

University of Aberdeen

From the Selected Works of Jon D. Carlson

Fall 2013

US Foreign Policy - Syllabus

Jon D. Carlson, *University of California, Merced*



Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/jondcarlson/17/>

University of California, Merced
POLI 160 – U.S. Foreign Policy

Fall 2013

Instructor – Dr. Jon D. Carlson
Class Location – SSB 160
Time – MWF 10:30-11:20

Office – SSM 250b
Hours – MWF 11:30-12:30, & by app't
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The following three quotations summarize the philosophy of this course:

“Men make their own history, but they don’t make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.”

KARL MARX

“The convictions that leaders have formed before reaching high office are the intellectual capital they will consume as long as they continue in office” -- Secretary of State HENRY KISSINGER

“Critics say that America is a lie because its reality is so far short of its ideals. They are wrong. America is not a lie; it is a disappointment. But it can be a disappointment only because it is also a hope” -- SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, Professor, Harvard University

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces students to the main outlines and issues in American foreign policy since the beginnings of World War II in 1939 and to the cultural and ideological foundations of these policies. The approach adopted could be called “critical political history.” “Political history” means that we will approach the subject of American foreign policy historically so that chronological sequencing and linkages among key events, actions, personalities and policies will provide the organizational basis for the course. “Critical” means that we will try to look below events and actions in an effort to understand the forces that offer the most comprehensive explanations of the past record and the best basis to anticipate the future behavior of the United States in foreign affairs.

Although American foreign policy began long before 1939 and its ideological roots are to be found in 16th century England, we begin our survey in 1939 when the US was not a superpower. America’s “rise to globalism” occurred between 1939 and 1943. How this happened and how the US has behaved as a superpower are what concerns us in this course. There are three major periods in our story:

- 1) 1939-1946, World War II and its immediate aftermath;
- 2) 1947-1990, fighting and winning the Cold War, which at several times and places was a “hot war” as in Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan; and
- 3) 1990 to the present, the post-Cold War era.

Thus, the bulk of the material will deal with the Cold War in Europe, Asia and the Third World: why this war was fought, how it was “won,” and what winning it cost the United States and the rest of the world. We will conclude the course with an analysis of US foreign policy today and its possible futures.

A major theme of this course, as suggested by the quotes from Marx and Kissinger is how each new American President is constrained to a remarkable degree by the actions and commitments of his predecessors. To understand and to be able to evaluate critically the foreign policies of our President Barack Obama, requires students to be familiar with the foreign policies of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson,

Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and Bush. Clearly, the policies of Clinton and Bush relate most closely to Obama's policies, but as you will learn, it was under Roosevelt that the US committed itself to the role of a global power, a role it plays to this day. Indeed, the French call the US a "hyperpower".

In addition to surveying critically the foreign policy record since 1939, we will explore those elements of American culture and values that shape how Americans, ordinary citizens and leaders alike, relate to the rest of the world. What beliefs do Americans hold about themselves and the role of the US in the world? How do we regard other peoples and cultures in our interdependent world? What do we think of violence and revolutionary change and how do we react to these widespread happenings? Where do these values, attitudes and beliefs come from and are they so coherent to be called an American **ideology**? Does *ideology* affect American foreign policy?

PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES (PLOs):

The Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) for the Political Science Program are for students to develop:

1. An understanding of the processes, theories, and empirical regularities of political institutions and political behavior in the student's chosen emphasis area: American politics, comparative politics, or international relations.
2. An ability to employ critical thinking and demonstrate social scientific literacy, including basic quantitative literacy.
3. A capacity to utilize contemporary social science research methods to conduct rigorous research on political phenomena.
4. Effective written communication skills, especially the ability to convey complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner.
5. An ability to apply abstract theory and research methods to understand contemporary political events and public policies.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

It is my intention that students who do well in POL 160 will be different persons in December 2013 than they were in August, when the course began. Specifically, students will: (1) **deepen** their understanding of the historical background of US foreign policy. (PLO #1) (2) **Appreciate and understand** the role of precedents and analogies in the conduct of foreign policy. (PLO #1, 5) (3) **Recognize** ideological discourse and behavior when they see, hear or read it. (PLO #4) (4) **Communicate** effectively in writing and speaking before a group. (PLO #4) (5) **Argue** in a clear, logical, concise and persuasive fashion. (PLO #4) And, (6) **Be able to think, write and speak** critically about US foreign policy so that they can be responsible citizens.

