Course Information

American Foreign Policy (U85 IA 535) Dr. Jeremy Caddel

Summer 2018

Online

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Office Hours: by appointment (caddelofficehours.acuitiescheduling.com)

Course Description

IMPORTANT: Read this first!

NB: This is a work in progress and subject to change as we figure out what works for this format.

This will be an unusual course. Typically, and online course consists of reading, quizzes, writing, and online discussion. Frankly, it’s boring, both for the students and the instructor. So, in an effort to make this more interesting, we’re going to try out a new format. As this hasn’t been tried before, please be patient. We’ll all need to be flexible as we figure out what works and what doesn’t work in this format.

Essentially, the coursework will break down into three segments:

1. The simulation,

2. Reading comprehension, and


Simulation

Let’s start with the simulation, as it’s the most unusual aspect of the course. Throughout the semester, you will engage with the course materials through a simulated real-world National
Security Council exercise. Before beginning the simulation, each of you will develop a fictional character to role play in this simulation. You’ll be assigned to a specific job, but you also will develop character traits and a backstory. Anytime you interact in the simulation, you won’t be acting as yourself, but as your fictional character. Think of it as a game—Foreign Policy Dungeons and Dragons, if you like. You will have specific objectives that you want to achieve in the simulation. Some players might have similar objectives, but others will be opposed to you. Your goal is to “win” the simulation by achieving as many of your objectives as possible.

The scenario for the simulation will be announced later in class. I will provide you with all of the background materials that you need. The scenario is based on a real-world event, so you’ll be working with primary documents that I’ve collected from government archives—the actual foreign policy memoranda, intelligence reports, etc. that your real-world counterparts were working with at the time. To be clear, though, your goal isn’t to accurately recreate history. Through your interactions we may come out with quite different outcomes. It’s all up to you!

My hope is that the simulation will take place outside of Blackboard (possibly using Slack), but I’m still trying to finalize the logistics of that. We’ll talk about the simulation in much greater detail before it begins, but that’s enough of an overview for now.

**Reading Comprehension**

This part is boring, but necessary. Think of it as preparation for the simulation. Prior to each role play session, you will prepare by reading the textbook and taking an online quiz. Each reading comprehension period will cover 2-3 chapters in the text book. The quizzes will be timed, but completely open book. You are free to take the quiz as many times as you need to in order to earn a perfect score for your final grade. However, only your first quiz attempt will matter for the simulation. Students who earn a high enough grade on their first attempt will receive bonuses that may be used to improve your chances in the simulation.

All quizzes will be administered online via Blackboard. You are free to work ahead, if you wish.

**Preparation and Debrief**

This is where we connect the textbook with the simulation. Prior to each round of the simulation, you will receive background information (documents, etc.) about the scenario. Then, considering the factors discussed in the textbook, the background information, and intricacies of your specific role, you will write a brief (3-4 paragraphs) strategy paper. For each strategy paper, you will identify three points from the textbook that you think will be important for
you in the simulation, explain why you think they are important, and discuss how you plan to account for them in the upcoming role-play.

After the simulation, you will then write another brief (3-4 paragraphs) debrief paper. For each debrief, you will discuss how your strategy played out, whether the points you identified in your strategy paper ended up being as important as you though, and what factors you didn’t consider ended up playing a role in the outcome.

For strategy and debrief papers, you will be writing as yourself (not your role) with me (the instructor) as the audience. These papers will be submitted via Blackboard.

**Summary**

Overall, the course will break down into 4-5 sections incorporating all three of these segments. First, there will be a reading period in which you will read the textbook and complete the quizzes. Then, you will work through the background materials to prepare your strategy paper. Next comes the active simulation, in which your characters will interact to make foreign policy. Finally, you’ll debrief and reflect on that round of the simulation.

**Overview**

In this class we will focus on the procedures and institutions that shape US foreign policy decisions. This is neither a course on international relations theory nor a history of US foreign policy. Rather, this course examines the international uncertainty, domestic politics, and decision-making processes that shape US foreign policy. How do public opinion, electoral politics, and interest groups shape foreign policy? Which branch controls foreign policy—the president, Congress, the courts? Or is it ultimately the foreign affairs bureaucracy that pulls the strings? How do foreign policy professionals evaluate information and make policy recommendations? These are all questions we will examine this semester.

