

# RPOS 383: American Foreign Policy

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Summer 2020 – Six Week 3 – July 6 - August 14

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Office: Humanities B-16

Class Hours: Asynchronous

Class Room: Not applicable

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## Course Description

Using the lenses provided to us by the toolkit of foreign policy analysis (FPA), we will learn about and explore how the international system and domestic factors affects the development of foreign policy, how policymakers come to make the decisions they make to create and implement policy, and what tools are available to policymakers in carrying out U.S. policy objectives. While U.S. foreign policy is dominated by the Executive Branch, other actors play important roles in the formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Students will compose a policy memo that addresses U.S./Chinese relations during a global pandemic while engaging in open source research. We will explore additional cases throughout the six weeks with a specific focus on U.S. foreign relations with Iran, North Korea, Russia, and the Middle East. *I may add additional readings related to COVID-19 or other international issues as they appear during the course.*

## Course Advisories - Please Read

Students should take note of three rules regarding this online course:

1. You must submit all work via Blackboard. **Do not email any assignments to the instructor** unless requested to do so. *I receive 50-100 emails a day on a number of projects I am working on this summer; there's a high probability that your emailed assignment will get buried if you email it. Lastly, all written work must go through the plagiarism check.*
2. **Inability to use Blackboard is not an excuse for late work.** If you are new to Blackboard or need help, please consult the ITS help pages or seek assistance from ITS.
3. All work must be completed on a weekly basis. In the past, students have attempted to submit all assignments during the last week of the six-week course. **Please do not do this as I will not accept late work unless you have extenuating circumstances, and you have received permission from me.**

## Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students should:

1. understand the domestic and international constraints on US foreign policy, the development of grand strategy, and the United States' national interest.
2. understand current challenges to U.S. foreign policy and how these challenges are a reflection of U.S. grand strategy and interests.
3. be able to understand how US foreign policy exemplifies both continuity and change from one administration to the next.
4. be familiar with the different ways that we study foreign policy decision-making by looking at rational choice theory, cognitive models of behavior, and groupthink.

## Required Textbooks

**Students need to purchase only one book:**

Houghton, David Patrick. 2013. *A Citizen's Guide to American Foreign Policy*. New York: Routledge.

**The book below is available free from the university library as an ebook (do not purchase; it is quite expensive):**

Hook, Steven W. and Christopher M. Jones. 2012. *Routledge Handbook of American Foreign Policy*. New York: Routledge.

## Readings for the Course

With the exception of the textbook by Houghton (profiled above), all other readings for the course are provided free in a folder I have created in Dropbox. Please bookmark the link below; you can also find this link on Blackboard:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0sroun7ixj4ou6l/AAC1YzRsg4qFq7637o6-CulJa?dl=0>

## Reading Effectively and Course Expectations

The syllabus, as you will see, contains a good deal of reading each week. *Please read effectively* and use your time wisely. You should be doing enough reading so that your final project – the policy memo – demonstrates that you understand how U.S. foreign policy works and is made as well as being able to do at least three of the response quizzes. You won't be able to do either without actually doing *some* of the reading. Be strategic with your time. **Student are expected to spend about 6 hours per week (2 hours per credit x 3 credit course)** – pace yourself and divide your work across the entire week. The more work you put into the course, the better, on average, your final grade will be.

## Lecture Videos and Podcasts

I will publish weekly lectures to Blackboard that go over key points in the readings and other useful information that may/may not be covered in the reading.

## Grading Policy

The course uses University's **A-E scale**: A (93-100), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), C- (72-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-63), D- (62-60), E (less than 60). **Please note that when it comes to final grades, I do not round up or down. The statistical average you have at the end of the course is the letter grade that you receive.** You can find your current grade and average throughout the course on Blackboard.

## Course Assessment

### Discussion Boards: Foreign Policy In The Real World: 30%

During three of the six weeks of the course, we will engage in three foreign policy debates. I will post a newspaper article or editorial. Students will read the article and respond to the question I post on Blackboard. Each student will compose a response to the question I pose and must do so by **Friday** during the module that the Discussion Board is assigned. *Students must then respond to at least two students during the response period, which lasts from Friday to Tuesday.* You must respond on **two different days** between Friday and Tuesday to receive full credit (you can respond more, but if you do not have three responses on three different days, then you will be not receive full credit – this makes sure that our discussions are fresh and substantive.)

