

Political Science 245

The United States in World Politics

Spring 2011
Tuesday/Thursday 1:30 pm – 3:18 pm
Caldwell Lab 0220

Austin Carson
Ph.D. Candidate, Ohio State University, Department of Political Science
Email: carson.153@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 9 am – 12 pm, or by appointment
Office location: 2081 Derby Hall

Course description

This course surveys American foreign policy from World War II to the present, reviewing both historical and contemporary challenges that have confronted decision-makers. The course focuses on the plural sources of influence in the creation and implementation of policy. The course is structured around the identification and development of *seven different centers of power* in American foreign policy. These centers of power include everything from the quotidian of popular culture to the gravity of presidential addresses. The course strikes a balance between an understanding of the historical context of US foreign affairs and the here-and-now challenges which drive today's and tomorrow's newspaper headlines. Substantive topics will include Cold War strategic doctrine, unmanned drone missile strikes in Pakistan, American covert foreign aid for civil war combatants, American sanctions policy regarding Cuba, US torture policy, and US nuclear weapons policy. Each week will feature one "center of power," a historical case study, and a pair of student presentations on a contemporary foreign policy issue of controversy.

Goals

The overall goal of the course is to equip students with *knowledge* and *analytical techniques* that will help you to be an active and informed citizen regarding American foreign policy. The knowledge half includes both historical knowledge and contemporary knowledge. We cannot wisely go where we want unless we know where we've been and how we got here. History matters and while sometimes tedious, it holds lessons for the present and future of American foreign policy. At the same time, geopolitics and technology change over time meaning that knowledge of the past is insufficient. We therefore cover several of today's most challenging foreign policy issues. Still, information only gets us so far; equally important is learning how to use knowledge wisely. We will also work on developing how to think in an analytically sophisticated way about US foreign policy issues. The course includes exercises which will help develop ways for students to thoughtfully assess the practical, strategic, and normative dimensions of tough foreign policy challenges.

This course also meets several General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirements in the categories of breadth / social science and international issues / non-Western. The learning goals associated with these are:

- Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they are applied to the study of organizations and polities.
- Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
- Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and polities and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.
- Students exhibit an understanding of some combination of political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical differences in or among the world's nations, peoples, and cultures outside the U.S.

Readings

Students should purchase the following text:

Keylor, William R. *A World of Nations: The International Order Since 1945*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Cost is around \$30-40 new or used. The book is available at the OSU Student Book Exchange (SBX) on 1806 North High St. *Be sure to get the 2009 *second* edition* (blue-green not yellow-red cover) if you are trying to get the book from other vendors either online or in person. All other readings will be on [Carmen](#).

Requirements

Students' grades will be based on four components.

Weekly reading quizzes (20%)

We will have weekly quizzes that contain true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions about the readings for that week. These quizzes will be administered online via [Carmen](#) (click "Quizzes" tab once in Carmen). **I will post the quiz 24 hours prior to the second class period of each themed week;** you must take it during this 24 hour window. For example, the first quiz can be taken between 1:30 pm on Wednesday, March 30th and 1:30 pm on Thursday, March 31st. Take the exam during this window; if you wait and are too late, you miss the quiz and get zero points. Quizzes are to be taken on your own; any evidence that students have collaborated will result in zero credit. Quizzes are open note, open book. Flexibility in taking the quiz (quizzes can be taken anywhere and anytime during the quiz window) means I will rarely excuse students from taking them. No quizzes will be dropped.

Policy debates (20%)

We will explore eight contemporary foreign policy issues via student policy debates. These debates will be conducted in small groups. Each student will be assigned to one group of 2-3 students; each group will give one class presentation. The topics of debate are listed in each themed week below as "Contemporary case." Two groups will present offering opposing views on a given topic (i.e. "for" and "against" Predator drone missile strikes in Pakistan). These presentations will then be graded. The grade will be based on two inputs: 1) *my* assessment of the *group's* fulfillment of presentation tasks (described in a separate handout to be distributed later) and; 2) a confidential assessment by each *group member* of their *fellow group members'* performance (to be submitted the afternoon after your group's debate via Carmen "Dropbox"). I will combine these to give a final individual grade which reflects both the group's performance and a reward/penalty for individual effort.