TEXTBOOKS

There are four required textbooks and eleven required case studies for this course. All texts are available from the Bookstore. You must acquire and read all of these materials if you are to do well in this course.

Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, 9th revised edition. New York: Penguin Books, 2010, **required**.

Thomas G. Paterson, *et. al.*, *American Foreign Relations, A History: Vol 2 Since 1895*, 6th or 7th Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005, **required**.

Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, **required**.

Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd edition. Houghton Mifflin, 1982, *optional*.

KENNEDY SCHOOL CASE#C16-90-970 “Constructive Engagement in South Africa: The Ethics of Persuasion.

[KENNEDY SCHOOL CASE # C14-79-144](#), “The Coming of the Cold War” and “Supplement”.

PEW/GUISD CASE #332, “The United States, Britain and Mossadegh.”

PEW/GUISD CASE # 334, “The Cuban Missile Crisis.”

[KENNEDY SCHOOL CASE # C15-80-271](#), “Americanizing the Vietnam War.”

PEW/GUISD CASE # 503, “Covert Action in Chile, 1970-73.”

PEW/GUISD CASE # 311, “The Fall of the Shah of Iran.”

[KENNEDY SCHOOL CASE # C16-91-1045.0](#), “The US Marines in Lebanon.”

PEW/GUISD CASE #514, “The Kuwait Crisis”

PEW/GUISD CASE #464, “Key Decisions in the Somalia Intervention.”

PEW/GUISD CASE #278, “Going to the United Nations: George W. Bush and Iraq”

Case Studies may be purchased directly from the publishers for electronic download, generally at rates lower than that for printed material. You are expected to abide by appropriate copyright laws:

Kennedy School: <http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/>

PEW/GUISD: http://www.guisd.org/case_page.cfm

STUDENT ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION¹

Most of us, if not all, know how to ride a bicycle. Think about how you learned to ride a bike. I’m sure you did not attend lectures on bike riding. Rather, with the assistance of a parent, sibling or friend you got on the bike and started riding. You may have had learning wheels, you may have fallen off the bike many times, **but in the end you learned how to ride the bike** and you can still do that today! This is a good example of all learning. First, it was **active**, not passive. You did things rather than taking lecture notes. Second, you were **motivated** to learn bike riding because your friends did it, or it gave you greater mobility, or for any number of other good reasons.

This course is like learning to ride a bike. We will be discussing and analyzing eleven case studies of important episodes in US foreign policy. You will also have to be ready to respond to my questions about my lectures that I may ask at any time. You will have to write three mini-essays on the case studies, and a research essay based on sources you find on your own.

Another way to think about learning at a University is that it is like taking out a membership in a Health and Fitness Club. Your tuition at the University gives you the right to attend a certain number of classes each semester. It also gives you the right to use the Library system, the computer commons and other University facilities. Similarly, your Club membership fee allows you to use the exercise machines, swimming pool and other Club facilities. **However**, if you never visit the Club and work out, your membership money is wasted. In the same fashion, if you just come to class some of the time without preparing and without participating, **without being active in class**, your tuition money is wasted too! So, as your teacher I am like a personal fitness trainer. It’s my job to exercise your mind. And please remember – **no pain, no gain!** Life IS a participatory activity.

Teaching Philosophy

¹ Learning metaphors courtesy of Patrick McGowan

Heterodox: Do not fear to dissent from the taken-for-granted or assumed “best” path. Question yourself; defend your point of view, without being dismissive of alternative positions or disrespectful of others. Use alternative ways of seeing to map the limitations of your own gaze, and to sharpen its focus. Recognize that learning is a process of *cooperative conflict*: ultimately, we argue with texts, distant authors, and each other in order to advance a dialogue, not to defend a dogma. If the instructor asks for clarification or pushes you to expand on a comment or position, he does so with this in mind, not to “make you feel dumb”.

