Week 1: Introduction: Making US Foreign Policy

This week, I will outline the module content and the assessment, as well as beginning with some preliminary information on the making of US foreign policy. The class will get to know each other and be split into three groups (for the semester).

Seminar topics:

- How effective is the ‘separation of powers’ doctrine, and what benefits or pitfalls does it entail?
- Who or what directs foreign policy or defines the ‘national interest’?
- How important for foreign policy are domestic contexts?
- What do current events in US domestic politics show about the relationship between domestic and foreign policy?
- What ‘is’ US foreign policy? What should be included or excluded from the study of it? War, diplomacy, treaties, humanitarian intervention, states, communities, culture, individuals? – What are the political implications of deciding what does and what does not count?

Plus outline of module and introduction of essay topics

Required Reading:


Additional reading:

- Here is a short piece about declaring war and how force has been authorised since WWII: [http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/all-the-previous-declarations-of-war/279246/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/all-the-previous-declarations-of-war/279246/)

US Institutions


US Congress

- David Gray Adler (Editor), Larry N. George (Editor), Arthur Meier, Jr. Schlesinger, *The constitution and the conduct of American foreign policy*(University Press of Kansas, 1996)


Richard F. Grimmett, *Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress*, CRS Report June 1, 1999 Available online


Randall Ripley and James L. Lindsay (eds.) *Congress resurgent: foreign and defense policy on Capitol Hill*(Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, c1993)


Robert B. Zoellick 'Congress and the Making of US Foreign Policy', *Survival* Volume 41 • No. 4 • Winter 1999–2000

Lobby Groups

http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/IsraelLobby.pdf


'The War over Israel's Influence', *Foreign policy*.July/August 2006.

You can also watch a talk by Walt and Mearsheimer at the Cambridge Forum at:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzXS3tmZrcU


The Constitution after 9/11


**Week 2: The idea of America: American exceptionalism and American power**

**Group 1:** What is American exceptionalism? Is America exceptional? Where did the term come from and what does it ‘do’ to American foreign policy?

McCrisken, T. (2004) *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam*, London: Palgrave. This book has a really excellent chapter on American exceptionalism, which is very accessibly written. (See this first and foremost for an introduction to American exceptionalism.)


**Group 2:** Is there a growing gap between the ‘thank God for America’ public and the ‘deal souls’ of American elites?


**Group 3:** What is the nature of American power? Is it (primarily) hard, soft, or both? How has it changed, is it declining, and will America remain the world’s only superpower?


**Seminar discussion topics:**

- What ‘is’ America? A state, a territory, a political imaginary, an idea, an identity, a dream?
How has American exceptionalism influenced USFP?
How can or should the role of the US in contemporary world politics be understood? A benevolent leader, the global police force, an 'exceptional' state, a self-interested hegemon, a declining superpower?

**General Reading:**


Short introductory video: ‘How America became a Superpower’
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BShvYeyMm_Y&feature=player_embedded

**Further Reading:**

*History of US Foreign Policy*


W.A. McDougall (1997) *Promised land, crusader state: the American encounter with the world since 1776*, Mariner Books;

*American Identity and Exceptionalism*


Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw No. 35 ‘Race to the Bottom’ - How the post-racial revolution became a whitewash
https://thebaffler.com/salvos/race-to-bottom-crenshaw (the idea of post-racialism and the election of Trump)


**Week 3: American foreign policy traditions**

**Group 1:** What does Walter Russell Mead mean by the Jeffersonian tradition?


**Group 2:** Compare and contrast the Wilsonian and Jeffersonian traditions.

Further reading on Jefferson, the Republicans and early US foreign policy


David Armstrong, Revolution and World Order, available electronically, ch.2.


Further Reading on Isolationism and Isolationists

Stephen Ambrose, Rise to Globalism ch.1.


Further reading on Wilson and Wilsonianism


Week 4: Theories of American foreign policy

Group 1: What does Walter Russell Mead mean by ‘continental’ Realism? How does it differ from what he calls ‘Hamiltonian’ or ‘American’ Realism?

**Group 2: What is liberal internationalism? When has it featured in US foreign policy? And Why?**


**Group 3:**

1. Who are the neoconservatives and what do they stand for?


What role did the neo-cons have in the Reagan administration?