### Response Quizzes: 15%

Students are responsible for completing **three response quizzes** during the six weeks. Additional quizzes can be completed for extra credit beyond the third. These quizzes are hosted on Blackboard and consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. These quizzes demonstrate to me that you have done the reading and understand what you have read. Response quizzes for each module open on Sundays of each week and remain active for 10 days. **After 10 days, quizzes close, so please make sure you complete the quiz during the 10 day period.**

### Mid-Course Exam: Position Paper: 20%

This assignment function as a sort of midterm. Students will read two brief pieces, one by Brooks and Wohlforth (*America Abroad: Why the Sole Superpower Should Not Pull Back from the World* (2016)) and another by Barry Posen, which discuss two foreign policy grand strategies that the United States should adopt. Students will read both pieces and write a position paper where they take a position on one of the two authors; this assignment serves as a type of "midterm" for the 6-week course. **A prompt will be provided.** 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. **Due Saturday, August 1 by 11:59 PM.**

### Final Project – Policy Memo: 35%

The Policy Memo is the course's final project and final exam. **Each student will construct a policy memo that provides the head of the National Security Council with guidance on how**

**to respond to China - if at all - regarding its handling of COVID-19.** It is due the last week of the course but should be started in the first week. Students will receive a prompt and will respond to the prompt by analyzing a current U.S. foreign policy problem and construct a memo that advises U.S. policymakers on a course of action. **The policy issue students will write about involves foreign relations with China in the aftermath of COVID-19.** 3-4 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font *with footnotes*. **Due Friday, August 14 by 11:59 PM.**

## Course Policies

### Academic Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please go here:

<http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml>

You can arrange for an academic accommodation letter to be sent to me. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please also inform me as soon as possible. **I cannot provide any accommodation without the letter.** If you took a course with me in previous semesters, you must still provide a copy of the letter to me each semester.

### Academic Integrity and Honesty

No cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated in this course. Cheating and plagiarism can take a variety of forms so please be sure you familiarize yourself with the potential dangers. In the past, students have relied on Google and Wikipedia to complete assignments. The use of either of these sources is considered cheating; you should be using the resources on the syllabus to answer questions. If in doubt, ask the instructor!

If you are struggling with the course, please email me or come see me so I can help you. Please note that all assignments submitted through Blackboard (take-home quizzes, final paper, and take-home midterm) will go through the SafeAssign Plagiarism check.

For a good survey of potential dangers, see: [http://www.albany.edu/eltil/academic\\_integrity.php](http://www.albany.edu/eltil/academic_integrity.php). All violations are reported to the Office of Community Standards regardless of the penalty imposed.

Students caught engaging in cheating or plagiarism may have to redo an assignment, fail the assignment, or fail the course, depending on the egregiousness of the infraction. Students will also be reported to the Office of Community Standards for possible disciplinary action.

### Attendance Policy and Work Completion Guidelines

In an asynchronous course, **all work must be completed as assigned in the syllabus.**

**Do not submit all your assignments the last week of class; I will not accept them unless you have received prior approval.** I cannot stress this enough - do not submit all your work the last day of class. Late penalties apply, and I will not have time to grade and evaluate six weeks worth of work in just two days.

### **Email Etiquette**

Treat email as a formal means of communication and not as a text message. This means using proper salutations and closings (don't put your entire email in the subject line), having a proper subject line (so I know what your email is about), and being respectful to me. *It is best to use your UAlbany email address to contact me.* If you email me using an alternative form of email, I will carbon copy any response to your UAlbany account by default.

