Formulation and Conduct of U.S. Foreign Policy

Basics

Instructor: Tobias Heinrich (`heinrict@mailbox.sc.edu` – `www.theinrich.net`)

Time and place: POLI 340, University of South Carolina, Summer 2017.

Class: Mondays through Thursdays, Noon–1.25pm, Gambrell 302.

Office hours: I will usually be available before and after class. You can also schedule alternative times with me through email.

Outline

This course offers an analytical approach to the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The goal is to learn to think about such policies by actively carrying out novel, unique research. Ideally, everyone wrestles with questions and issues that often are only spoken in lectures.

The course is also extremely focused via the conscientious omissions and choices with regard to the content. Most crucially, this is neither a course on diplomatic history, nor about whatever media outlets happen to be covering at this minute. Further, the course will not treat the United States' foreign policy as anything inherently exceptional, but rather as an important case among all states' foreign policies.

What does the course cover? Foreign policy of any state is presumed to come out of the interplay between various actors who seek to influence the statal policy over some issue. Using this perspective, we will consider (1) who these actors are, (2) which issues they might seek to affect, and (3) what the resulting statal policies might be. With a broad overview of these foundations in the first third of the course, we then carry out two research projects as large class exercises.

If you actively and meticulously participate in this course, you will learn

- how to coherently think in a structured way through political issues and how policy toward it gets made;

- about a broad range of activities of U.S. foreign policy;

- how to predict the outcomes of complex political interactions;

Date of this syllabus: May 7, 2017.

- consider issues of design in answering questions of interest;

- to think more like a (social) scientist and much less like a journalist or talking head.

Required Materials

All materials (journal articles, book chapters, and some news articles) will be provided via email or Blackboard.

An important note on the readings: The course will rely at times on some complicated material that may involve difficult statistics and game theoretic models. I do not expect you to fully understand these sections of papers; however, the expectation is that you are able to get what the addressed issue is, what the previous work thought on the topic, what the novel take of the paper is, and what the implications are. How the author reaches the conclusions is not that important in the context of this class. At times, lectures will walk you through details of the readings.

Grades and Grading

Your grade will be comprised of several contributions. The details for each assignment will be provided in class when the assignment is given. These are:

- **Test 1** covers ideas about science, social science, research, and basic concepts of political science. Like the other tests, it will be given on Blackboard. [It is given on May 15 and is due May 16 6, 11.59am. Weight is 3.]

- **Test 2** is about actors and issues in foreign policy. [Given on June 6 and is due June 7, 11.59am. Weight is 3.]

- The topic of **Test 3** is about everything we've done. [Given in class June 21. Weight is 5.]

- There will be frequent-ish **Quizzes**, generally consisting of 3–4 short questions. The grade for the quizzes will be the average of your best 70% of quizzes. [Weight is 3.]

- For the **Book Forum**, you have to read one book about (recent) history or current events. Your responsibility is to lead half a class session: distribute a chapter of the book for everyone to read, provide a detailed review of the book, and use two social science concepts to analyze aspects of the book. The book has to be approved. [Weight is 3.]

- As part of a group, you have to lead a class session on a **New actor**. The goal is to review how scholars think about that new actor. [Weight is 4.]

- At the beginning of (many) classes without quizzes, one student will be randomly selected to recap the last class session. The grade for the **Random Recap** will be the average of the best 70% recaps. [Weight is 2.]

Everything in this class will be graded on a scale of 0-100 and carries a weight as indicated above. The final grade is simply the weighted average of the grades.

Note: As **Test 1** is the first time that (longer) work is graded in this class, students have a simple, no-questions-asked option to downweight **Test 1**. If a student declares via email to the instructor that he/she wishes to have **Test 1** count only half, then the grade of **Test 1** will only have a weight of 1.5 in the calculation of the final grade. This has to be declared before **Test 2** is given, and the decision is not reversible.

There will be no extra-credit at all. There are plenty of opportunities in the class to better one's grade. Unexcused absences from the new actor and book forum sessions at which one has to present entail an automatic zero.

I will use the following grading scale to map the final grade-points to letter grades. A 92-100, B+ 87-91, B 80-86, C+ 77-79, C 70-76, D+ 67-69, D 60-66, and F 0-59. Standard rounding rules apply. If you choose to turn in your work late, then you will lose ten points each and every 6 hours. Further, tests may get curved; how this happens is at the discretion of the instructor.