**Further Reading on Hamilton**


**Further reading on and by Kissinger**


**Further reading on and by Kennan**


**Further reading on or by Morgenthau**


Further Reading on 21st Century Realism

Jeffrey Goldberg, ‘Breaking Ranks. What turned Brent Scowcroft against the Bush Administration?’ The New Yorker Online, Available online


Further Reading on the Neo-Cons


Anne Norton, Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire Yale University Press, 2004


…on the future of neo-conservatism


Week 5: From Cold War to New World Order
Group 1: What was the Reagan Doctrine?


1. How have neo-cons made use of Reagan’s legacy?


Group 2: How did the US handle German reunification and what did it tell us about the future of American foreign policy?


Group 3: How did the US handle the diplomatic situation before, during and after the Gulf War and what did it tell you about the future of American foreign policy?


1. What did Bush mean by the phrase ‘New World Order’ and how did America’s approach to the crises in Somalia relate to it?


Further Reading


Further Reading on the Neo-Cons and Reagan


Fred Halliday, *The making of the second cold war*Vintage, pp.105-133.


Week 6: READING WEEK - no lecture. Seminars are assessment focused. Please come prepare with arguments, structures, reading ideas etc.

Week 7: Clinton

Group 1:Who was Ross Perot and how did he help Clinton win the election? What did that tell you about the future of American foreign policy?

Mick Cox, *US Foreign Policy after the Cold War. Superpower without a Mission* pp.8-37. And please do your own research on this topic online.

Group 2:What does Michael Cox mean when he calls Clinton ‘the pragmatic crusader’?


Group 3:Case study: Clinton and US policy to China post-Tiananman. Explain the shift in Clinton’s policy.


Further Reading:


Clinton's Foreign Policy' Foreign policy. No.121, 2000, pp.18-29.


Week 8: Bush

Group 1: 1. What characterised the Bush administration’s foreign policy prior to 9-11?


2. Which of Mead’s foreign policy traditions best characterised the Bush presidency?

Two interviews with Walter Russell Mead available online at: http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/mead/qna.htmlland

http://www.cfr.org/publication/6626/mead.html

Group 2: 1. Why was 9-11 so shocking for America(ns), why did nobody see it coming?


2. How did the US invade Afghanistan? Has Operation ‘Enduring Freedom’ been a success?


Group 3:How was the War in Iraq sold to the American public?

Holland, J. Selling the War on Terror, Routledge 2013 (only the relevant bits!)

Further Reading on Bush prior to 9-11

Rice, Condoleezza ‘Promoting the National Interest,’ Foreign affairs. January/February 2000

Zoellick, Robert B. ‘A Republican Foreign Policy,’ Foreign affairs. January/February 2000


Further (Critical) Reading on 9-11


James P. Rubin ‘Stumbling Into War’ Foreign affairs., September/October 2003


Further Reading on Iraq and the 2004 Election


Further Reading on Iraq and US – European relations


Peter Merkl, The Rift Between America and Old Europe.The Distracted EagleRoutldege 2005.

Comparisons to the Vietnam War


Impact of the Iraq War on other issues


Further (critical) Reading on Iraq


Flibbert, A. ‘The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Iraq War ’, Security Studies, 15:2,


Week 9: Obama

Group 1: Did supporters hear more change than Obama promised?


Group 2: Was Obama a Jeffersonian?

Holland, J. ‘Obama as modern Jeffersonian’. In Bentley and Holland eds, Obama’s Foreign Policy, Routledge.

Group 3: What was the Obama Doctrine? And what will be Obama’s foreign policy legacy?

Bentley and Holland, eds, The Obama Doctrine, Routledge 2016 (introduction and conclusion, plus chapters of your choosing)

...Further Reading on Obama

I strongly encourage you to search for literature (use Google Scholar, Web of Science etc). Both Obama’s books – Audacity of Hope and Dreams from my Father – are worth reading. Journal articles have a shorter publication time than books, so it is worth searching major foreign policy journals (Foreign affairs, Foreign policy, etc). Likewise, newspapers can produce material rapidly – you should read the New York Times and Washington post to keep up to date. Both of these will email you for free if you sign up (likewise BBC).

A particularly insightful article in the NYT by Peter Baker available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/world/asia/06reconstruct.html

Gene Healy on Afghanistan as Obama’s Vietnam – available online at: http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10497


Barack Obama Renewing American Leadership’ Foreign affairs., July/August 2007.


Special edition of Survival The Bush Years and Beyond, February-March 2008.


