PSCI 490: US Foreign Policy
Spring 2017
Mondays 11:30-2:20 AL 209

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Ettinger
Email Address: aaron.ettinger@uwaterloo.ca
Office Location: Hagey Hall 348
Office Hours: Mondays 3-5pm, or by appointment

Contact Policy:
The best way to communicate with me is by email at the address listed above. I do my best to answer all queries within 24 hours. When you send an email please observe some common-sense rules of email etiquette. Always include “PSCI 490” in the subject line; begin the message with a greeting and sign off with your own name. Use your uwaterloo email address to prevent your message from going to the junk folder. Regarding office hours, I have a general open door policy and you may drop in anytime, though forewarning would help. I also hold formal office hours.

Course Description
This course is about American foreign policy from 2001 to the present, also known as the post-September 11 period. In this time, the US-led wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and the global war on terrorism have been the principal preoccupation of the US foreign policy establishment. Increasingly, US foreign policy intellectuals have come to identify this period as a distinct era in the history of America’s foreign relations. At best, the record of US foreign policy in this time has been mixed; at worst, it has been an abject failure. This class addresses the politics and policies that have guided US foreign policy in this time and the controversies that have gripped the world. More broadly, it will attempt to answer the questions about the current state of affairs: how did US foreign policy get to this point and where might it be headed under the third presidential administration of the post-September 11 era.

Pre-Requisites:
There are no pre-requisites, though as a fourth-year seminar course, 4A is strongly recommended. Additional recommendations include at least one 300-level International Relations course; PSCI 281 World Politics is strongly recommended as is PSCI 257 Introduction to the Middle East. Since this is a fourth-year seminar course, I assume that you are familiar with the basics of International Relations theory and its major concepts. Though you will not be evaluated on your knowledge of IR theory, it is advisable to be conversant in this language.
Expectations:

(1) *Come to class:* A university education is a privilege and seminar discussions can be illuminating. More instrumentally, the world is run by those who show up. Wise students will attend all seminars and use the discussions to develop ideas for the final term paper. I expect everyone to attend each seminar. It’s as simple as that.

(2) *Keep up with your work:* I expect you to attend class having read the assigned material. Assignments must be submitted by the time and date indicated. As always, late penalties will apply. A list of key dates appears on the final page of this syllabus.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this twelve-week course, students will be able to:

(1) Identify the ideological foundations of US foreign policy
(2) Explain the evolution of US foreign policy in the post-September 11 period
(3) Speak clearly about the theoretical and empirical aspects of US foreign policy;
(4) Write clearly about the complexities of US foreign policy and International Relations theory

Texts
There is no textbook for this course so I have developed a reading list drawn from academic journals available online. A link to each article appears next to each entry on this syllabus. If, for whatever reason, the link does not work, most readings can be accessed online through the library search function or Google Scholar. Readings that are *not* available online will be posted to LEARN.

Course Requirements

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Page Commentaries</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Six of eight weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>August 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weeks 10-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weeks 10-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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30%  Single-Page Commentaries (6 x 1 page each)

You will write six (6) single-page commentaries in response to the required readings. Each commentary will be graded out of 10. The total score (60) will be divided in half which will be
your score on this portion of the coursework. Commentaries should be no longer than 1 page single-spaced. There is no need to provide citations or a bibliography. If you cannot resist the urge to cite, refer to the author of the article in parenthesis and I will assume that it corresponds to the syllabus.

Commentaries may address any component of the readings that you find interesting. Treat the commentaries as editorial reflections on the material at hand. This may include specific objections to the literature, broad commentaries, issues you would like to explore, et cetera. Though the direction is up to you, the compositions should avoid trivial concerns or summarizing the readings.

Commentaries will be graded on the basis of substance and style. I want to see interesting and substantive insights into the content, and clear writing.

Due dates: Six times throughout the first eight substantive weeks of class. Put differently, you have two weeks where you do not have to submit a paper. Only one commentary can be submitted per class. I prefer that you submit the paper during the relevant session in hard copy though I can accept emailed versions under extenuating circumstances. You cannot bundle them together and submit them as a package later in the term.

40%  Research Paper (3000-3500 words)

You will write a research paper on a topic of your choice. The essay may cover any issue relating to US foreign policy in the post-2001 period, broadly interpreted. This is your opportunity to explore an issue that interests you. Topics may flow from classroom conversations or from weekly reflection papers. Students may also select a topic that is not covered on the syllabus, provided it relates to the course’s theme. I recommend consulting with me first.

Your research should be framed by a question. A good research question allows you to offer an answer – also known as your thesis or argument. Your paper must make an argument about its subject matter. This means that you must advance a normative, theoretical or an empirical claim in response to your research question. Papers that only describe a situation will not suffice.

Your essay must have a bibliography and use a proper citation style.

