About This Course

Overview: If the post-Cold War period began with the promise of a New World Order and ended in the rubble of Falluja, today the United States faces a new era of conventional and unconventional challenges. This course surveys a number of contemporary state and non-state challenges to U.S. interests. These include the perils of unipolarity, the rise of potential peer competitors, internal conflict and terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. Students will analyze cases as well as theoretical literatures to deepen their understanding of the contemporary security issues facing the United States.

The course provides tools for analysis within class and after in the form of social science methodology, theory, and empirical knowledge. It also provides the opportunity to gain skills in analysis, argument, writing, and speaking that will serve students long after college.

The course provides no answers about "correct" views of or approaches to international challenges. Course material and assignments are intended to encourage students to think through foreign policy problems as citizens assessing the choices of their leaders, and, potentially, as policymakers or analysts.

This is not a course about current events. Students are expected to understand and apply theoretical arguments about state interests, threats, and strategies, and to master the empirics of the contemporary international environment. Students are expected to come to class ready to present a brief summary and analysis of the arguments and evidence presented in the readings for the week.

Educational goals: Build students’ analytical abilities; develop students’ ability to weigh available evidence and present a logically consistent argument that accords with it; to find and use evidence effectively; to analyze others’ use of evidence and logic; to analyze world events and state policies through a social science lens; to increase students’ understanding of international challenges and states’ foreign policy choices in order to build their ability to act as responsible and informed citizens; to increase their ability to assess certain types of foreign policy threats and understand some possible ways to meet them.
**Course requirements:** Students are expected to have read and considered the material prior to the class for which it is assigned, and be prepared to discuss it in class. Students are expected to attend all classes. Class attendance, participation, and assignments are all critical to doing well in the course. The written assignments culminate in a 20-page research paper. The writing process includes class presentations on your work. No late assignments will be accepted without documentation of a medical or personal emergency. Assignments turned in late without documented evidence of an emergency will be dropped one full grade for every day they are late, starting on the day the assignment is due. The assignments are discussed in detail below.

Should I make any changes in the syllabus or assignments, I will notify students through the Blackboard system. Students should feel free to email or meet with me to discuss class material and assignments.

**Academic Integrity:** Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (http://www.rochester.edu/living/urhere/handbook/discipline2.html#XII). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

**Additional Resources:** I encourage students to use the university's resources. The Writing Center, other tutoring, and the Department of Political Science librarian are all available to you. Note that the Writing Center apparently requires a professor's approval to work on a class assignment, so plan ahead.

The Office of the Dean, through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the College Center for Academic Support, provides tutoring. Students wanting information may go to CCAS in Lattimore 312, 275-2354.

The College Writing Program offers tutoring on written assignments. http://writing.rochester.edu/help/index.html

Valuable information on research and writing is at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?page=3869&this_pageID=59. Resources also appear on a page within the Blackboard course.

The Department of Political Science reference librarian, Ann Marshall, is a terrific resource. Contact her at amarshall@library.rochester.edu.

**Books Suggested for Purchase**

These books should be on reserve in the library, but they are also available in the bookstore and elsewhere.
All other material is available online, either on Blackboard or in the public realm. Assigned books will be on reserve in the library. Scholarly articles are also available through the library's online resources.


**Course outline**

**Setting the stage: Social science, theory, and policy**

**Internal challenges**

The perils of unipolarity

Shaping the world order

Potential peer competitors

Messy internal conflicts

**Terrorism**

Nuclear proliferation

Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear weapons (CBRN)
**Course requirements**

In this class you will write a research paper based on scholarly theories, arguments, and evidence from within and outside class. It requires you to conduct your own research (I and the department librarian are happy to consult with you), to plan ahead, to present your work in progress in order to strengthen it, to write and rewrite your work incorporating feedback and the knowledge and understanding you will gain throughout the term, and to produce a thoughtful, polished final paper. It is a lot of work. Do not take these assignments lightly and do start early. There are hard deadlines throughout the semester, starting with the second class.

1. **Paper prospectus due February 13 (12% of course grade):** This is a brief description of the paper you plan to write. Identify your topic, why it matters, what the conventional wisdom is on it, why you think the conventional wisdom is wrong, and what you think is a more correct view or understanding. One paragraph on each element should suffice.