Intellectualism: If you are in college or university, odds are good that you believe in the value of education. Indeed, knowledge is power. However, having an opinion (especially in Political Science courses) or a belief is not the same as having accurate knowledge. In fact, many of human kind’s most enduring conflicts are based on beliefs (religious or otherwise) that do not coincide with others’ beliefs. In this class I will ask you to develop the following skills:

1. **Embrace your ignorance**, then strive to overcome it. We learn by first recognizing there is a skill or body of knowledge that we do not have, then taking steps to rectify this. Many students have their academic progress stunted because they are afraid of “looking stupid” in front of their peers; we are all here to learn, act accordingly and overcome this fear!

2. **Question assumptions:** Part of being in college is to challenge belief systems and to think new, often scary thoughts. Question yourself and ask WHY you believe things that you believe. It is acceptable to have opinions, but the instructor will often ask you why you hold them; have a reason *why* you think what you think! Part of being human is our ability to recognize when we have been wrong, and change our viewpoint in light of new information. This can be incredibly powerful, even though ‘existential crises’ are often a disturbing aspect of being in university.

3. **Opposing views:** Part of being truly educated is the ability to hold two opposite viewpoints in your mind at the same time, understand both fully, and then be able to decide which is most favorable. This does *not* require you to agree with one, both, or either, but rather to understand it in an objective (not reactionary) manner. For example, in American politics we have a system dominated by two parties, which often leads to emotionally heated debates. One way to cut through the emotion of such situations is to mentally “switch” the labels associated with each position, and ask yourself if you would feel the same way if a Democrat (or Republican) were taking the position being contested. This can be especially fruitful in situations dominated by personality (such as a Presidency!). Be able to take personal views and emotions out of a debate and evaluate arguments critically.

Your performance in POLI 160 will be based on the following learning activities:

1) **CLASS ATTENDANCE (10%):** This is easy. I expect that you will attend all meetings of this class. By the third meeting of this course, you will be in a permanent seat of your own choosing (a seating chart will be made on this day) and I will take roll of the class on ten randomly selected days. You begin this course with 10 attendance points. Each absence will cost you one point off your final grade, up to a total of minus 10 points. If you are absent because of personal illness, please get a note to that effect from your MD and I will remove your absent mark.

2) **CLASS PARTICIPATION (30%)** This may be new to you and will be worth 30 points toward your final grade. As outlined in the following schedule, we are going to read and discuss eleven cases dealing with important aspects of American foreign policy during this semester. We will spend 1 day discussing each case. Directions on how to prepare for case study discussion will be forthcoming. Also, on Friday we will do a practice case called “The Offended Colonel” and debrief it. This will help you become comfortable with the case discussion method of learning. The case to read and discuss is at the end of this syllabus. In addition, self and peer evaluation of

overall participation will be included in your final course participation grade. Honest and forthright feedback is required; feedback deemed not to be so will be discounted or thrown out.

3) **MINI-ESSAYS (15%)** – You will write three mini-essays, each no more than three double-spaced pages long on subjects related to the text, lectures, but particularly the case discussions. Each essay should comprise a well-written analysis of the assigned questions with a thesis, a body of the essay that develops the thesis and a conclusion. The essays should include references and, when appropriate, quotations from the relevant cases and the texts. You do not need to do any outside research in preparing your mini-essays. ***Please take these instructions seriously, as experience shows that students do not do their best work on their first essay. Please give your very best efforts from first to last essay!*** Your essay will be marked 50% on the quality of writing and 50% on its substantive content, so please make sure your essays are well written. Each essay is worth five points, for 15 points toward your final grade. Due in class on the date given.

Essay Question One – To what extent does ideology -- as outlined and discussed by Hunt -- influence contemporary US foreign policy? You may give examples from “Constructive Engagement in South Africa” or other use more contemporary examples. **DUE 09/18.**

Essay Question Two - Which country was most responsible for starting the Cold War, the USA, or the USSR or both? Why? The case “The Coming of the Cold War” is particularly relevant. **DUE 10/04.**

Essay Question Three – Putting yourself in the position of the current leadership of Iran, should you view the US as an ally or antagonist? What historical evidence do you use to reach this conclusion? The cases “The US Britain & Mossadegh” and “The Fall of the Shah” may be salient. **DUE 11/08.**

4) **RESEARCH-BASED ESSAY (20%)**: Assume that you are a senior advisor to Secretary of State John Kerry. The Secretary has tasked you with writing a position paper on a contemporary issue in American foreign policy. Your paper should be ten to twelve double-spaced pages in length with at least one page of sources. The paper must do three things: (1) describe the issue; (2) explain current US policy toward the issue; (3) present a defense/justification/suggestions for the US policy position. Your essay is worth 20 points toward your final grade. **DUE 12/04.**

Your essay should use *reputable* sources of information as much as possible. The following URLs will prove useful. When you find any URLs, please share them!

