GVPT 457: American Foreign Relations  
Fall 2017  
Weds. 2:00pm-4:45pm  
Location: MTH 0402  
Syllabus v.1.0

Prof. Jennifer Wallace  
Email: jwallace@umd.edu  
Office: TYD 1153  
Office Hours: TuTh 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Course Objectives:  
This course provides an overview of the evolution and contemporary foreign policy of the United States. The first part of the course will be devoted to the context of foreign policy-making: the international environment, domestic institutions, and the role of media and public opinion. The second part of the course takes a closer look at contemporary foreign policy themes, identifying the major economic, humanitarian, and security concerns and the response of the United States government. The course incorporates a variety of methods to appeal to all learning types: lectures, debates, discussions and film. These methods are intended to reinforce basic concepts as well as to hone students’ critical thinking skills.

This course is designed so that students successful in the course will be able to demonstrate:  

- An understanding of how foreign policy is formulated in the U.S. government, and what historical, institutional, and political factors shape these outcomes;  
- Knowledge of the major foreign policy issues facing the United States today, and how these issues came into prominence;  
- An understanding of the terminology and major theories of the study of foreign policy;  
- An ability to critically analyze historical and contemporary events, and to conduct appropriate research that applies relevant terminology, theory, and empirical data to answer questions about the topic.

The class will combine lecture and class discussion nearly every week, so the success of this course relies heavily on students coming to class ready and willing to discuss the reading material. I will provide background information on the themes and cases as needed, but many of the readings present different perspectives that are part of the ongoing debate about role of the United States in the world. You should be ready to think critically about these texts and to formulate your own opinions on the merits of these arguments. There is no better learning environment than a classroom of students who are prepared, engaged, and excited to hear each other. Let’s make that happen!
**Course Structure:**
The course only meets once per week, so we meet for 2 hours and 45 minutes. A typical class will consist of a current events session, lecture, break, and class discussion. While class sessions may deviate from this format to accommodate unique lessons and academic needs, a typical class will roughly follow the following schedule:

2:00-2:30: Administrative Matters and Current Events  
2:30-3:30: Lecture  
3:30-3:45: Break  
3:45-4:45: Class Discussion

**Course Readings:**

- The are no required textbooks for this course. Readings will be available online, either through the course page (on ELMS), links to websites, or academic journals.
- You are expected to keep up with current events by following a major daily newspaper such as the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* or the *New York Times*. Other recommended sources for foreign policy articles are *The Economist*, *The Financial Times*, *The Diplomat* (for East Asia), *Der Spiegel* and *Le Monde Diplomatique* (for Europe, both have online English versions), *The Atlantic Monthly and Foreign Affairs*.
- If you would like supplementary reading to the course lectures to strengthen your background or conceptual knowledge, I recommend the following two textbooks:
  
  **On Part I: The Context of US Foreign Policy: Theory and History:**
  
  
  **On Part II: American Foreign Policy in the 21st Century**
  
- I have requested that the library purchase both textbooks and place them on course reserves (24-hour loan).
- I may update the some of the readings for Part II of the course in response to changing events. Any changes to the assigned readings will be noted in an announcement on ELMS.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Discussion Preparation: 35% (5% each – 7/11 required)  
2. Current Events Contributions: 5%  
3. Midterm: 20%  
4. Take-Home Final Exam: 20%  
5. Participation and Attendance: 10%  
6. Event or Literature Review: 10%

**Discussion Preparation:** There are 11 structured discussions planned for the semester as noted on the syllabus, not including Week 1 of the course (4 in Part I; 7 in Part II). To prepare for these discussions students are expected to submit a 1-2 page document (single spaced) to ELMS before the start of class.
that demonstrates preparation for the in-class discussion. These submissions should reflect knowledge of the readings assigned for the day and include your own answer to the discussion questions noted on the syllabus. Assignments are graded on: 1) accurately integrating the arguments from the reading; 2) answering the question; and 3) demonstrating independent analysis. Submissions may be informal in style [you can discuss the authors’ contributions by referencing their name (e.g., “According to Madison...”), without formal citations] and should only focus on the course material, not outside research. You have four “free passes” over the course of the semester, or days in which you may opt out of the writing assignment, although you are still expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading material for the day. Thus, you are expected to complete 7 preparation assignments in total over the duration of the course. Discussion preparation assignments will not be accepted after the class period begins under any circumstances, including illness and technical difficulty. If you have difficulty uploading your assignment you may email it directly to me or turn in a hard copy in class as a backup.