### **Grade Appeals**

Grade appeals are permitted within 1 week of receipt of the grade. Appeals must be in writing (we can meet in office hours, but the decision is based on your written rationale) and provide an explanation for the change. You should submit this preferably via e-mail. A grade appeal may result in the grade being raised, lowered, or left unaltered. After one week, grade appeals will not be considered unless there are extenuating circumstances (such as a serious illness). **Effort is not a valid reason for a grade change.**

### **Late Penalties**

If you need extensions, please talk to me. I can't guarantee I will offer one or provide one, but we need to talk first (either by email or by phone). If you do not submit work, it will be marked "0" at the end of the third day. If you are struggling, please reach out! **Because we only have six weeks, it will be difficult to grant long extensions on assignments, which is why it is important to reach out early if you have some difficulties with the class or life situations that interfere with your ability to complete the course.**

**Discussion Boards:** There are no late penalties, but students who fail to complete the discussion board and respond to their peers by the assigned due date will receive a zero.

**Response Quizzes:** There are no late penalties; you may take the quiz at any time while it is active. The quiz will automatically deactivate when it expires, typically 7 days after the start of the module (exception: the last week, when the class ends on Friday.)

**Mid-Course Response Paper:** 7 points per day for each day late. At the end of the third day, if you haven't talked to me about an extension, you will receive a zero.

**Final Project Policy Memo:** 10 points per day for each day late. I will accept it late up until the day that grades are due. Once I submit grades to the registrar, I cannot accept any late work.

**The moral of all of this – if you are struggling with deadlines, email me, call me, text me - let's talk about it.** However, it is your responsibility to juggle any summer work responsibilities and

vacations you have and complete work before going on vacation or working additional shifts if you know that doing these activities will make you late. **Do your best to be proactive!**

## COVID-19

If you become sick with COVID-19 over the summer, please follow the university's guidelines: <https://www.albany.edu/covid-19>. If you become sick, please notify me right away. It is best to get documentation from a medical professional in case the university/registrar request the information. If your symptoms are mild and you are able, I suggest doing your best to keep up with the work. If the virus impacts you in other ways, please reach out to me as soon as you can. *Please be aware that COVID-19 is a fluid situation, and new outbreaks and spikes in the number of cases may occur over the coming weeks.* Please stay safe and be proactive during this public health crisis.

## Netiquette and Courtesy

Please be courteous and respectful to each other and to me during course activities, especially during our discussion board exercises. We all come from different experiences with different political points of view. Let's just agree to disagree and do our best to listen to each other and respect each others' viewpoints.

## Office Hours

Since COVID-19, I have found it easier to give students my cell phone number to arrange office hours: [INSERT PHONE NUMBER HERE]. To make an appointment, please text me. Be sure to say who you are in the text message, and we can arrange a time to talk by phone. You can also use the text messages to ask quick questions you have while working on assignments. Once a time is arranged, it is the student's responsibility to call me at the arranged time.

You can, of course, email me questions you may have, and I will respond as quickly as I can.

## Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus at any time (including assessments) during the semester, and I promise to do so in a timely manner in accordance with university policies. **Because U.S. foreign policy is in continuous flux, there may be things that happen in government and politics that will necessitate us adding new readings and subtracting others.**

## Module 1: Foundations of US Foreign Policy (July 6-July 11)

In the first, we will focus on key concepts and learning how to analyze foreign policy, which involves 1) understanding the domestic and international environments, 2) formulating a policy and making a decision, and, lastly, 3) implementing a policy connected to the decision made. We will also learn about how we study U.S. Foreign Policy, what this means for the next six weeks, and why this information is important to learn.

### Online Poll

I created an online poll; please take the poll before the end of the first week. You will be graded for completing the activity, not on the answers. I will use the poll data I collect for next week's module on public opinion. You can find the link on Blackboard.

### Reading

The reading for this module is below. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of pages.

- Dombrowski, Peter and Simon Reich. 2019. *Comparative Grand Strategy*. Chapter 2: USA (Provides a short discussion of the US' grand strategy from a historical and theoretical perspective; I also included the introduction to their book on Dropbox, but this is optional reading). (17)
- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 1: The Study of American Foreign Policy (14)
- Houghton: Chapter 1 (24)
- Silove, Nina. 2018. "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of Grand Strategy." *Security Studies* 27(1). Just read pp. 27-45 (focus mainly on pp. 34-45)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures** on YouTube.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week's response quiz, it is due by **Sunday, July 12 by 11:59 PM**.

