign policy goals?

Required readings

- Afoaku, O. G. (2000). US foreign policy and authoritarian regimes: Change and continuity in international clientelism. *Journal of Third World Studies*, 17(2), 13-40.
- Blair, R. A., Marty, R., & Roessler, P. (2022). Foreign aid and soft power: Great power competition in Africa in the early twenty-first century. *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 1355-1376.

Presentation

- Tokdemir, E. (2017). Winning hearts & minds (!): The dilemma of foreign aid in anti-Americanism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 54(6):819–832.

Further readings.

- Essex, J. (2013). *Development, security, and aid: geopolitics and geoeconomics at the US Agency for International Development* (Vol. 16). University of Georgia Press.
- Hurst, R., Tidwell, T., and Hawkins, D. (2017). Down the rathole? Public support for US foreign aid. *International Studies Quarterly*, 61(2), 442–454.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2013). The choice for multilateralism: Foreign aid and American foreign policy. *The Review of International Organizations*, 8, 313-341.
- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. H. (2010). The political economy of US foreign aid: American legislators and the domestic politics of aid. *Economics & Politics*, 22(2), 200-232.

Session 8 (05 December 2024): Economic sanctions

What are economic sanctions? When and why does the US impose sanctions? What are the dangers of an overreliance on economic statecraft?

Required readings

- Attia, H., & Grauvogel, J. (2023). Monitoring the monitor? Selective responses to human rights transgressions. *International Studies Quarterly*, 67(2), sqad014.
- Tama, J. (2020). Forcing the president's hand: How the US Congress shapes foreign policy through sanctions legislation. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(3), 397-416.

Presentation

- Peksen, D., Peterson, T. M., & Drury, A. C. (2014). Media-driven humanitarianism? News media coverage of human rights abuses and the use of economic sanctions. *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(4), 855-866.

Further readings

- Attia, H. (2024). Divert when it does not hurt: The initiation of economic sanctions by US presidents from 1989 to 2015. *Review of International Economics*, 32(1), 109-131.
- Blackwill, R. D., & Harris, J. M. (2016). The lost art of economic statecraft: Restoring an American tradition. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 99.
- Early, B. R., & Preble, K. A. (2020). Going fishing versus hunting whales: Explaining changes in how the US enforces economic sanctions. *Security Studies*, 29(2), 231-267.
- Von Soest, C., & Wahman, M. (2015). Not all dictators are equal: Coups, fraudulent elections, and the selective targeting of democratic sanctions. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(1), 17-31.

Session 9 (12 December 2024): Military intervention

When and why does the US intervene militarily? What factors led to a comparatively limited use of force as a policy option in the recent decade?

Required readings

- Mayer, M. (2019). Trigger happy: The foundations of US military interventions. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42(2):259–281.
- Yoon, M. Y. (1997). Explaining US intervention in third world internal wars, 1945-1989. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41(4), 580-602.

Presentation

- Herring, G. C., & Immerman, R. H. (1984). Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: “The Day We Didn't Go to War” Revisited. *The Journal of American History*, 71(2), 343-363.
- May, E. R. (2002). 1947-48: When Marshall Kept the US Out of War in China. *Journal of Military History*, 66(4).

Further readings

- Dobbins, J., Reveron, D. S., Cushman, C., Anderson, G. W., Veillette, C., Serafino, N., ... & Marks, E. (2014). *Mission creep: the militarization of US foreign policy?* Georgetown University Press.
- Ellis, R. E. (2019). The U.S. military in support of strategic objectives in Latin America and the Caribbean. *PRISM*, 8(1):26–39.
- Howell, W. G., & Pevehouse, J. C. (2005). Presidents, Congress, and the use of force. *International Organization*, 59(1), 209-232.
- Krebs, R. R. and Spindel, J. (2018). Divided priorities: Why and when allies differ over military intervention. *Security Studies*, 27(4), 575–606.
- O'Hanlon, M. E. (2021). *Defense 101: Understanding the Military of Today and Tomorrow*. Cornell University Press.

19 December 2024: No class!

Winter break — No Class!

Section IV: Case studies

Session 10 (9 January 2025): Russia

How has the US policy towards Russia developed since the collapse of the Soviet Union? Has the US incited Russia's interventions in Ukraine or are Moscow's actions unprovoked aggressions?