Mitt Romney ‘Rising to a New Generation of Global Challenges’ Foreign affairs, July/August 2007


See also:
Milton Bearden on the redefinition of the ‘AfPak’ region at:
http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64925/milton-bearden/obamas-war

Ken Roth on the issue of closing Guantanamo at:

A speech on foreign policy from Obama in 2007 at:

And to bring the empirical half of the course full-circle, and temper your Obama enthusiasm, see George Friedman on (unfavourable) comparisons of Obama to Reagan at:
http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/12/15/obamas_foreign_policy_after_year_one.html

Barack Obama ‘Renewing American Leadership’ Foreign affairs, July/August 2007. His pre-election statement on FP

Barack Obama 2009, ’The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan’ December 1, Address to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York Available online


Jonathan Chait (2016) Five Days That Shaped a Presidency, NY Magazine. available:
http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/10/barack-obama-on-5-days-that-shaped-his-presidency.html


Zbigniew Brzezinski, From Hope to AudacityAppraising Obama’s Foreign Policy, Foreign affairs. 2009.


Jason Ralph, Law, War and the State of the American Exception available on VLE.


Richard Lappin ‘Obama and Democracy Assistance: Challenges and Responses’ Available online
Michael Desch, ‘The more things change the more they stay the same. The Liberal Tradition of Obama’s Counterterrorism policy’, *PS : political science and politics*. 2010


The situation in 2008


Mitt Romney/Rising to a New Generation of Global Challenges’ *Foreign affairs*., July/August 2007


Toby Dodge'Iraq and the Next American President' *Survival* Vol.50, No.5 2008.


Cold War 2.0: how Russia and the west reheated a historic struggle


Syria


Robert E. Hunter'A New American Middle East Strategy?' *Survival* Vol.50 No.6 2008


Group 1: How did Trump win the 2016 US election? And why were the pundits so wrong?

Holland, Jack, and Ben Fermor. "Trump's rhetoric at 100 days: contradictions within effective emotional narratives." *Critical Studies on Security* 5.2 (2017): 182-186. You may also like the other contributions to this section.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37918303
http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/election-update-yes-donald-trump-has-a-path-to-victory/
http://michaelmoore.com/trumpwillwin/

Group 2: What is the relationship between Trump’s foreign and domestic policies?


Group 3: Is Donald Trump a Jacksonian?


http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-foreign-policy-213546
http://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trumps-jacksonian-revolt-1478886196
http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/the-jacksonian-candidate/483563/
http://www.niskanencenter.org/blog/obama-trump-jacksonian-foreign-policy/

Good Reading:

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, 'The First White President', *The Atlantic* October 2017
- Thomas Wright, 'Trump's 19th Century Foreign Policy,' Politico, January 20, 2016
  http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-foreign-policy-213546

Reading list:


http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-foreign-policy-213546

‘How Trump Won and Why Clinton Lost the Election – 13 Theories’ (2016) Vox.com

LSE US Centre, The Ballpark podcast Episode 2.3: Trumpian Foreign Policy
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/06/03/the-ballpark-podcast-episode-2-3-trumpian-foreign-policy/

Rebecca Friedman, War on The Rocks, The Risk of Nuclear Catastrophe under Trump
23 May, 2017
https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/the-risk-of-nuclear-catastrophe-under-trump/


Angelo M. Codevilla (October 2016) Make America Victorious Again. From The Claremont Institute. Available:
http://www.claremont.org/crb/basicpage/make-america-victorious-again/(this was on influence on the Trump FP campaign message)

Matt Taibbi ‘How America Made Donald Trump Unstoppable’ Rolling Stone
February 24, 2016 Available online


‘How Trump Won and Why Clinton Lost the Election – 13 Theories’ (2016) Vox.com

LSE US Centre, The Ballpark podcast Episode 2.3: Trumpian Foreign Policy
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/06/03/the-ballpark-podcast-episode-2-3-trumpian-foreign-policy/

Rebecca Friedman, War on The Rocks, The Risk of Nuclear Catastrophe under Trump
23 May, 2017
https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/the-risk-of-nuclear-catastrophe-under-trump/


Angelo M. Codevilla (October 2016) Make America Victorious Again. From The Claremont Institute. Available:
http://www.claremont.org/crb/basicpage/make-america-victorious-again/(this was on influence on the Trump FP campaign message)

Matt Taibbi ‘How America Made Donald Trump Unstoppable’ Rolling Stone
February 24, 2016 Available online


Available:

Zack Beauchamp, Vox, ‘Steve Bannon tried to destroy “globalism.” It destroyed him instead.

Week 11: Biden??
We will respond to events this week!
This list was last updated on 20/08/2020

Reading lists home
Foreign Policy), in over 20 foreign countries (including the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany), and has been translated in Mandarin Chinese.

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