

Centre for the Studies of the Americas
School of International Studies, JNU

Course	MA IRAS
Course Number	IA 511
Course Title	Contemporary Themes in American Politics and Foreign Policy
Course Type	Optional
Semester	Monsoon
Previously taught by	Prof. K.P. Vijayalakshmi and Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra
Course Instructor	Dr. Uma Purushothaman Room No.: 319 Email: umapurushothaman@mail.jnu.ac.in
Course Credits	4

Course Statement

Foreign policy is often an extension of domestic politics; and foreign policy conversely often influences domestic politics. This linkage between domestic and foreign policies is particularly evident in the US where often debates over Presidential and Congressional powers take place and where domestic lobbies, think tanks and interest groups influence foreign policy priorities.

This course combines the Domestic Political Processes and Foreign Policy of United States (US). It gives a comprehensive and holistic approach to understand American Politics and Foreign Policy in the age of globalization and a global order in flux. While explaining the major themes in Contemporary American Politics, the course will focus on the domestic roots of Foreign Policy and the influence of external factors in domestic politics of the United States. The objective of the course is to assess and evaluate the inter-linkages between them through a two-level analysis.

The course is structured around four key modules:

- Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy
- Ideas and Doctrines in US Foreign Policy
- Tools of Influence and Power Projection
- The US in a Changing Global Order

Course Objectives

- To provide students with a foundational understanding of the domestic roots of US foreign policy

- To explore the various actors involved in the making of US foreign policy
- To understand the role of different doctrines and ideas involved in shaping US foreign policy
- To analyse the debates around the tools of power projection used by the US
- Investigate and explain the current debates around the US role in a changing global order

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able -

- To critically analyse the role of domestic politics in US foreign policy
- To develop a critique of the various actors involved in the making of US foreign policy
- To discuss and explain the how different doctrines and ideas have impacted US foreign policy
- To evaluate the debates around US power projection and tools of power projection
- To explain and analyse the role of the US in a changing global order

Evaluation Methods

Midsemesterevaluation(50%)

- TermPaper- 30%
- Presentation-20%

End semesterevaluation(50%)

- EndSemesterExamination- 50 %

SIS Research Manual should be used as a guide for written assignments. This is available at https://www.jnu.ac.in/sites/default/files/SIS_Research_Manual_0.pdf

Students must maintain high degree of academic integrity, which includes abstaining from copying and plagiarism. For details on plagiarism and research ethics, refer to SIS Research Manual.

Course Module

Module 1: Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy

This module explores the Institutions and Actors in the making of US foreign policy by emphasising on the following topics:

- Formal Powers: Presidency, Congress, Judiciary, Executive
- Informal and “Shadow” Actors: Bureaucracy, Think Tanks, Lobbies, Media, Diasporas, Corporations
- Interbranch Tensions: War Powers, Oversight, Executive Orders
- Political Processes Behind Policy – Bipartisanship, Polarization, and Fragmentation

- Interface of US domestic and foreign policies

Module 2: Ideas and Doctrines in US Foreign Policy

The ideas and doctrines involved in the shaping of US foreign policy are discussed in this module. The focus would be on:

- U.S. Grand Strategy and Strategic Culture
- Engagement vs. Retreat: From Liberal Internationalism to Neo-isolationism
- Select Presidential Doctrines

Module 3: Tools of Influence and Power Projection

This module discusses the tools of influence and power project used by the US government, emphasising on:

- Military Globalism and Security Commitments
- Economic and Technological Statecraft: Sanctions, Trade Wars, Dollar Dominance
- Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, and Cultural Exports
- Foreign Aid and Humanitarian Engagements

Module 4: The US in a Changing Global Order

This module examines the debates on the US role in a multipolar world by discussing:

- Structural Shifts: US approach towards the emerging economies and the Global South
- US Role in Multilateralism and Global Governance (UN, WTO, NATO, Climate Agreements)
- Debates on American Decline

Readings

Module 1: Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy

Essential Readings

- Jacobs, L. R., & Page, B. I., (2005), "Who influences US Foreign Policy?", *American Political Science Review*, 99(1): 107-123.
- Lindsay, J. M., (1992), "Congress and foreign policy: Why the Hill matters", *Political Science Quarterly*, 107(4): 607-628.
- McCormick, J. M., (2023), *America Foreign Policy and Process*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two Level Games: Negotiation dynamics across domestic & international levels, *International*

Organization, 42 (3): 427-460.

