

## PL 228: United States Foreign Policy in a Changing World

**Credits: 4**

Dates of course: January 23, 2024-April 30, 2024

Time: Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:20-1:40 pm

Location: Tang SOMR

Instructor: Dr. Charmaine N. Willis

Office hours: Fridays, 2-3 pm and by appointment in Ladd 308

Contact: [cnwillis@skidmore.edu](mailto:cnwillis@skidmore.edu)

Email hours: You will generally receive a reply from me within a few hours, but any e-mail correspondence after 7:00 pm may not receive a response until the next day.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.



This course examines the development and current features of American foreign policy focusing on the international challenges and opportunities faced by the United States after the end of the Cold War. It analyzes some of the major patterns of United States foreign policy, reviews some important interpretations and methodological approaches to the study of United States foreign policy, discusses the ideological components of these policies, examines the foreign policy actors and the decision-making process in which they participate, and evaluates the changing objectives and circumstances shaping recent American international initiatives. Special attention will be devoted to the impact of the end of the Cold War and the rise of interdependence and globalization on recent United States economic, strategic, and environmental foreign policies as well as in the formulation of specific approaches to different regions of the world.

## Learning Objectives

This course endeavors not only to help students learn about US foreign policy, but also skills critical to success in college. To that end, the learning objectives for this course include:

- **Gain knowledge about what US foreign policy is, how it is made, and historical and contemporary issues facing American policymakers.**
- **Grasp key concepts and theories in the fields of comparative politics and international relations and understand how to use them to analyze US foreign policy.**
- **Distill key ideas from academic articles and discuss them with others.**
- **Conduct an original research project as part of a team.**
- **Convey your research to various audiences.**

## University Resources and Policy Information

- **Accommodating Students with Disabilities:** Skidmore College is committed to supporting the learning needs of all students in our diverse community. If you have a documented barrier to learning or think you may have a disability, please consult with Meg Hegener, Associate Director of SAS and Coordinator of Student Access Services ([mhegener@skidmore.edu](mailto:mhegener@skidmore.edu)). Accommodations are approved by the coordinator following a review of students' documentation. If you are approved for academic accommodations, please provide your letter of accommodations to me early in the semester or as soon as you are approved so that we can proactively coordinate implementation. Academic accommodations based on disability cannot be granted by individual faculty. For further information, please call (518) 580-8150 to contact Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center.
- **Conscientious Religious Observance Policy:** Skidmore College acknowledges that our community is one of many faiths with a diverse range of practices and observances important to each tradition. In order to fulfill our mission to educate a diverse population of talented students and our commitment to inclusion regardless of religious and spiritual tradition, we seek to practice an equitable and consistent approach in providing religious accommodations. If religious observance requires absence from class or you anticipate a conflict with assignments or due dates, please notify your instructor **prior** to the absence or conflict so that accommodations can be arranged. Although not required, please provide notification about a pending religious holiday at the start of the semester or at least one week before the holiday. As an option, you may use the form available at [www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php) [or [here](#)].

Accommodations for your absence should not reduce the overall expectations of a course nor unduly burden you for requesting accommodation. Students shall not suffer academic, athletic, or employment penalties because of the conscientious observance of any religious day or days. Faculty must permit students to take a makeup examination without any penalty if they have to miss an examination due to religious observances. Similarly, faculty must permit students to submit missed assignments by an agreed upon due date, without penalty.

If a student, supervisor, coach, or faculty member feels the policy is being violated, they should contact the Dean of Faculty Office at 518-580-5705 (Palamountain 416), the Dean of Students Office at 518-580-5760 (Case Center 313), or Human Resources at 518-580-5800 (Barrett Center first floor). The full policy can be found at [www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php).

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Skidmore College is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community in which members develop their abilities to live in a complex and interconnected world. Consistent with our educational mission, we recognize ourselves as a community that respects individual identities based on varying sociocultural characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, first language, religious and spiritual tradition, age, ability, socioeconomic status and learning style. We strive to create a socially just world that honors the dignity and worth of each individual, and we seek to build a community centered on mutual respect and openness to ideas—one in which individuals value cultural and intellectual diversity and share the responsibility for creating a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment. We recognize that our community is most inclusive when all members participate to their full capacity in the spirited and sometimes challenging conversations that are at the center of the college's educational mission.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct: Title IX Statement:** Skidmore College considers sexual and gender-based misconduct to be one of the most serious violations of the values and standards of the College. Unwelcome sexual contact of any form is a violation of students' personal integrity and their right to a safe environment and therefore violates Skidmore's values. Sexual and gender-based misconduct is also prohibited by federal and state regulations. Skidmore College faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. If a student chooses to confide in a member of Skidmore's faculty or staff regarding an issue of sexual or gender-based misconduct, that faculty or staff member is obligated to tell Skidmore's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator will assist the student in connecting with all possible resources for support and options for reporting both on and off campus. Identities and details will be shared only with those who need to know to support the student and to address the situation through the college's processes. If the student wishes to confide in a confidential resource, the Counseling Center Staff, Health Services, and Victim Advocates (anonymous) are all options available.