Scope

In 1945, Senator Arthur Vandenberg famously argued that partisan politics should stop at the water’s edge. By this he meant that US foreign policy should not be decided based on domestic political objectives, but solely on US objectives in the international arena. Most Americans continue to hold this view—but is it right? Isn’t the entire purpose of domestic politics to provide for the democratic competition of ideas and to hold elected representatives accountable to the electorate? Why then would we hold that the conduct of our nation’s foreign policy should be beyond that accountability? In fact, our foreign policy is not (nor has it ever been) independent of domestic politics. Public opinion, electoral competition, interest groups, and bureaucratic politics all help shape our nation’s decisions in international affairs.
There are two learning objectives for this course:

1. Students become familiar with the important aspects of domestic politics and institutions that shape US foreign policy decisions.

2. Students gain first-hand experience applying these factors as they build deeper understanding through an extensive interactive simulation.

Course Materials

Textbook


Feel free to get the online version of the book.

Additional Materials

All additional materials (PDFs, videos, and other media) will be available via the Blackboard site under the “Simulation Materials” tab in the lefthand menubar.

Technology

Quizzes and papers will be submitted via Blackboard. For the simulation, I hope to be able to use more flexible technology that will allow you to participate more easily from any device and in real time. More information to come on this part of the course. Regardless, this is an online course, so it is essential that you have a laptop computer or other internet-connected device that will allow you to complete the assignments and participate in the simulations.
Assignments and Grading

Grades:

Each of the three course segments will count for 1/3 of your total grade. So, 1/3 of your final grade will be based on your quiz average. Since you are allowed to take the quizzes as many times as you want, there is no reason not to have a 100 average for this portion. The second 1/3 of your final grade will be based on your strategy and reflection paper average. I will post specific grading rubrics for each type of assignment. The final 1/3 of your grade will be based on your participation in the simulation. You must be active to receive full credit for this portion. In addition, your grade for this portion may be adjusted based on your success in achieving the objectives for your role and/or particularly valuable contributions made to the simulation.

Attendance/Participation:

As this is an online course, there is no attendance. However, timely participation is essential. To ensure that everyone is on track and prepared, assignments will be sequenced using adaptive release in Blackboard. You will not have access to each reading quiz until you have submitted at least one attempt for the previously assigned chapter’s quiz. You will not have access to the background materials or to the assignment tabs for the strategy and reflection papers until you have submitted at least one attempt for the last quiz assigned in that section of the course. Therefore, it is up to you to make sure that you are keeping up with assignments in order to be prepared for the simulation.

Other Issues

Academic Integrity

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University. Students should review and comply with the University’s Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy. Any violations of this policy will be reported to the University College academic in-
tegrity officer. Penalties for violations can be severe, including but not limited to failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Please cite all of your sources in your homework and project assignments.

**Student Accommodations**

Washington University is committed to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) assists students with disabilities by providing services and arranging for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and equal academic opportunities. Students wishing to request services or accommodations must register and provide appropriate documentation to the DRC at cornerstone.wustl.edu. The DRC serves as a resource and advisor to students with disabilities and welcomes opportunities to consult with students, families, faculty, and staff.

**Safe Educational Environment**

This course involves lecture, discussion and collaborative problem solving. This means that all of us will be responsible for contributing to our own learning as well as the learning experiences of others. Because open dialogue questions and answers of every student are essential, any behavior or language that makes other students feel unsafe or unwelcome in this classroom cannot be tolerated (examples range from simply interrupting or ignoring others while they are talking to overt harassment or intimidation with reference to race, gender identity, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or ability). These expectations are essential to maintaining an environment in which everyone can feel safe discussing, examining, and responding to the content of the course. Please bring any violation of this policy to my attention as soon as possible.
Schedule

The class will begin on Monday, June 11 and end on Monday, August 13. There will be four reading comprehension periods during the semester and five rounds of the simulation, including the preparation and debrief components for each round. The majority of the course will be conducted online, but I will host two in-person sessions, one at the beginning of the semester to meet one another and prepare our roles for the simulation and one at the end of the semester as a debrief. These events are optional. They’re meant to be a fun way to build more community. I plan to hold these events at a local restaurant (TBD) and food will be provided. The biggest scheduling challenge is determining when to hold these events and how to manage our simulations. I’ll be in contact before the semester to get feedback on possible options, so the schedule below is subject to change based on what works best for the class as a whole.

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**Preparation** Preparation 2

**Simulation** Session 2

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**Reading**

**Preparation** Debrief 2

**Simulation**

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**Simulation** Session 5

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**Reading**

**Preparation** Final Debrief (Live!)

**Simulation**