**Current Events Contribution:** You are expected to contribute to our current events discussions by identifying an article of interest and leading an informal discussion on it in class; once during Part I of the course and once during Part II of the course. (“Informal discussion” means that you will say why it is interesting and lead a discussion with the class; no presentation is necessary.) Students will be assigned weeks in which their articles are due, but are welcome to send additional articles throughout the course that you wish to discuss in our current events session. On your assigned week, you are expected to email to me a full-length article of interest to you that will be posted on ELMS for the class to discuss in the next class session. Current events articles should meet the following guidelines:

- **Be recent,** i.e., less than a week old from a daily periodical or less than a month old from a weekly or monthly periodical (½ point);
- **Be of good journalistic quality,** meaning from a reputable publication with quality reporting. It does not need to be politically neutral, but should not make unsubstantiated arguments or offer “conspiracy theories” (½ point);
- **Be relevant** to deepening our understanding of current events as they relate to foreign policy (½ point);
- and **be substantive,** meaning a full-length article regarding a new development or discussion of an ongoing current event that offers more than a short update or “blurb” (½ point).

Students should email articles no later than the **Tuesday before class at noon.** The email should include the article attached as a pdf (please avoid sending links to avoid subscription/access issues) and include **a short paragraph** in the body of the email on why you found the article to be interesting and relevant (½ point). We will also use current events sessions to discuss any other newsworthy events not captured by the assigned articles. Each submission is worth 2.5 points as indicated above, for a total percentage of your overall grade of 5%.

**Midterm:** There will be a mid-term held in class on October 11 covering Part I of the course. It will be mixed format (multiple choice, short answer, short essay).
**Take-Home Final Exam:** A take-home final exam will be posted on Blackboard after the final class of the semester. The format will be short essay. It will be due at 11:59pm on ELMS on whatever day the final exam for this class is scheduled by the university. (This date will be announced mid-semester because our class meets at a non-standard class time.)

**Participation:** Your participation will be measured by your attendance AND your involvement in classroom discussions and activities. At a minimum, you should come to class having read all of the assigned material, identified some common themes or interesting questions raised by the texts, and be prepared to discuss them. Announced or unannounced quizzes may be added to assess participation if deemed necessary by the professor. If you miss roll call at the beginning of class, it is your responsibility to see me at the end of class (not in the next class or by email) to confirm your attendance. Unexcused absences, non-participation and coming to class unprepared will result in a lower grade.

**Event (or Literature) Review:** You are expected to attend one foreign policy event on campus or in Washington DC. You should then submit documentation of your attendance (program, ticket stub, photo/selfie) and a 5-page analysis of the event. The review should include: A brief description of the topic addressed and speaker; a summary of the arguments presented; and your own analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. The analysis should focus on the presentation content, and not the general delivery of the presentation. For example, you may wish to address questions such as: Were the arguments convincing? Did the speaker address a range of perspectives? Do you agree with any policy recommendations offered? The following institutions regularly offer free events that address foreign policy issues:

- American Enterprise Institute: [https://www.aei.org/events/](https://www.aei.org/events/)
- Brookings Institution: [https://www.brookings.edu/events/](https://www.brookings.edu/events/)
- Cato Institute: [http://www.cato.org/events](http://www.cato.org/events)
- Center for American Progress: [https://www.americanprogress.org/events/upcoming-events/](https://www.americanprogress.org/events/upcoming-events/)
- Center for Strategic and International Studies: [https://www.csis.org/events](https://www.csis.org/events)
- Heritage Foundation: [http://www.heritage.org/events](http://www.heritage.org/events)
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/events](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/events)