Assignments and examination work are expected to be the sole effort of the student submitting the work. Students are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Honor Code and should expect that every instance of a suspected violation will be reported. Students found responsible for violations of the Code will be subject to academic penalties under the Code in addition to whatever disciplinary sanctions are applied. Cheating on a test or copying someone else's work, will result in a zero for the work, possibly a grade of F in the course, and, in accordance with University policy, be referred to the University Committee for Academic Responsibility and may result in expulsion from the University. Don't do it.

You are expected to be in class on time and be there every time as attending class is an integral part in learning the material. That said, no attendance will be taken so that there is no formal, direct disadvantage. The exception to this is that if you miss many quizzes or random recaps, then your grade will be affected. I firmly believe that missing classes will adversely affect your learning and thereby your grade in indirected ways.

Reading the assigned material and attending class are crucial and not substitutable for each other. Some material in the readings are starting points for the content of the lectures; others will be dissected meticulously in lectures. There will also be lectures without any previous grounding in readings. Your learning and thereby your grade will require close attention to lectures and readings.

Politics is inherently a social phenomenon, and thereby discussions about it are as well. I encourage every student to voice objections, questions, critique, and dissatisfaction with the presented material as well as to instructor's and other students' views on the material. There are only three prerequisites: the comments have to be thought-out before voiced, be respectful, and must not aim to disrupt the course for disruption's sake.

Last, in light of debates around "micro-aggression", let me clear: I cannot rule out that class discussions will challenge students' pre-existing beliefs; I would argue that I would fail my job if discussions did not challenge pre-existing beliefs. Consider this syllabus an omnibus trigger warning for the entire semester.

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Office of Student Disability Services: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email `sasds@ mailbox.sc.edu`, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.

The syllabus may be changed by the instructor. If unclear about anything, just ask and ask early. Don't hesitate.

Course Schedule

Part I: Preliminaries

The initial part of the course sets the stage for everything that follows. Students will learn the demarcation of topics as well as the approach that will be taken throughout. It also explores the questions what foreign policy is anyways.

May 8 Howdy, y'all. And what are we doing here? Also: Setting up a first group project on the question, "What is foreign policy?"
May 9 A lecture on what won't be covered in this course.
May 10 Answers to "What is foreign policy?" Presentations of the results from the group project. Also: Setting up group project for the question, "What do you already know about studying foreign policy?"
May 11 What is science? What is social science? Also: Submit at least three books that you propose to read.
May 15 Answers to "What do you already know about studying foreign policy?" Also: Assign books and new actors.

Part II: Actors of (and issues in) foreign policy

This part of the course introduces some of the major actors and issues in U.S. foreign policy. Students will learn how to assess what drives the actors in foreign policy, and gain an understanding of how the actors would approach issues.

May 16: The executive.
May 17: The legislative.
May 18: The bureaucracy.
May 22: The interest groups and firms.

May 23: The people and the media.
May 24: Book Forum I.
May 25: Book Forum II.
May 29: New actor I.
May 30: No class.
May 31: New actor II.
June 1: Issue area and its actors. We pick an issue (Iran nuclear deal? NAFTA? Third-party doctrine and surveillance?) and then dig into the actors.
June 5: Book Forum III.
June 6: Book Forum IV.

Part III: Project 1 – Predicting the Future!

This section will prepare students to know the future. Relying on the framework by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, we combine assumptions taken from public resources and from what we generally know about actors to forecast the future. Which outcome we will predict in class will be determined by a vote.

June 7: Making predictions. Deciding on the topic.

- Michael A.M. Lerner and Ethan Hill, "The New Nostradamus" in Good Magazine. URL: `http://preview.tinyurl.com/p4axrqe`.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "A Prediction for the Future of Iran" at TED. URL: `http://preview.tinyurl.com/p75ktum`.

June 8: Defining and refining what we want to predict.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioneer's Game*, Chapter 4 on Blackboard.

June 12: The ability to influence the future: what one wants, can do, and would bother to do.

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioneer's Game*, Chapter 5 on Blackboard.

June 13: Looking at our predictions!

Part IV: Project 2!

We are conducting a second piece of research. What? To be determined. Perhaps a survey experiment or some text analysis.
June 14, 15, 19, 20: Research.
June 21: Buffer class.
June 22: ... and it's a wrap! Last day of class.