

**SKIDMORE COLLEGE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT**  
**UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN A CHANGING WORLD**

*Government 228*  
*Spring 2009*  
*Ladd 206*  
*M-W-F: 9:05-10:00AM*  
*e-mail: [avacs@skidmore.edu](mailto:avacs@skidmore.edu)*

*Aldo C. Vacs*  
*Ladd 319 (X 5249)*  
*Office Hours:*  
*Tu-Th: 9:30am -12:30pm*  
*or by appointment*

The purpose of this course is to examine the development and current features of American foreign policy focusing on the international challenges and opportunities faced by the United States after the end of the Cold War, and particularly since September 11, 2001. The course analyzes some of the major historical and current patterns of U.S. foreign policy, reviews some important interpretations and methodological approaches to the study of U.S. international relations, discusses the ideological components of some of these policies, examines the features and evolution of U.S. foreign policy actors and decision making processes, and evaluates the changing political economic objectives and international circumstances shaping recent U.S. foreign policies. Special attention is devoted to the impact of the end of the Cold War, the rise of economic interdependence and globalization, the challenge of international terrorism, the reappearance of national, ethnic and religious confrontations, and the proliferation of nuclear and mass destruction weapons on U.S. diplomatic, strategic, economic, and environmental foreign policies as well as on the formulation of specific approaches to different world regions and countries.

**Course requirements**

\* **Class attendance and informed participation are required.** Attendance is essential for those desiring to pass the course and will be taken by signing an attendance sheet. In order to be able to participate effectively in the discussions and other class activities you must read the assignments **before** the day they are scheduled for analysis in class. In addition, each student, either individually or as member of a small group –depending on the size of the class– will be responsible for making a presentation and leading the discussion in one of the class sessions scheduled in the last part of the course. The student (or students) making each presentation will meet with me in advance to discuss the presentation and research the topic, and will be responsible for delivering with sufficient anticipation a list of discussion questions (and other relevant materials, if necessary) to the rest of the class. You are expected to follow current developments in U.S. foreign policy by reading the appropriate sections of some of the national newspapers and magazines, specialized journals, and/or electronic sources of information mentioned below. It is expected that in class discussions each student will make reference to this information to update the discussion on different aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Attendance, preparation for class discussions and student-led activities, and analytical quality of the interventions will be evaluated in order to calculate the course grade. **(30%**

**of the final grade)**

\* **Four quizzes focused on the reading materials assigned throughout the course.** These multiple choice examinations will be given in class and will be focused on the readings assigned for specific sections. These quizzes are designed to check your knowledge of the basic information on different aspects of contemporary U.S. policy that is presented and analyzed in the assigned readings. There is no make-up for these quizzes. **(20% of the final grade)**

\* **Midterm take-home examination (25% of the total grade)**

\* **Final take-home examination (25% of the total grade)**

[The instructions for both take-home examinations will be delivered with sufficient anticipation in class. The assignment will be focused on some critical issues in U.S. foreign policy and will require writing individual essays from a critical and (hopefully) well informed perspective. These essays should be clear and concise, show adequate knowledge of the issues, demonstrate logical consistency and use of relevant evidence to advance specific arguments, and draw well-thought critical conclusions. Late assignments will lose half a grade point for each day they are late.]

In addition to the readings specified in the assignment section, other materials will be delivered in class to update the analysis of certain issues or to add different perspectives. Students are also expected to keep informed of current issues related to the topics analyzed in class. Good sources of information are major newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor) and national weekly magazines (Time, Newsweek). To analyze more in-depth certain topics, prepare your final papers, and update the information contained in the texts it is recommended to consult the specialized journals found in the Scribner Library, including among them: *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *International Affairs*, *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of International Affairs*, *Millennium*, *World Policy Journal*, and *World Politics* as well as a large number of journals specialized in regional (Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Russia, Western Europe, etc.) and functional issues (economic, strategic, environmental and other affairs). There are numerous World Wide Web sites focused on U.S. foreign policy issues that can be consulted. Among the most useful sites for this course are the following:

*The Carter Center: <http://www.cartercenter.org/>*

*Center for Defense Information: <http://www.cdi.org/>*

*Central Intelligence Agency: <http://www.cia.gov/>*

*Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.foreignrelations.org/>*

*Department of Defense: <http://www.defenselink.mil/>*

*Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/>*

*Foreign Policy in Focus: <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/>*

*House Committee on International Relations:*  
*[http://www.house.gov/international\\_relations/](http://www.house.gov/international_relations/)*  
*Library of Congress:* *<http://thomas.loc.gov/>*  
*The National Security Archive:* *<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>*  
*National Security Council:* *<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/>*  
*Policy Community Online:* *<http://www.policy.com/>*  
*Senate Committee on Foreign Relations:* *<http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/>*  
*United States Information Agency:* *<http://www.usia.gov/>*  
*United States Institute of Peace:* *<http://www.usip.org/>*  
*United States Trade Representative:* *<http://www.ustr.gov/>*  
*The White House:* *<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>*  
*Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars:* *<http://wwics.si.edu/>*

Annotated references to other internet sites related to U.S. foreign policy issues are found at the end of each chapter in Steven W. Hook's book , *U.S. Foreign Policy: the paradox of world power*.