You are encouraged to check the calendar of events of these organizations early in the semester, confirm that they are open to the public, and register if necessary. You may want to join the mailing lists of these organizations/follow them on social media early in the semester so that you get notifications of events as they are added. If students do have a valid reason why attending an event is a hardship, let me know and we can discuss whether substituting this assignment for a review of a book related to foreign policy (chosen after consultation with me) is appropriate. However, this arrangement must be agreed to **before the midterm**, no exceptions, and should only be used out of absolute necessity. Washington DC has a wealth of resources to strengthen your foreign policy knowledge – go out there and use them!
**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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**Course Policies and Expectations:**

1. Assignments that are turned in past the due date will be penalized **one letter grade per day** for each day or a fraction thereof that the assignment is late. The take-home final will be penalized **one letter grade per hour** or fraction thereof that it is submitted late. Discussion preparation assignments will not be accepted after the class period begins under any circumstances, including illness and technical difficulty. If you have difficulty uploading your assignment you may turn in a hard copy in class as a backup.

2. Because this class meets only once per week, the absence policy will be enforced strictly. Absences for valid reasons such as medical or family emergencies will be excused with appropriate documentation, but you will still be responsible for material missed and a make-up assignment may be required. All unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation grade. Please contact me in advance if you know you will be late or absent, or as soon as possible following the missed class.

3. With respect to announced quizzes and exams, there will be **no make-up** unless: 1) there is an official excuse for having missed an exam (proper documentation is required); or 2) prior arrangement is made. Medical excuses will only be accepted with a doctor’s note on official letterhead with a contact phone number.

4. Neither cheating nor plagiarism in any form will be tolerated. The penalty for having committed either one of these violations is a **failing grade for the course**. Should you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or during office hours.

5. Cell phones and other potentially disrupting devices must be **turned off** before you enter the classroom. Laptops may be used to access course material as needed, but must be put away during classroom discussions. If you are checking your email or social media, you are not giving this course your full attention. If I see it, you will be considered “absent,” and you will lose your privilege to use your laptop for the rest of the semester. Should distracted use of laptops become a consistent problem, their use in class will be prohibited.

6. Any student with disabilities/special needs or who will miss class due to a religious observance should contact me **during the first week of classes** so that the proper arrangements can be made.

7. I know that some students find class participation challenging. If you have particular concerns or anxieties about participating in class discussion, let’s talk about it **early** in the semester. I will gladly work with you over the course of the semester to make your participation less stressful and more effective. But I can only work with you to make that happen if we talk about your
concerns and develop a strategy to respond to them. Think of this class as a comfortable place
to develop the communication skills you will need later on. Getting more comfortable with
participation and public speaking could be a major personal accomplishment this semester, with
this class as the vehicle.

8. While I am happy to answer brief questions by email, meeting during office hours is the
preferred form of communication and should be used if you have a substantive question about
the course material. It also helps us get to know each other, which can be a good investment of
your time if you need recommendation letters or career advice down the line. Take advantage
of the opportunity!

9. For additional information on university-wide policies, including on topics of academic integrity,
student conduct, sexual misconduct, discrimination, accessibility, attendance, absences, missed
assignments, student rights regarding undergraduate courses, official UMD communications,
midterm grades, complaints about final exams, copyright and intellectual property, final exams,
course evaluations, and campus resources for students, please see the following link:
http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html
Course Structure:

PART I: The Context of U.S. Foreign Policy: Theory and History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Strategic Context</td>
<td>Change and Continuity in US Foreign Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td></td>
<td>What priorities characterize U.S. foreign policy? What tensions exist, and how are they resolved? Is U.S. foreign policy marked by continuity or change?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- S. Walt, “Making the Grade: Is There a Way to Judge if a Foreign Policy is Successful?” Foreign Policy, January 6, 2014.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)</td>
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<td>- The Monroe Doctrine (1823)</td>
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<td>- The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1904)</td>
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<td>- The Truman Doctrine (1947)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Domestic Context – The President and Congress</td>
<td>Is Foreign Policy Like Sausage Making?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>How are decisions made in the United States regarding foreign policy? How might this lead to errors in decision-making?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Domestic Context – Media and Public Opinion</td>
<td>Is the U.S. Public the 12th Man?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>How does the public influence foreign policy? What is the role of the media? Are the public’s interests different from those of practitioners?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Historical Context</td>
<td>The United States as a Great Power</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
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<td>When and why did the U.S. emerge as a “superpower”? Was this by design or circumstance?</td>
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Week 5
Lecture: The Cold War
Sept 27
Movie: The Quiet American
No discussion preparation assignment this week, but please read the following in preparation for the lecture and the movie:

Week 6
Discussion: Lessons from the Cold War
Oct 4
Why did the U.S. get involved in Vietnam? What is the role of “credibility” in U.S. foreign policy?
ICC Debate Prep

PART II: American Foreign Policy in the 21st Century

Week 7
Midterm on Weeks 1-6
Oct 11
ICC Debate
- See Background Materials on ELMS for ICC Debate

Week 8
Lecture: Strategy in a New Era: Foreign Policy in the 21st Century
Oct 18
Discussion: Change and Continuity in the U.S. Presidency
Have the 21st century presidencies been characterized by change or continuity in foreign policy? What do you expect the Trump Administration to change or maintain, and why?
- Jeffrey Goldberg (April 2016) “The Obama Doctrine,” The Atlantic
- J. Biden, “Building on Success: Opportunities for the Next Administration,” Foreign Affairs 95, no. 5 (September/October 2015).
- M. Anton (March 2017) “America and the Liberal International Order,” American Affairs

Optional:
- S. Walt (March 2017) “How Not to Fix the Liberal World Order,” Foreign Policy. [This is a response to the Anton article, above]

Week 9
Lecture: The Role of the Military and WMD
Oct 25
Discussion: Foreign Policy toward Iran, North Korea
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Iran nuclear deal? What should the policy of the U.S. be towards Iran and other potential nuclear powers? What about its own arsenal?

Optional:
- Dan De Luce. (October 2016) “US Weighs Iran-Style Sanctions on North Korea, Risking a Rift With China,” Foreign Policy

Week 10
Lecture: Economics – Free Trade vs. Neomercantilism
Nov 1
Discussion: NAFTA, TPP, Trade Agreements
What are the domestic and international factors that have led to a rise of neomercantilism? What should be the government’s response?
- Francis Fukyama (2016) “American Political Decay or Renewal?” Foreign Affairs

Optional:

Week 11
Lecture: Human Rights and Intervention
Nov 8  
Discussion: Evaluating the Responsibility to Protect
What are the obligations of the United States to intervene militarily in Syria, legally and ethically? If you were a member of Congress, what course of action would you recommend?
- Micah Zenko. (October 2016) “This is How America Will Accidentally Join the Syrian War,” Foreign Policy.

Optional:

Week 12  
Lecture: US Interventionism and Abandonment in the Middle East
Nov 15  
Discussion: Engagement with the “Greater Middle East”
What do you think of the criticism that Obama abandoned the Middle East? Do you think that US interests are better served by engaging more deeply, or by reducing involvement in the region? Is a diplomatic approach possible?

Optional:
- Martin Kramer (2016) “Israel and the Post-American Middle East: Why the Status Quo is Sustainable,” Foreign Affairs

Nov 22 
No Class – **Happy Thanksgiving!**

Week 13  
Lecture: Frenemies? – China and Russia (and Cuba)
Nov 29  
Discussion: Engagement versus Containment
What is the outlook of US relations with its former Cold War rivals in the 21st century? What are the primary areas of cooperation; what tensions remain?

Optional:
- Philp M. Breedlove (2016) “NATO’s Next Act” Foreign Affairs.

**Week 14**

**Lecture:** The Environment, Energy Security, and Climate Change

**Discussion:** US Leadership, its Limits and What’s Next

How do U.S. energy policy and climate change policy intersect? Should the U.S. disengage from the Paris Climate Agreement? What impact will that have, domestically and internationally?