A) **OFFICIAL U. S. GOVERNMENT SOURCES:**

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

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

United States Central Intelligence Agency <http://www.odci.gov/cia/>

The Whitehouse and Executive Branch <http://whitehouse.gov/>

United States Congress <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

B) **MAJOR AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS:**

The Christian Science Monitor <http://www.csmonitor.com/>

The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/>

The Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

C) **GENERAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS INTERNET SOURCES:**

Foreign Affairs : <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/>

Foreign Policy : <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

International Relations and Security Network: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/>

5) **EXAMINATION(S) (25%)**: There will be a Midterm and Final Examination covering text readings, case study readings and lectures. The Midterm will be on **10/14** and is worth 100 points toward your grade. The Final Exam will be during the university scheduled examination time and will cover material after the Midterm. It will be worth 150 total points.

GRADING SCHEME

Grades in POL 160 will not be assigned on a curve. Everyone can earn a grade of “A” or a grade of “F.” Your final grade will be based upon the following components:

Class attendance.....	100 points
Three mini-essays.....	150 points
Policy essay.....	200 points
Case discussion/DQs.....	300 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final examination.....	150 points

TOTAL	1000 points

CLASS ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Cheating

Cheating on any quiz, exam, or written assignment will result in an automatic failing grade for that assignment and possibly an ‘F’ for the entire course – *notation will be made in your transcript to this effect*. Extreme cases may also result in expulsion from the University, as discussed college guidelines for academic dishonesty. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying any part of a classmate’s work and plagiarism – inadequately citing published material or using material without permission. Plagiarism will be taken *extremely* seriously and any and all cases will be referred to the Dean for administrative action.

<http://studentlife.ucmerced.edu/what-we-do/student-judicial-affairs/academicy-honesty-policy>

Special Needs

If you have special needs or a disability, please be sure to contact the UC Disability Services Specialist, for help in clarifying and obtaining appropriate accommodations.

Late Assignments

All assignments are due in class on the date they are due. You are responsible for printing and stapling a hard copy for submission AND uploading an electronic version to CROPS. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade *per day* (not class meeting) they are late, to a ‘base’ of 50% after which papers will be graded out of 50%.

DURING AND BEYOND THIS COURSE: As the instructor of this course, I hope that you will develop a life-long interest in American foreign policy and the role of the United States in the world. There are many specialized quarterly journals relevant to this subject, most strongly recommended are *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. Other mainstream magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Economist* and even *National Geographic* regularly deal with issues of foreign policy interest.

COURSE SCHEDULE (16 weeks)

Note: Fridays are ‘catch all’ days. Class *does* meet.

Week 1:

Friday: Course organization, discussion of syllabus, read “The Case of the Offended Colonel.” Intro Lecture on Foreign Policy structures.

Week 2:

Monday* (no class): **Case discussion** of “The Offended Colonel”; debrief case discussion. Perception exercise and discuss case. Roots of American foreign policy ideology. Read the Hunt text, pp. 1-91.

Wednesday: Notions of American greatness and racism. Read the Hunt text, pp. 92-198. Janis Ch 1.

Friday: American ideology in the 20th century. Review the entire Hunt text. Paterson Ch 5.

Week 3:

Monday: Finish and Review Hunt text

Wednesday: **Case discussion** of “Constructive Engagement in South Africa.” Janis Ch. 4: Pearl Harbor.

Friday: The United States and the Onset of World War II; World War II in Europe and its Consequences. Read the Ambrose and Brinkley text, pp. ix-34. Paterson Ch6.

Week 4:

Monday: World War II in Asia and its Consequences. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 35-51.

Wednesday: Origins of the Cold War. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 52-74. **MINI-ESSAY #1 DUE 09/18.**

Friday: The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 75-94. Paterson Ch 7. Janis Ch 7: Making of the Marshall Plan.