### Discussion Board: Introductions

*Please complete the introductions. You will receive a grade for completing this.* Please do so by the end of the first week. Be sure to respond to your peers and play the icebreaker game!

## Module 2: Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy I (July 12-July 18)

Foreign policy, while dominated by the U.S. president, can be influenced by the societal factors (general public, media, etc.) as well Congress. In this module, we need to think about the role that groups outside the Executive Branch play in being able to influence, change, and generate foreign policy responses. We will also study public opinion, review the results of the class poll, and what these results tell us about how political science have studied the effect of the public on foreign policy.

### Reading

- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 19: Public Opinion (14)
- Hook, Steven W. 2019. *U.S. Foreign Policy: Paradox of World Power*. Chapter 5. (12)
- Houghton: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 (53)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures** on YouTube.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week's response quiz, it is due by **Sunday, July 19 by 11:59 PM**.

### Foreign Policy In The Real World 1

Please find the article/editorial in the Discussion Boards. Please read it and respond to the question I have posted. *You should respond to your classmates' responses with no more than 1 response per day and do so at least three times between Friday-Tuesday.*

## Module 3: Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy II (July 19-July 25)

While the U.S. President dominates U.S. foreign policy, the president, in reality, only gets involved with the “big decisions.” So much of U.S. foreign policy is carried out by the U.S. agencies, such as the Departments of State, Treasury, and Defense. In this module, we will learn about what the President’s role is. In many ways, U.S. foreign policy is a ship with the President as captain and a U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy that keeps the ship steady (and from sinking...)!

### Reading

- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 13: Department of State (15)
- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 13: Department of Defense (10)
- Houghton: Chapters 2-3 (32)
- Brands, Hal, Peter Feaver, and William Inboden. 2020. "Defense of the Blob." *Foreign Affairs*. (6)
- Scott, James M. and Jerel A. Rosati. 2020. *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy*. Chapter 3: The Presidency. (19)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures** on YouTube.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week’s response quiz, it is due by **Sunday, July 26 by 11:59 PM**.

### Foreign Policy In the Real World 2

Please find the article/editorial in the Discussion Boards. Please read it and respond to the question I have posted. *You should respond to your classmates’ responses with no more than 1 response per day and do so at least three times between Friday-Tuesday.*

## Module 4: Foreign Policy Decision-Making (July 26-August 1)

In this module, we will study some of the common theories of foreign policy decision-making. How do leaders make decisions within a large bureaucracy? We will study rational choice, cognitive model, and groupthink to understand how different theories focus on **choices** and **decisions**. There are many theories of foreign policy decision-making so the ones we study are not the only ones out there, but these are the ones that are the most common.

### Reading

- Congressional Research Service. 2008. "Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates." (18)
- Scott, James M. and Jerel A. Rosati. 2020. *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy*. Chapter 10. (This chapters provide a concise overview of how policy is made - more or less - and a discussion of the major ways we study decision-making). (20)
- Houghton: Chapters 7 (14)

### Optional Reading

- Hook 2012: Chapter 6 – "The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy." (SKIM – focus mainly on the charts and graphs that outline the structure and agencies of the foreign policy bureaucracy)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures on the three theories of foreign policy decision-making** on YouTube. Please find the links on Blackboard.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week's response quiz, it is due by **Sunday, August 2 by 11:59 PM**.

### Mid-Course Position Paper Is Due At The Start Of This Week

Your mid-course position paper is due **Saturday, August 1 by 11:59 PM**.

## Module 5: Diplomatic and Economic Statecraft (August 2-August 8)

In the last two weeks of the course, we will study the ways in which decisions are implemented. Once a foreign policy decision has been made with respect to a problem, a policy is devised, and this policy is carried out, which we call **statecraft**. There are three types of statecraft: **economic**, **diplomatic**, and **military**. This week, we will focus on the first two. *Please be aware that most policy solutions typically utilize a host of different policies.*

### Reading

- Early, Bryan R. and Keith A. Preble. *Forthcoming*. "Economic Statecraft." *Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (25)
- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 2: Diplomatic History (14)
- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 25: Foreign Aid (12)
- Tarock, Adam. 2016. "The Iran nuclear deal: winning a little, losing a lot." *Third World Quarterly*. (This is a great article on how states combine various tools of statecraft to achieve a particular goal.) (18)
- NY Times Article on Tariffs (2019)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures on YouTube**. Please find the links on Blackboard.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week's response quiz, it is due by **Sunday, August 9 by 11:59 PM**.