- Tower, J. G., (1981), “Congress versus the President: the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, 60(2): 229-246.
- Wallner, J., Burgat, C., Marcum, A., & Fisher, L. (2020), “A Dynamic Relationship: How Congress and the President Shape Foreign Policy”, in K. Kosar (Ed.), *Congress and Foreign Affairs: Reasserting the Power of the First Branch*, Washington D.C.: R Street Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25818.5>, 17-35.
- Wittkopf, Eugene R. and McCormick, James M. (2008), *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Zoellick, R., (1999), “Congress and the Making of US Foreign Policy”, *Survival*, 41(4): 20-41.

Additional Readings

- Abelson, D. E., (2016), “Theoretical models and approaches to understanding the role of lobbies and think tanks in US foreign policy”, in *Policy Expertise in Contemporary Democracies*, London: Routledge, 9-30.
- Baumer, D. C., Gold, H. J. (2015), Parties, *Polarization and Democracy in the United States*, London: United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.
- Borg, S. (2024), “A ‘natcon takeover’? The New Right and the future of American foreign policy”, *International Affairs*, 100(5): 2233-2245.
- Eichensehr, Kristen E., (2018), “Courts, Congress, and the Conduct of Foreign Relations”, *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 85(3):609-675, https://lawreview.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/01%20Eichensehr_ART_SA%20%28BHC%29.pdf.
- Gries, P., (2020), *The politics of American foreign policy: How ideology divides liberals and conservatives over foreign affairs*, Standford: Stanford University Press.
- Kollman, Ken, (2011), *The American Political System*, New York: WW Norton and Co.

- Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D., (2015). *Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Myrick, R., (2021), “Do external threats unite or divide? Security crises, rivalries, and polarization in American foreign policy”, *International Organization*, 75(4): 921-958.
- Tama, J., (2023), *Bipartisanship and US foreign policy: cooperation in a polarized age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Module 2: Ideas and Doctrines in U.S. Foreign Policy

Essential Readings

- Boggs, C., (2020), “US grand strategy and its contradictions”, in Joseph Peschek (ed.), *The Politics of Empire: War, Terror and Hegemony*, London: Routledge, 3-23.
- Kleinfeld, R., & Dickas, J. (2020), “What Is Nativism?: Creating Two Classes of Citizens. In Rachel Kleinfeld and John Dickas (eds) *Resisting the Call of Nativism: What U.S. Political Parties Can Learn From Other Democracies*”, Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24292.5>, 3-7.
- Lieber, R. J., (2016), *Retreat and its consequences: American foreign policy and the problem of world order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ritter, L. (2021), “The Power of Nativist Rhetoric”, in *Inventing America’s First Immigration Crisis: Political Nativism in the Antebellum West* (1st ed.), New York: Fordham University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv119907b.6>, 60-81.
- Spykman, N. J., (2017), *America’s strategy in world politics: the United States and the balance of power*, London: Routledge.

Additional Readings

- Anton, M., (2019), “The Trump Doctrine”, *Foreign Policy*, (232), 40-47.
- Bentley, M., & Holland, J. (Eds.), (2016), *The Obama Doctrine: a legacy of continuity in US foreign policy?*, London: Routledge.
- Clarke, M., & Ricketts, A., (2017), “Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition”, *Comparative Strategy*, 36(4): 366-379.