   **Presentations January 30 and February 6**

   Possible topics (this list is not exhaustive, only illustrative) include an argument about why a specific threat or challenge is greater or smaller than generally considered the case; an argument about the most effective way to meet a challenge; and an argument about why a specific attempt to meet a challenge failed.

   You may find it most useful to look at more than one case or challenge in investigating your outcome of interest and making your argument.

2. **Paper outline due February 20 (12% of course grade):** This shows the structure of your paper and the argument and evidence you plan to present.

3. **Paper literature review due March 9 (12% of course grade):** This summarizes what we know now about your topic. What are the key arguments and dominant viewpoints in the scholarly literature today? Van Evera discusses the literature review in greater detail.

   **Presentations February 27 and March 5**

4. **Paper body of argument due April 9 (12% of course grade):** This is a draft of the main body of your paper, the meat of it. It includes your argument and evidence. It does not include the introduction, literature review, or conclusion.

   **Presentations March 19 and March 26**

5. **Final draft of 20-page paper due May 14 (32% of course grade):** This is the complete and final draft of your paper, with every element rewritten to reflect the feedback you have received.

   **Presentations April 23 and April 30**
6. **Presentations on prospectus, literature review, and argument (20% of course grade, this grade includes class participation):** Each presentation will be a well planned, well organized, succinct discussion of the project element you are focusing on.

   **Prospectus presentations January 30 and February 6**  
   **Literature review presentations February 27 and March 5**  
   **Argument presentations March 19 and March 26**  
   **Final paper presentations April 23 and April 30**

**Written assignments are due to me by email by 9 a.m. on date due. Remember to put your name on your work.**

Your written work must be succinct, well written, and clearly focused. You must make an argument and support it. You must draw on scholarly theories from class and outside it. You must include empirical research that goes beyond class assignments. You must use a standard citation format. You must include correct spelling, grammar, syntax, and word choice. You must format your work properly. No fiddling with margins or font size. Pay attention to the scope of theories and the definitions used. If you cite Wikipedia, you will receive a failing grade on the assignment. Grade will be based on these criteria and the accuracy of theories and facts you use, the logic and strength of your argument, the relevance and accuracy of the evidence presented, and the clarity and precision of expression.

7. **Active participation** in class, including questions, comments, and analysis, but no opinions, based on the course reading. At the beginning of each class, students will present a brief summary of the readings, including their assessment of it. Students will be called on at random; so come prepared. You are also expected to provide kind, thoughtful, constructive feedback to your classmates on their work in the discussions that follow presentations. Assessing others’ work will improve your own.

We will discuss how to read scholarly work, research and write essays, and present your work effectively. I encourage you to discuss your thoughts, assignments, and class material with others, but you will be graded solely on your own work.

**Course schedule**

**Monday, January 23**  
**Setting the stage: Social science, theory, and policy**  
**Internal challenges**


Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*, all but Chapter 3

**Monday, January 30**  
**The perils of unipolarity**

Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*

Presentations on prospectuses

**Monday, February 6**  
**Shaping the world order**

John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 7

Presentations on prospectuses

**Monday, February 13**  
**Potential peer competitors**


Discussion of outlines

Prospectuses due by 9 a.m. in my email inbox

**Monday, February 20**  
**Messy internal conflicts**


Outlines due by 9 a.m. in my email inbox

**Monday, February 27**

*Messy internal conflicts*

Sarah Kenyon Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6

Literature review presentations

**Monday, March 5**

*Terrorism*

Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Chapters 1, 3, 8


Daniel Byman, "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?" *World Politics* 56:1 (October 2003), pp. 139-163

Literature review presentations

Lit review due by 9 a.m. Friday, March 9, in my email inbox

**BREAK**

**Monday, March 19**

Argument presentations

**Monday, March 26**
Argument presentations

**Monday, April 2**

*Writing papers and the comparative method*

NO CLASS. We will discuss paper writing and methodology on numerous occasions and I expect you to use this material in your papers, so be sure to read the assignments.


Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 3.

**Monday, April 9**

*Nuclear proliferation*


Argument due by 9 a.m. in my email inbox

**Monday, April 16**

*Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear weapons (CBRN)*

Gregory Koblentz, *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, Conclusion

**Monday, April 23**

Presentations on final paper

**Monday, April 30**

Presentations on final paper

Final paper due May 14, by 9 a.m. in my email inbox