

The Evolving Role of the U.S. in World Affairs

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In this course we will analyze the evolving role of the United States of America in world affairs. In doing so, we will consider alternative interpretations of the American role as well as the domestic economic, political, and societal bases on which it depends. We will also examine the impact of changes in the international system due to globalization and the diffusion of power. By the conclusion of this course, students should acquire a broad understanding of the determinants of U.S. strength, its unique role in world affairs, the contingent nature of policy choices, and the potential consequences for international order if the U.S. were to adopt a strategy of disengagement.

KEYWORDS:

United States of America, Foreign Policy, Primacy, Decline, Competitiveness, Leadership

REQUIRED READING: (The Lieber and Mandelbaum books are available in paperback and e-reader):

Robert J. Lieber, *Power & Willpower in the American Future: Why the US is Not Destined to Decline* (Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Michael Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower: America's Global Leadership in a Cash-Strapped Era* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011).

Journal articles on U.S. foreign policy (see included below)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Reading: Students are expected to complete the reading before each class.

Email response: After each day, students must send a brief email response concerning a question or idea about the subject(s).

Send these to Professor Lieber, lieberr@georgetown.edu, and to one of the TAs, Ren Iida, rentaro.iida@gmail.com

Participation in discussion: At every session, each student will be asked to identify what he or she considers the most important question or problem from at least one of the readings and/or the subject of that session.

One short paper of no more than 250 words. These will be presented in the seminar.

One research paper. M.A. students, approximately 10 pages; Ph.D. students, 15-20 pages

SCHEDULE:

Friday, July 26

#1, Introduction to U.S. Foreign Policy

Robert J. Lieber, *Power and Willpower*, Introduction, pp. 1-6

Michael Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower*, Introduction, pp. 1-8

Monday, July 29

#2, American Exceptionalism

Seymour Martin Lipset, "Still the Exceptional Nation," *The Wilson Quarterly*,

Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 2000): 31-45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40259998>

#3, Liberal Internationalism and US Foreign Policy

Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, & William C. Wohlforth, "Lean Forward: In Defense of American Engagement," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2013, pp. 130-142

#4, Discussion of Exceptionalism and Liberalism

Richard K. Betts, "Institutional Imperialism," (review of Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*) *The National Interest*, May/June 2011, pp. 85-96

Tuesday, July 30

#5, Realism and US Foreign Policy

Barry Posen, "Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2013, pp. 116-129

#6, Problems of Policy & Purpose: Economic Policy

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 30-51

Mandelbaum, *Frugal Superpower* 1-34

#7, Domestic and Global Interactions: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, "American Attitudes and Institutions," 59-64

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "Foreign Policy in the New Millennium," Results of the 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/2012_CCS_Report.pdf

Wednesday, July 31

#8, Domestic & Global Interactions: Energy and Foreign Policy

Lieber, *Power and Willpower*, 52-58

Daniel Yergin, "U.S. Energy is Changing the World Again," *Financial Times*, Nov. 16, 2012

Mandelbaum, *Frugal Superpower*, 167-175

#9, US Attitudes & Institutions

Lieber, *Power and Willpower*, 64-79

#10, Discussion

Charles King, "How to Write a Research Paper,"

http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/how_to_write_a_research_paper.htm

Thursday, August 1

#11, The Rise of Others, The US & China

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 95-105

Aaron Friedberg, "Bucking Beijing: An Alternative to U.S. China Policy," *Foreign Affairs*,
September/October 2012

#12, BRICS and Problems of Collective Action

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 137-144

Mandelbaum, *Frugal Superpower*, 101-135

#13, Security Threats

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 80-95, 105-117

Henry Kissinger, "Iran Must be President Obama's Immediate priority," *Washington Post*, Nov.
16, 2012

Friday, August 2

#14, Commitments & Capabilities: Is There a Problem of "Imperial Overstretch"

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 156-172

#15, Why the US is Not Destined to Decline

Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower*, 181-194

Lieber, *Power & Willpower*, 147-156

Paul Kennedy, "On American Decline and Decadence," *The New Republic*, Dec. 21, 2010.

<http://www.tnr.com/article/magazine/79753/normalcy-american-decline-decadence>