Due date: August 18 at 11:59pm

10%  Student Presentations

Weeks 10-12 will consist of student presentations. Students will present their preliminary research papers in a conference-style format. Three or four students will present their work, followed by discussion and constructive commentary from the class. Each student will have
about 15 minutes to discuss the particulars of his or her research at that particular stage of its
development. As a work-in-progress, your presentation should offer:

1. An interesting question and a reason why this topic matters
2. A working hypothesis / interesting answer(s)
3. Some evidence to support your claims
4. Potential avenues for further exploration

Ideally, your presentation will spark debate and help you develop your research paper in advance
of the deadline.

Due dates: A schedule of presentations will be established in advance

10% Peer Evaluation

During student presentations (weeks 10-12), you will provide written anonymous feedback on
each presentation. The purpose of this peer evaluation is to provide helpful commentary on each
project during its development. Accordingly, you will be evaluated on the insight and usefulness
of your feedback. You will provide typed comments on each presenter within 6 days of the
presentation. Comments will be emailed directly to me, anonymized, and passed along to the
presenter so that they may be considered during the final composition of the research paper. 100
words will be considered the baseline target for your comments.

10% Class Attendance and participation

This is a seminar course and you are expected to participate regularly and vigorously.
Accordingly, a healthy percentage of the overall grade is apportioned to in-class performance. I
will assess your participation on three general criteria.

Seminar Discussion and Office Hours: In-class performance as well as any office visits will
count towards your overall participation grade.

Late Policy:

Single-page commentaries must be submitted on the day of the class

Term paper is due Friday, August 18 at 11:59 pm on LEARN or in my office or via email.
Papers submitted after the deadline will be assessed 8% for the first day and 3% for every day
thereafter

Extensions may be granted only with justifiable reason. Student travel plans are not an
acceptable reason for granting extensions.
Grade Scale

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<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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Style Guidelines

Please submit all of your written work with the following specifications.

Font – Times New Roman (anything else will drive me nuts)
Font size – 12-point font (thank you)
Margins – 2.54 cm / 1 inch margins
Page numbers – beginning on the first page of text, not the title page
Headings – Yes, you can use headings and subheadings in your submitted work.
Citation style – I prefer any style that involves embedded citations. This means citations in the text that look like this: (Author last name, year: page #). A bibliography at the end of the paper connects the in-text citation to the full source information. Footnotes are allowable for explanatory digressions or notes of clarification. If you have any concerns about how use this style, please refer to the reading list for examples of how to do it right. If I see mistakes in your citation style, I will know that you have not read the syllabus.
Schedule of Topics:

**Week 1: Introductions: What were the post-September 11 Wars?**

*Recommended reading*


**Week 2: The Political Ideologies of US Foreign Policy (76 pages)**


**Week 3: The War in Afghanistan (97 pages)**


*Bonus viewing*


**Week 4: The War in Iraq (~100 pages)**


Filkins, Dexter. 2014. “What We Left Behind.” *New Yorker*. April 28. [Here](#)

**Recommended viewing:**

PBS Frontline. 2014. “Losing Iraq.” July 29. 84 minutes. [Here](#)

**Week 5: The War on Terrorism (~90 pages)**


Stern, Jessica. 2015. Obama and Terrorism: Like it or Not, the War Goes On. *Foreign Affairs* September/October. Pp. 61-70. [Here](#)


**Week 6: The Dark Side (~85 pages)**


**Week 7: US and the Muslim World (110~ pages)**

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2002. Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism. *American Anthropologist* 104 (3): 766-775. [Here](#)


Eltahawy, Mona. 2012. “Why Do They Hate Us?” *Foreign Policy*, April 23. [Here](#)


**Week 8: Arab Spring and the Perils of Humanitarian Intervention (111 pages)**


**Week 9: Foreign Policy Doctrine: Bush, Obama, Trump**


**Week 10-12: Student Presentations**
University Regulations

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,


Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, Student Petitions http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70. In addition, consult Student Grievances http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, Student Appeals http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): Academic Integrity http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): Academic Integrity Office http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

If you need to request special accommodation, please communicate with me as soon as possible. This way we can arrange for the proper arrangements with little disruption.
Key Dates in this Course:

Monday, May 1: Introductions: What were the post-September 11 Wars?
Monday, May 8: Ideas, Ideologies and US Foreign Policy
Monday, May 15: The War in Afghanistan
Monday, May 22: NO CLASSES, VICTORIA DAY
Tuesday, May 23: The War in Iraq
Monday, May 29: The War on Terrorism
Monday, June 5: The Dark Side
Monday, June 12: US and the Muslim World
Monday, June 19: Arab Spring and the Perils of Humanitarian Intervention
Monday, June 26: US Foreign Policy Doctrines: Bush, Obama, Trump
Monday, June 3: NO CLASSES, CANADA DAY
Monday, June 10: Student Presentations
Monday, June 17: Student Presentations
Monday, June 24: Student Presentations
Friday, August 18: RESEARCH PAPER DUE