

Sul Ross State University - Rio Grande College  
American Foreign Policy  
Fall 2016

Dr. Jeremy Stephen Roethler  
Phone: 830-275-0919 (mobile)  
E-mail: [jroethler@sulross.edu](mailto:jroethler@sulross.edu)  
Office Hours: by appointment

Course meeting times: this is a web course and does not have scheduled meeting times.

Course Description: This course examines the sources, processes, mechanisms, conduct and results of American foreign policy. This course will include an overview of the historical background of American foreign policy, including foreign policy priorities as they have evolved over time and as they have been debated and contested by various foreign policy shapers and makers in and outside of the federal government. The course will also examine the process of policy development and the mechanisms of foreign policy implementation.

Required Texts:

Steven W. Hook, *U.S. Foreign Policy: The Paradox of World Power* (Fourth Edition).  
(ISBN 978-1-4522-4150-0)

Primary Learning Objectives:

At the successful conclusion of this course, through performance on short reading assignments, an essay and a final examination, the student will be able to

- Identify and explain the major issues which have been a part of American foreign policy and how those issues are reflected in contemporary American policy;
- Identify and explain the relationship related to foreign policy formation and implementation of the several branches of government responsible for foreign policy, including the President, the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury and Homeland Security;
- Understand the relationships of foreign policy to domestic policy and to articulate those relationships;
- Understand the relationship of the United States foreign policy to non-U.S. non-governmental agencies and other governments;

- Be familiar with and able to explain the terms of foreign policy action;
- Exercise critical thinking skills and demonstrate informed judgment in evaluating issues and answering questions relating to the topics listed above;
- Improve and build on sound writing skills.

To complete the requirements of this course successfully, you must have a Sul Ross Blackboard account and be able to access documents attached to this course. See below for further details

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801.

Course requirements, course objectives, and course grade breakdown:

\* Short Written Assignments (50%): Reading selections follow below. A set of questions correspond to each reading assignment. You will be expected to type your answers to these questions. These need not be formal writing exercises, and they will not be evaluated based on writing style or elegance. Their primary purpose is to allow students to be comfortable in writing about the course subject matter in an informal (but serious) setting. (You should not expect the cumulative length of your answers to exceed approximately 2 pages per assignment.) You must submit a total of **10** short writing assignments to receive full credit for this component of the course.

\*Paper (25%): The paper will require you to answer a question chosen from a list at your discretion and produce a fully elaborated argument in response to the question. The paper must make use of at least three works of peer-reviewed scholarship (e.g., journal

articles, books, book chapters, appropriate on-line resources, etc.) The paper is expected to be approximately 4-5 pages in length. (I am willing to entertain more substantial efforts). A successful paper must observe the conventions standard to upper division level writing in the liberal arts and the social sciences, including those pertaining to grammar, style, analysis and citation. (APA, Chicago style or the Modern Language Association formats are all acceptable.) I am more than happy to review rough drafts of the paper in advance of the due date. Plagiarism will result in expulsion from the course, a failing course grade and disciplinary action from the university. The paper will be graded based on a rubric. The rubric is attached to this syllabus. I reserve the right to request modifications to papers before granting final credit for the course.

#### Questions for Paper:

1. Who makes American foreign policy? To engage this question, you should discuss the evolution of the Presidency in its conduct of American foreign policy over the past century. You should consider the role played by Congress, the federal bureaucracy and other institutions and organizations. You should also consider the roles played by the media and public opinion.
2. What role has war played in the conduct of America's foreign policy over approximately the past 100 years? In which circumstances has war been an effective instrument of American foreign policy? In which circumstances was war an ineffective foreign policy instrument?
3. Which of the following over approximately the past 100 years has played the most important role in shaping American foreign policy: the promotion of democratic values; the pursuit of economic self-interest, or defending national security? In your opinion (which you must defend), which of these should be the most important factor in determining American foreign policy?
4. What important foreign policy challenges face the United States of America today?
5. Select a question at your discretion appropriate to the course subject matter. You must clear this question with me before writing your paper.

Final Examination (25%): The final examination will consist of 100 multiple choice questions drawn from the textbook. The questions will be distributed in advance. You will be responsible for finding the answers to these questions through whatever means are available to you. You will be given two opportunities to take the test. On the first

opportunity, I will indicate which questions you answered incorrectly. You will then have a second opportunity to answer the questions correctly.