- Cox, M., & Stokes, D. (Eds.), (2018), *US Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Porter, P., (2018), “Why America's grand strategy has not changed: Power, habit, and the US Foreign policy establishment”, *International Security*, 42(4): 9-46.
- Scott, J. M., & Rosati, J. A., (2020), *The politics of United States foreign policy*, Washington D.C.: CQ Press.

Module 3: Tools of Influence and Power Projection

Essential Readings

- Cull, N. J., (2013), “The long road to public diplomacy 2.0: The Internet in US public diplomacy”, *International Studies Review*, 15(1): 123-139.
- Drezner, D. W. (2011), “Sanctions sometimes smart: Targeted sanctions in theory and practice”, *International Studies Review*, 13(1): 96-108.
- Lutz, C. (2015), “US Foreign Military Bases: The Edge and Essence of Empire”, in Jeff Maskovsky, Ida Susser (eds.), *Rethinking America: The Imperial Homeland in the 21st Century*, London: Routledge, 15-30.
- Nye Jr, J. S. (2004), “Soft power and American foreign policy”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 119(2): 255-270.
- Posen, B. R., (2003), “Command of the commons: the military foundation of US hegemony”, *International Security*, 28(1): 5-46.
- Schultz, T. W. (2019). A Critique of the Economics of US Foreign Aid”, In Kenneth C Nobe and Rajan K. Sampath (eds), *Issues in Third World Development*, London: Routledge, 457-468.

Additional Readings

- Deibel, T. L., (2019), “Changing Patterns of Collective Defense: US Security Commitments in the Third World”, in Alan Ned Sabrosky (Ed.), *Alliances in US Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 107-132.
- Early, B. R. (2012)., “Alliances and trade with sanctioned states: A study of US economic sanctions, 1950–2000”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 56(3): 547-572.

- Mattoo, A., & Staiger, R. W. (2020). Trade wars: What do they mean? Why are they happening now? What are the costs?”, *Economic Policy*, 35(103): 561-584.
- Runde, D. F., (2020), “U.S. Foreign Assistance in the Age of Strategic Competition”, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24783>.
- Yeo, A. I. (2017), “The politics of overseas military bases”, *Perspectives on Politics*, 15(1): 129-136.

Module 4: The US in a Changing Global Order

Essential Readings

- Amin, S. (2006), *Beyond US hegemony: Assessing the prospects for a multipolar world*, London: Zed Books.
- Blackwill, R. D., (2020), *Implementing Grand Strategy Toward China: Twenty-Two U.S. Policy Prescriptions*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Diesen, G. (2019), “The disorderly transition to a multipolar world”, *New Perspectives*, 27(3): 125-129.
- Huntington, S. P. (1988), “The U.S.: Decline or Renewal?”, *Foreign Affairs*, 67(2): 76–96. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20043774>.
- Keaney, Michael, (2017), “The Buck Stops Here: The Return of US Decline”, *World Review of Political Economy*, 8(2): 253–267, <https://doi.org/10.13169/worlrevipoliecon.8.2.0253>.
- Walt, Stephen M., (2014), Is the United States in Decline? Does It Matter?”, <https://www.theideasletter.org/essay/is-the-united-states-in-decline/>.

Additional Readings

- Felder, R., (2009), “From Bretton Woods to neoliberal reforms: The international financial institutions and American power”, in L. Panitch and M. Konings (eds), *American empire and the political economy of global finance*, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 175-197.
- Hardt, M., Negri, A. (2001). *Empire*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

- Hall, J., (2021), “In search of enemies: Donald Trump’s populist foreign policy rhetoric”, *Politics*, 41(1): 48-63.
- Krahmann, E., (2005), “American hegemony or global governance? Competing visions of international security”, *International Studies Review*, 7(4): 531-545.
- Redfield, M., (2020), *The rhetoric of terror: Reflections on 9/11 and the war on terror*, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Taylor, P., (2019), *Nonstate actors in international politics: From transregional to substate organizations*, London: Routledge.