

U.S. Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory

David A. Welch

Course objectives/overview

This course is intended to give students an opportunity to explore how different International Relations paradigms, theories, and analytical approaches help us understand the history of U.S. foreign policy. The paradigms under consideration include Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and Marxism; theories include Hegemonic Stability, Balance of Power, and Liberal Peace; analytical approaches include rational choice, game theory, and political psychology. The emphasis is on postwar and contemporary U.S. foreign policy.

Keywords

U.S foreign policy
International Relations Theory

Schedule

The course will normally meet twice per day from Aug. 1 to Aug. 9, with the exception of Aug. 4 (1 lecture) and Aug. 6 and 7 (weekend: no lecture). We will cover the relevant theoretical material during the first half of the course and apply it to U.S. foreign policy during the second half of the course.

Teaching Methods

The course will be run as a seminar. There will be no lectures. I will begin each session with some remarks on the current theme, but for the most part during class we will engage in general discussion. It is important that students not be shy about their English-language skills. I will not be grading anyone on their English skills, but I will reward effort.

Auditors are welcome on condition that they participate fully. No one is allowed simply to be an observer.

Method of Evaluation

Attendance	25%
Participation	25%
Short paper	50%*

* Graduate students will have the option of having their short paper count for 25% and a short in-class presentation on a current flashpoint count for 25%. This presentation would take place on Aug. 8.

Readings

The required textbook for the course is Joyce P. Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* 3rd ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013). We will also use short selections from Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation* 10th ed. (Pearson, 2016), which I will supply online. I will draw students' attention to additional (optional) short timely readings as necessary—usually news articles or opinion pieces—via the [#TodaiUSFP](#) hashtag on my Twitter feed ([@DavidAWelch](#)).

Topics and class preparation

Session	Date	Time	Topic	Reading
1	Aug. 1	10:25-12:10	Course introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. ix-xii, 1-9, 29-31
2	Aug. 1	13:00-14:45	Levels of analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nye and Welch, pp. 55-65, http://bit.ly/2av46h6
3	Aug. 2	10:25-12:10	Paradigms, theories, foreign policy orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nye and Welch, pp. 65-74, http://bit.ly/2afjdde • Kaufman, pp. 9-28
4	Aug. 2	13:00-14:45	U.S. foreign policy to 1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 33-59
5	Aug. 3	10:25-12:10	The interwar period and World War II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 61-81
6	Aug. 3	13:00-14:45	The Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 83-129
7	Aug. 4	10:25-13:10	The early post-Cold War years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 129-146
8	Aug. 5	10:25-12:10	George W. Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 147-167
9	Aug. 5	13:00-14:45	Barack Obama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 169-189 • Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," http://theatlantic.com/2afjehD
10	Aug. 8	10:25-12:10	Current flashpoints: Europe and the Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nye and Welch, pp. 231-274, http://bit.ly/2a0isGM
11	Aug. 8	13:00-14:45	Current flashpoints: Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nye and Welch, pp. 274-297, http://bit.ly/2axFiGf
12	Aug. 9	10:25-12:55	The future of U.S. foreign policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaufman, pp. 191-198 • Nye and Welch, pp. 382-390, http://bit.ly/2animSD