Attendance (10%)

I will take roll each class. I grade this category pass/fail. Every student has up to two unexcused absences during the quarter without penalty (excused absences for university functions, sickness, or death in the family are a separate category and there is no limit so long as I am warned ahead of time and approve). Any unexcused absence beyond two results in a zero for attendance. In addition, the first

session after the midterm will feature a movie, *The Hurt Locker*, for which attendance is required. Failure to attend without prior excused permission from me results in a zero for attendance. If you have fewer than two unexcused absences and attend the movie, you get full credit in attendance.

Midterm exam (20%)

A midterm exam with a mix of multiple choice / short answer and essay questions will be administered in class on Tuesday, May 3.

Final exam (30%)

A final exam with a mix of multiple choice / short answer and essay questions will be administered in class on Thursday, June 9, 2011, 1:30 – 3:18pm, Caldwell Lab 0220.

Extra credit (+1%)

You will have the opportunity to participate in Political Science experiments towards the end of the quarter. I will add one extra percentage point to your final grade for participating in an experiment. I will describe the procedure in more detail later in the quarter. There will be up to two opportunities for a maximum of two extra credit points.

Grading

To summarize, final grades will consist of

20%	Weekly quizzes
20%	Policy debates
10%	Attendance
20%	Midterm exam
+ 30%	Final exam
<hr/>	
100%	Final grade

Letter grades will be assigned on the default OSU scale.

A	93% or higher	A-	90% - 92%		
B+	87 % - 89%	B	83% - 86%	B-	80 % - 82%
C+	77% - 79%	C	73% - 76%	C-	70 % - 72%
D+	67% - 69%	D	60% - 66%		
E	59% or lower				

A curve may be applied to individual components or the final grades if circumstances warrant. Bear in mind that this is unlikely.

Computer policy

No use of laptop computers will be permitted during class.

Academic Honesty

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). Plagiarism of any assignments – defined as the intentional or unintentional use of someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation – will not be tolerated. If you are unsure whether your work meets standards of academic honesty, please feel free to

discuss your questions or concerns with me. I take this issue very seriously and will not accept explanations or excuses for violations except under the most unusual circumstances.

Sexual harassment

Harassment of the instructor or other students based on gender or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. Please report any possible cases of harassment by other students to me. Students are also encouraged to speak with me if any instructor comments are perceived to violate University policy or if a student believes the classroom environment is not being adequately safeguarded by the instructor. For clarification of what constitutes sexual harassment, please see the Ohio State University policy at hr.osu.edu/policy/policy115.Pdf.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Resources

The OSU Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing's *Student Writing Center* consultants are an excellent resource for writers at any level or at any stage in the writing process. Take advantage of the free individual tutoring that you will receive there. <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter/default.cfm>. A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing any such problems are strongly encouraged to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Services for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. Younkin Success Center, www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Tuesday, March 29

Introduction and course overview

Thursday, March 31

Lecture. "American foreign policy and the seven centers of power"

Readings

- Power players in American politics (Dahl, pp. 1-8)
- Power in international politics (Carr, pp. 97-130)
- United States National Security Strategy, May 2010 (pp. 1-16)

Week 2: The Presidency, Part 1

Tuesday, April 5 and Thursday, April 7

Topic: Formal powers of the President in American foreign policy

Historical case: Early Cold War containment policy

Contemporary case: Debating the Obama Administration's deadline for beginning the withdrawal of American combat forces from Afghanistan

Readings

- Historical background on containment & the Korean War (Keylor, pp. 11-23, 42-52, 242-257)
- Presidential powers in foreign policy (Jentleson, pp. 27-39)
- Text of NSC-68 (pp. 4-9, 44-59)