### Foreign Policy In The Real World 3

Please find the article/editorial in the Discussion Boards. Please read it and respond to the question I have posted. *You should respond to your classmates' responses with no more than 1 response per day and do so at least three times between Friday-Tuesday.*

## Module 6: Military Statecraft And Transnational Challenges (August 9-August 14)

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has, some argue, resorted to using its military power (perhaps to the detriment of its own interests). Some argue that U.S. foreign policy has shifted away from diplomacy and economic coercion to the use of *threats of force* and *force* itself. In this module, we will learn about the basics of how the U.S. uses military force in its foreign policy, issues related to weapons proliferation and arms control, and two current foreign policy issues in Iran and North Korea.

### Reading

- *Handbook of American Foreign Policy*: Chapter 23: The Use of Military Force (14)
- Jackson, Van. 2019. *On the Brink*. Chapter 1: The inheritance of Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un. (21)
- Murray, Donette. 2009. *US Foreign Policy and Iran: American-Iranian Relations Since the Islamic Revolution*. Introduction: The Iran Syndrome. (11)
- Saunders, Elizabeth. 2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Chapter 1. (19)

### Optional Reading

- Rollins, John and Liana Sun Wyler. 2013. "Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*, R41004. (Read pp. 1-6, 21-27) (11)

### Lectures

There are **two 15-minute lectures on YouTube**.

### Response Quiz

If you choose to do this week's response quiz, it is due by **Friday, August 14 by 11:59 PM** on Blackboard.

### Final Project: Policy Memo Due This Week!

Your policy memo is due **Friday, August 14 by 11:59 PM** on Blackboard.

# 1 Additional Support Information

## Religious Holidays

As you know, UAlbany changed the way it puts together its academic calendar, and UAlbany no longer closes for religious holidays as it did in previous academic years. New York State Education Law (Section 224-a) states that all campuses are required to excuse, without penalty, individual students absent because of religious beliefs, and to provide equivalent opportunities for make-up examinations, study, or work requirements missed because of such absences.

According to UAlbany, "It shall be the student's responsibility to provide sufficient documentation to support any request (In this context, it should be noted that fraudulent excuses are considered violations of academic integrity and are grounds for academic or disciplinary penalties)."

Please note that students are still required to complete all readings and assignments in the syllabus. If a quiz or exam takes place during a religious holiday to which you have an exemption, please let me know in advance so we can work out alternative arrangements to make-up the missed assessment. No student will be penalized for absences due to religious holidays.

## Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities.

The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies prohibit offenses defined as sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), sexual exploitation, and stalking. The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies apply to the entire University at Albany community, including students, faculty, and staff of all gender identities. The University at Albany provides a variety of resources for support and advocacy to assist individuals who have experienced sexual offenses.

Confidential support and guidance can be found through the following:

Counseling Center (518-442-5800, [https://www.albany.edu/counseling\\_center/](https://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/))

University Health Center (518-442-5454, [https://www.albany.edu/health\\_center/](https://www.albany.edu/health_center/))

Interfaith Center (518-489-8573, <https://www.albany.edu/spirituality/onCampus.shtml>)

Individuals at these locations will not report crimes to law enforcement or university officials without permission, except for in extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency. Additionally, the Advocates at the University at Albany's Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence are available to assist students without sharing information that could identify them (518-442-CARE, <https://www.albany.edu/advocacycenter/>).

Sexual offenses can be reported non-confidentially to:

Title IX Coordinator within The Office for Equity and Compliance

(518-442-3800, <https://www.albany.edu/equity-compliance/>, Building 25, Room 117)

University Police Department  
(518-442-3131, <http://police.albany.edu/>).

**Please note that faculty members are considered “responsible employees” at the University at Albany, meaning that they are required to report all known relevant details about a complaint of sexual violence to the University’s Title IX Coordinator, including names of anyone involved or present, date, time, and location.**

In case of an emergency, please call 911.