Required readings

- Kagan, R. (2022). The price of hegemony: Can America learn to use its power? *Foreign Affairs*, 101, 10–19.
- Meese, M. J., Nielsen, S. C., & Sondheimer, R. M. (2018). *American national security*. JHU Press. (Chapter 22: Russia).

Presentation

- Frye, T. (2019). Economic sanctions and public opinion: Survey experiments from Russia. *Comparative political studies*, 52(7), 967-994.
- Rasmussen, A. F., Stent, A., Walt, S. M., Mohan, C. R., Niblett, R., Fox, L., Allen, E., and Theil, S. (2022). Revisiting U.S. Grand Strategy After Ukraine. *Foreign Policy*.

Further readings

- Frye, T. (2019). Economic sanctions and public opinion: Survey experiments from Russia. *Comparative political studies*, 52(7), 967-994.
- Kofman, M., & Kendall-Taylor, A. (2021). The myth of Russian decline: Why Moscow will be a persistent power. *Foreign Affairs*, 100, 142-153.
- Kotkin, S. (2024). The Five Futures of Russia: And How America Can Prepare for Whatever Comes Next. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(3), 64–83.

- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy. *International security*, 34(4), 63-95.
- Renz, B. (2019). Russian responses to the changing character of war. *International Affairs*, 95(4): 817–834.

Session 11 (16 January 2025): China

How has a rising China influenced US foreign policy? How should the US strategy towards China look like? Should the US pursue a strategy of limited geopolitical accommodation to avoid conflict?

Required readings

- Harrell, P. E. (2024). How to China-Proof the Global Economy: America Needs a More Targeted Strategy. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(1), 135–149.
- Pottinger, M., & Gallagher, M. (2024). No Substitute for Victory: America's Competition With China Must Be Won, Not Managed. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(3), 25–39.
- Robbins, M., Jamal, A. A., & Tessler, M. (2024). America Is Losing the Arab World: And China Is Reaping the Benefits. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(4), 39–49.

Presentation

- Arnold, A. (2023). Curbing China's Resilience to US Coercive Economic Statecraft. *The Washington Quarterly*, 46(1), 153-167.
- Fang, S., Li, X., & Liu, A. Y. (2022). Chinese public opinion about US–China relations from Trump to Biden. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 15(1), 27-46.

Further readings

- Cunningham, F. S. and Fravel, M. T. (2015). Assuring assured retaliation: China's nuclear posture and US-China strategic stability. *International Security*, 40(2):7–50.
- De Graaff, N. and Van Apeldoorn, B. (2018). US-China relations and the liberal world order: Contending elites, colliding visions? *International Affairs*, 94(1):113–131.
- Economy, E. (2024). China's Alternative Order: And What America Should Learn From It. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(3), 8–24.
- Glaser, C. L. (2015). A US-China grand bargain? The hard choice between military competition and accommodation. *International Security*, 39(4):49–90.
- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy. *International Security*, 34(4), 63-95.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2021). The inevitable rivalry: America, China, and the tragedy of great-power politics. *Foreign Affairs*, 100, 48-60.

Session 12 (23 January 2025): Libya and Iran

Why did the US intervention in Libya end in failure? What was Obama's role in its failure?

Required readings

- Kuperman, Alan J. (2015). "Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure." *Foreign Affairs*, 94(2): 66-77. www.jstor.org/stable/24483483.

- Weissman, S. R. (2016). Presidential deception in foreign policy making: Military intervention in Libya 2011. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 46(3):669–690.

Presentation

- Van de Graaf, T. (2013). The “oil weapon” reversed? Sanctions against Iran and US-EU structural power. *Middle East Policy*, 20(3), 145-163.
- Wolf, A. B. (2018). After JCPOA: American grand strategy toward Iran. *Comparative Strategy*, 37(1), 22-34.

Further readings

- Baumgartner, J. C., Francia, P. L., and Morris, J. S. (2008). A clash of civilizations? The influence of religion on public opinion of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2):171–179.
- Edelman, E., and Takeyh, R. (2020). The Next Iranian Revolution: Why Washington Should Seek Regime Change in Tehran. *Foreign Affairs*, 99(3), 131-145.
- Goldenberg, I., Ewers, E. C., & Thomas, K. (2020). *Reengaging Iran*. Center for New American Media.
- Mousavian, S. H. (2018). The Strategic Disaster of Leaving the Iran Deal. *Foreign Affairs*.

Session 13 (30 January 2025): Simulation