Week 3: The Bureaucracy

Tuesday, April 12 and Thursday, April 14

Topic: Powers of bureaucratic organizations in formulating and implementing American foreign policy

Historical case: Cuban Missile Crisis

Contemporary case: Debating the Department of Justice's definition of torture

Readings

- Historical background on Cuban Missile Crisis (Keylor, pp. 78-81, 195-203)
- Bureaucracy and foreign policy (Allison & Zelikow, pp. 143-160, 176-179)
- Cuban Missile Crisis and bureaucracy (Allison & Zelikow, pp. 197-201, 217-236)

Week 4: The Media

Tuesday, April 19 and Thursday, April 21

Topic: Powers of the media in influencing our beliefs and attitudes about American foreign policy

Historical case: Vietnam War

Contemporary case: Debating the American role in intervention in Libya

Readings

- Historical background on Vietnam War (Keylor, pp. 290-315)
- Media representations during Vietnam (Hallin, pp. 3-11, 114-118, 159-180, 191-201)
- Forms of possible media influence on foreign policy (Robinson, pp. 523-541)

Week 5: The Presidency, Part 2

Tuesday, April 26 and Thursday, April 28

Topic: Less formal powers of the President in American foreign policy

Historical case: Nixon to China

Contemporary case: Debating the use of armed Predator drones for lethal strikes against suspected terrorists

Readings

- Historical background on Nixon to China (Keylor, pp. 234-241, 268-276)
- The power of the bully pulpit and “going public” (Kernell, pp. 104-135)
- The power to define the situation or “framing” (Zarefsky, pp. 611-3; two cases of your choice from 613-8)

MIDTERM: Tuesday, May 3, 1:30 – 3:18 pm, Caldwell Lab 0220

MOVIE: Thursday, May 5. *The Hurt Locker*. *Attendance required*

Week 6: Popular Culture

Tuesday, May 10 and Thursday, May 12

Topic: Power of pop culture to steer and shape our views of American foreign policy

Historical case: Film representations of war, post-WWII to the present

Contemporary case: Debating the appropriateness and effect of video games about war on popular understandings

Readings

- War in American film (Wetta and Curley, pp. 1-52)
- War and video games: an overview (Sullentrop, pp. online)

Week 7: The Congress

Tuesday, May 17 and Thursday, May 19

Topic: Formal and informal powers of members of Congress in the conduct of American foreign policy

Historical case: Foreign aid for civil war combatants in the 1980s (Reagan Doctrine)

Contemporary case: Debating the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), an international ban on nuclear weapons testing

Readings

- Historical background on Reagan Doctrine (Scott, pp. 14-39)
- How Congress influences foreign and defense policy (Ripley and Lindsay, pp. 17-35)
- How Congress helped end the Vietnam War (Zelizer, pp. online)
<http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=12438>

Week 8: The People

Tuesday, May 24 and Thursday, May 26

Topic: Powers of the general public to influence the conduct of American foreign policy

Historical case: The Nuclear Freeze movements of the 1980s

Contemporary case: Debating a reduction in government spending via substantial cut in American foreign economic aid

Readings

- Historical background on détente (Keylor, pp. 121-135)
- The impact of public activism on arms control in the 1980s (Knopf, pp. 199-246)
- The role of transnational activism in ending the Cold War (Meyer, pp. 182-203)

Week 9: Interest Groups

Tuesday, May 31 and Thursday, June 2

Topic: Power of interest groups in influencing the conduct of American foreign policy

Historical case: US policy towards China & Taiwan in the 1990s

Contemporary case: Debating the removal of U.S. sanctions on Cuba

Readings

- Historical background on China, Taiwan (Keylor, pp. 434-438)
- Interest groups and foreign policy (Jentleson, pp. 50-58)
- Interest groups and US-China trade policy (Sutter, pp. 185-204)
- Interest groups and sanctions policy after the Cold War (O'Sullivan, pp. 11-24)

Final exam week

Final exam: Thursday, June 9th, 2011, 1:30 – 3:18pm, Caldwell Lab 0220