Week 5:

Monday: **Case discussion** of “The Coming of the Cold War.”

Wednesday: Containment in action. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 95-113,

Week 6:

Monday: The Korean War. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 114-126. Modern Legacies? Janis Ch 3: North Korea. The Republican Approach to Foreign Policy. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 127-150. Paterson Ch 8.

Wednesday: The Second Eisenhower Administration: Hungary, Suez and Cuba. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 151-170. **YOUR SECOND MINI-ESSAY IS DUE 10/04.**

Week 7:

Monday: **Case discussion** of “The United States, Britain and Mossadegh.”

Wednesday: John F. Kennedy and the New Frontier. Ambrose and Brinkley text, pp. 171-189. Paterson Ch 9, to 342. Janis Ch 6.

Week 8:

Monday: **MIDTERM EXAM 10/14**

Wednesday: **Case discussion** of “The Cuban Missile Crisis.” Lyndon Baines Johnson and Vietnam. Ambrose and Brinkley , pp. 190-223. The debacle in Vietnam. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 224-253. Paterson, finish Ch9.

Week 9:

Monday: **Case discussion** of “Americanizing the Vietnam War.” Janis Ch 5.

Wednesday: Nixon’s policies in the Middle East and Africa. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 253-280. Paterson Ch10.

Week 10:

Monday: **Case discussion** of “Covert Action in Chile, 1970-1973”. Janis Ch 8.

Wednesday: Jimmy Carter’s foreign policies. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 281-302.

Week 11:

Monday: **Case discussion** of “The Fall of the Shah of Iran.” Janis Ch 10.

Wednesday: Reagan and the Evil Empire. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 303-351, Paterson Ch11.

Friday: **YOUR THIRD MINI-ESSAY IS DUE 11/08.**

Week 12: (Monday – No Class)

Monday: **Case discussion** of the “U.S. Marines in Lebanon.” Janis Ch 11.

Wednesday: Bush, the end of the Cold War and the Kuwait Crisis, Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 352-397

Week 13:

Monday: **Case Discussion** of “The Kuwait Crisis”. Clinton and Democratic Enlargement, Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 398-428, Paterson Ch 12.

Wednesday: **Case discussion** of “The Somalia Intervention.”

Friday: (No Class)

Week 14:

Monday: *Frontline*.

Wednesday: The Clinton Legacy and Rwanda, Bush and the Current Trajectory of American Foreign Policy. Ambrose and Brinkley, pp.431-460.

Week 15:

Monday: Bush Doctrine and Pre-emption in Iraq, Future Projections and Legacies of Bush, Ambrose and Brinkley, pp. 473-512

Wednesday: **YOUR POLICY POSITION PAPER IS DUE TODAY 12/04.**

Friday: **Case Discussion** “Going to the United Nations: George W. Bush and Iraq”

Week 16:

Monday: Obama and the first few years; Ch12 (online)

Wednesday: *Frontline*

Friday: Evaluation of Obama Policies. Instruction ends

Final examination: Saturday 12/14, 8-11 am. – **NO EARLY EXAMS!**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Students enrolled in POLI 160: U.S. Foreign Policy

FR: Jon D. Carlson, Instructor

RE: Study Questions for the Case of “The Offended Colonel.”

Please read the following case very carefully and develop answers to the following questions. You can make notes to yourself in the case and at the bottom of this page. **Hint:** If you know someone in class, prepare to discuss with him/her.

- 1) Does Ben Cheever have a problem? If so, exactly what is it?
- 2) Ben has an interesting background that is described in the case. What characteristics, experiences and abilities does Ben have that should help him deal with the situation created by the Colonel?
- 3) In looking at what Ben said and did up to the point of the Colonel’s challenge, what might Ben have done differently? In other words, is there information in the case that suggests Ben made some mistakes in how he prepared for and conducted the class?
- 4) All classes exist in larger settings. Is there anything in how and why the class was organized or what happened before Ben began the case discussion that might be working against Ben?
- 5) What should Ben do? Should he apologize to the Colonel? If so, how and why? If not, why not?
- 6) Does this case relate in any way to your educational experiences at UC Merced? If so, how?

Your ideas/answers/reflections/rude comments go below and on the back.