**Required Texts** (available at the Skidmore shop)

**Ralph G. Carter, ed. Contemporary Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy: from terrorism to trade. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2008)**

**Steven W. Hook, U.S. Foreign Policy: the paradox of world power. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2008)**

**Other Sources** (Not for purchase but helpful for consultation):

Thomas L. Brewer, American Foreign Policy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992)

Ralph C. Carter, ed., Contemporary Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy: From Terrorism to Trade (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002)

Michael Cox, U.S. Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Superpower without a Mission? (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995)

David A. Deese, ed., The New Politics of American Foreign Policy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994)

John Dumbrell, American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996)

Glenn P. Hastedt, American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003)

- Martha Honey and Tom Barry, eds., Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)
- Robert L. Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War (Washington, DC & Baltimore: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press- Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)
- Frederick Hartmann & Robert Wendzel, America's Foreign Policy in a Changing World (New York: Harper Collins, 1994)
- Steven Hook and John Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2000)
- G. John Ikenberry, ed., American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays (New York: Harper Collins, 1996)
- Charles W. Kegley & Eugene R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996)
- , eds., The Future of American Foreign Policy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992)
- Robert J. Lieber, ed. Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century (New York: Longman, 1997)
- , Eagle Rules? Foreign Policy and American Primacy in the Twenty First Century (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002)
- Stanley J. Michalak, Jr., ed., Competing Conceptions of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper Collins, 1992)
- Richard Sobel, The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- John Spanier & Steven W. Hook, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, 14<sup>th</sup> edition (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1998)
- Stephen J. Valone, ed., Two Centuries of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Documentary Record (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995)
- Howard Wiarda, American Foreign Policy: Actors and Processes (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).

## ASSIGNMENTS

### I. UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE

January 21 - 26

#### 1. The Setting of United States Foreign Policy

Hook: Chapter 1 (*The United States in a Turbulent World*), pp. 1-25, and pp. 64-76.

Carter: Introduction, pp. xxi-xxx

Hastedt: Chapter 3 (*The American National Style*), pp. 30-48.

January 28 - February 13

#### 2. United States Foreign Policy in a Changing World

Hook: Chapter 2 (*The Expansion of U.S. Power*), pp. 26-63.

Philip H. Gordon, *The End of the Bush Revolution*, Foreign Affairs 85:4 (July-August 2006)

Marcin Zaborowski, *Bush's Legacy and America's Next Foreign Policy*, Caillot Paper No. 111, European Union Institute for Security Studies (September 2008).

Various authors: *Realism, Idealism and Neo-Conservatism in Recent U.S. Foreign*

#### ***Some Issues to Consider as this Section Ends:***

*What is your assessment of U.S. post-Cold War foreign policy strategy? Is the U.S. following a relatively successful grand strategy of promoting democracy and global stability? Or, has the U.S. embraced a short-sighted and domineering approach? Is U.S. global dominance the best approach to guarantee international security and prosperity? Or, as some authors believe, would this approach transform the U.S. into a "rogue superpower" threatening global security and prosperity? What kind of U.S. foreign policy approach and strategy would you recommend to the current administration? Why?*

*Policy and the Prospects for the Obama Administration.*

### II. EXAMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: PROCESS, ACTORS, AND INSTRUMENTS

February 16 - 20

#### 3. The Context of American Foreign Policy: Public Opinion, Mass Media, and Interest Groups.

Hook: pp. 76-97; and Chapters 7 (*Public Opinion at Home and Abroad*), 8 (*The Impact of Mass Communications*), and 9 (*Social Movements and Interest Groups*), pp. 200-290.

Carter: Chapters 6 (Foyle: *Anatomy of a Crash: Port Security and the 2006 Dubai Ports World Controversy*); 8 (Rosenblum: *Immigration Policy: U.S.-Mexican Relations Confront U.S. Political Realities*), and 11 (Hook and Barr Lebo: *U.S.-China Trade Relations: Privatizing Foreign Policy*).

#### **February 23 - 27**

#### **4. The Elected Foreign Policy Actors: The President and Congress.**

Hook: Chapters 4 (Presidential Power), pp. 98-127; and 5 (Congress Beyond the “Water’s Edge”), pp. 128 - 161.