Due Dates: You are strongly advised to produce at least one short written assignment per week. All written work must be turned in at the latest by December 2 (last day of instruction). The final examination must be submitted no later than December 8 (last day of final examinations).

Grading methodology: The 10 short assignments will be evaluated on a 20-point scale (200 points total). The research paper and final examination will be graded on a 100-point scale as follows

90-100 (A) 80-89 (B) 70-79 (C) 60-69 (D) <60 (F)

Reading Selections (a total of **10** short assignments are due for the course) (you may submit up to an additional **2** assignments for extra credit)

#### Chapter 1: The United States in a Turbulent World

Short writing assignment questions: What key foreign policy challenges face the United States today? What are the reasons for America's predominance in the world? Is American predominance in the world stable, on the rise or declining? What is meant by the term: "the paradox of America's world power?"

#### Chapter 2: The Expansion of U.S. Power

Short writing assignment question: In approximately 2 pages, summarize the expansion of America's power and influence in the world from independence through the late twentieth century. What were the key moments in this story?

#### Chapter 3: Dynamics of Decision Making

Short writing assignment questions: Describe and explain the differences between the following levels of analysis: interstate system, civil society, government institutions, and political psychology. Describe and explain the differences between the following: structural realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

#### Chapter 4: Presidential Power

Short writing assignment questions: What is the President's role in making foreign policy? What advantages does the President have over Congress in making foreign policy? What are the limitations on Presidential power in making foreign policy? What current controversies face presidential decision-making today?

#### Chapter 5: Congress beyond the "Water's Edge"

Short writing assignment questions: What is Congress' role in making foreign policy? What are the key Congressional institutions in making foreign policy? What advantages does Congress have over the President in making foreign policy? Historically, in what

situations have Congress and the President been able to cooperate in foreign policy? What situations have seen the two in conflict, and who has generally prevailed?

#### Chapter 6: The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy

Short writing assignment questions: What are the key executive level departments and agencies that shape and make foreign policy? Briefly describe the roles of each. What advantages does the bureaucracy have over our elected leaders in making foreign policy? What are the potential risks in leaving so much of our day-to-day foreign policy management in the hands of the bureaucracy?

#### Chapter 7: Public Opinion at Home and Abroad

Short writing assignment questions: Explain the difference between the following terms: foreign policy elite, attentive public, and mass public. More broadly, what influence can the public have on the making of foreign policy? Should our foreign policy makers pay heed to public opinion? Why or why not?

#### Chapter 8: The Impact of Mass Communications

Short writing assignment questions: What role does the media play in the shaping and making of foreign policy? To what extent have technological developments over the past decade or so expanded the role of the media's influence? To what extent is media coverage of foreign policy biased? (Be specific.)

#### Chapter 9: Social Movements and Interest Groups

Short writing assignment questions: What are some of the prominent social movements and interest groups that have an impact on American foreign policy? What is it about our constitutional and social structures that allow private interest groups to be so persistent and effective in making their voices heard? What are NGO's? What impact can they have on foreign policy? What are their limitations? What is the military industrial complex? Why did certain public figures (President Eisenhower most conspicuously) believe that it posed a potential danger?

#### Chapter 10: National Security and Defense Policy

Short writing assignment questions: Briefly define each of the following and explain why each is important: military security, economic security, political security, societal security and environmental security. What is a "grand strategy?" What are its key elements? If the United States has a grand strategy, what is it, or what historically has it been? On what grounds can military force be justified? What is a preventative war and when is it justified?

#### Chapter 11: Economic Statecraft

Short writing assignment questions: Briefly define each of the following: capitalism, socialism, communism, economic nationalism. On what criteria is a nation's economic prowess determined? Who are the great economic powers today? To what extent does a nation's economic health determine its foreign policy? What role does trade play in a

nation's foreign policy? Is it generally advantageous for a nation to pursue free trade or protectionism? To what extent can foreign aid play in a nation's foreign policy?

Chapter 12: Transnational Policy Problems

Short writing assignment questions: What is a transnational policy problem? Provide two or three examples and explain why each problem defies traditional notions of national sovereignty. In your opinion, which transnational problem confronting the world today is the most important? Explain why.

## Writing Rubric

Student:

Class: American Foreign Policy

Term:

Assignment: Paper

	Inadequate (<14)	Adequate (14-15)	Good (16-17)	Excellent (18-20)
Thesis/Argument				
Development: Reasons & Evidence				
Organization				
Grammar and Mechanics				
Research/ Documentation In-text citation				
Total				