Carter: Chapters 2 (Lantis & Moskowitz, *The Return of the Imperial Presidency?*); 7 (Fisher: *NSA Eavesdropping: Unchecked or Limited Presidential Power?*); 10 (Haney & Vanderbush, *The Helms-Burton Act: Congress and Cuba Policy*); and 15 (Cornett and Gibney: *The Rights of Detainees: Determining the Limits of Law*).

\*\*\*\* **March 6 : Midterm take-home examination due** \*\*\*\*

#### **March 2 - 6**

#### **5. The Unelected Foreign Policy Actors: Diplomatic, Security, Intelligence and Economic Foreign Affairs Bureaucracies**

Hook: Chapter 6 (The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy), pp. 162 - 199.

Carter: Chapter 4 (Preston and Infranco: *The Nuclear Standoff between the United States and Iran*).

#### **March 7 - 15: Spring Vacation**

### **III. CURRENT ISSUES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

**March 16 - 20**

#### **6. The Security Dilemmas**

Hook: Chapter 10 (*National Security and Defense Policy*), pp. 291-328 ; and pp. 379-383.

Carter: Chapters 1 (Hendrickson, *The United States vs. Terrorism*); 3 (Holmes, *Coca, Human Rights, and Violence*); and 5 (James and Özdamar, *The United States and North Korea*).

**March 23 - 27**

#### **7. The Economic Challenges**

Hook: Chapter 11 (*Economic Statecraft*), pp. 329-363.

Carter: Chapters 9 (Blecker, *U.S. Steel Import Tariffs: The Politics of Global Markets*); 11 (Hook and Barr Lebo: *U.S.-China Trade Relations: Privatizing Foreign Policy*); and 12 (Schiller and Carter: *The World Trade Organization and Tax Subsidies for Exports: Equal Competition or Corporate Welfare?*)

#### ***Some Issues to Consider as this Section Ends:***

*What is your assessment of the way in which U.S. foreign policy is currently formulated and implemented? Do you believe that the U.S. constitutional framework and the existing division of powers facilitate or hinder the formulation of an effective foreign policy? Do you think that public opinion should play a larger or lesser role in shaping foreign policy decisions? Are the foreign affairs bureaucracies playing an effective role in implementing U.S. policies or do they need to be reformed? Are the existing departments and agencies adequate for the implementation of a successful U.S. post-Cold War and post-September 11 foreign policy? Why? Why not?*

**March 30 - April 3**

#### **8. The Transnational Problems: Environment, Immigration, Human Rights and Democracy.**

Hook: Chapter 12 (*Transnational Policy Problems*); pp. 364-399.

Lieber: Chapter 15 (Paarlberg: *The Eagle and the Global Environment: The Burden of Being Essential*)

Carter: Chapters 8 (Rosenblum: *Immigration Policy: U.S.-Mexican Relations Confront U.S. Political Realities*); 13 (Payne & Payne: *The Kyoto Protocol and Beyond: The Politics of Climate Change*); 14 (Jackson and Carter: *The International Criminal Court: 105 Nations Join but Not the United States*); and 15 (Cornett and Gibney: *The Rights of Detainees: Determining the Limits of Law*).

***Some Issues to Consider as this Section Ends:***

*What do you believe are the main foreign policy challenges confronted by the U.S. at the beginning of the Twenty-First century? What do you think should be the U.S. priorities in terms of international policies? On what kind of strategic issues should the U.S. policymakers focus their attention and what should be done to address them effectively? What kind of economic strategy should the U.S. pursue in the next few years? Is it important for the U.S. to develop a stronger leadership role in international environmental matters? Why? Why not?*

**IV. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

**Student-led Presentations and Debates**

**April 6 - 8**

- 9. Prevention vs. Preemption? Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism?: The U.S. Policy toward Iraq and Iran.** (*see Carter: Chapters 2 and 4*)

**April 8 - 10**

- 10. Realpolitik and its Alternatives: Dealing with International Terrorism** (*see Carter, Chapters 1 and 15*)

**April 13 - 15**

- 11. Presidents vs. Congress: The Controversy on War-Related Decisions** (*see Carter: Chapters 2 and 15*)

**April 15 - 17**

- 12. Isolationism vs. Internationalism: National Sovereignty, Globalization, and the ICC (International Criminal Court)** (*see Carter, Chapter 14*)

**April 20 - 22**

- 13. Anti-Americanism or Anti-Imperialism?: International Reactions to Recent U.S.**

**Foreign Policy.** (*see Carter: Chapters 10, 13, and 14*)

**April 22 - 24**

**14. From *Strategic Partnership* to *Strategic Competition*?: The Recent Evolution of U.S. Relations with China and Russia.** (*see Carter, Chapter 11*)

**April 27 - 29**

**15. The Environmental Disputes: U.S. Foreign Policy and Global Warming** (*see Carter, Chapter 13*)

**April 29, 2009: Final Take-Home Examination Due**