More information can be found at the Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct [website](#) or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator, Joel Aure ([jaure@skidmore.edu](mailto:jaure@skidmore.edu)), 580-5708.

- **Academic integrity and conduct:** The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Skidmore's Academic Honor Code states that: *"I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the college regulations."* A serious violation of academic integrity is plagiarism, the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. **If**

**you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me before submitting graded assignments. Please note that Skidmore College requires faculty to report all violations of the Academic Honor Code.** For more information about the university's academic integrity policies, please see the Student Handbook and the following resource:

[https://www.skidmore.edu/osaa/integrity/new\\_integrity\\_docs/Definitions\\_and\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.skidmore.edu/osaa/integrity/new_integrity_docs/Definitions_and_Guidelines.pdf)

- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool Usage<sup>1</sup>:** You may use AI programs e.g., ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. **You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor).**
- **General Health and COVID-19:** The College expects all members of the community to adhere to the College's COVID-19 health and safety guidelines at all times. Please be aware of [the guidelines posted on the College's website](#).

If you think you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, please follow Health Services' [recommendations regarding testing](#) and when to safely return to class and public spaces. As with any health-related illness, we ask that you contact Health Services as soon as you can.

When mask wearing is required, you must wear a mask covering your mouth and nose fully at all times in the classroom. If your mask is not providing sufficient protection because it has slipped in some way, you are responsible for adjusting the fit. If I ask you to wear your mask properly, you must comply or you can choose to leave the classroom.

Skidmore College is committed to the health and safety of all members of our community and has implemented protocols based on recommendations from the CDC, New York State Department of Health, and Saratoga County Department of Health. The College is not requiring vaccinated individuals to wear a mask indoors; however, if anyone would like to ask that we all wear a mask at all times in our classroom, please speak with me outside of class, or contact me via email.

## Course Policies

- **Discussion Etiquette:** Some of the topics that we will cover in class are controversial (which is the nature of politics). Learning from and attempting to understand other opinions is a crucial part of the learning experience. I expect there to be varying opinions and great debates. However, I also expect civility and respectfulness in our discussions. This means no personal attacks or obscene language.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Holly Fernandez-Lyn, University of Pennsylvania.

- **Late Penalties and Missed Assignments:** It is imperative that you do not fall behind on assignments. Assignments should be submitted by 11:59 pm the day that they are due via theSpring. After that, 10% will be deducted from the maximum possible score for each day that the assignment is late (including weekends). Missed assignments will receive '0' points.
- **Grade Appeals:** Students who feel that their assignments have been graded incorrectly should follow a three-step procedure. First, the student carefully reads the assignment and identifies the precise problem(s) with the grading. Second, the student sends a written appeal via email explaining why their answer was appropriate to the instructor; you must wait **24 hours** after receiving your grade to submit an appeal. Third, the instructor will regrade the assignment, taking the appeal into account. Note that the instructor may assign a higher or lower grade following such an appeal.
- **Questions?** There is a section on theSpring under "Discussion" entitled "Questions"; please feel free to ask anything related to the course here, especially as your classmates may have similar questions. Additionally, please do not hesitate to contact me at [cnwillis@skidmore.edu](mailto:cnwillis@skidmore.edu) with any questions or concerns.

### Course materials, grading, course structure, and assignments

- **Texts:** All texts for this course (except for the ICONS simulation materials) can be found on theSpring and/or linked in the syllabus.
  - Presidential Commission: Policy Responses to Terrorism: *\$13/student*.
- **Recommended:** I recommend that you follow a major news source for international events such as Al-Jazeera, BBC, New York Times, or Washington Post,
- **Grading:** the course will be graded on a 1000-point scale. Each assignment and portion of the course is worth a set number of points and will be graded accordingly. At the end of the class your final grade will be based on your total number of points earned throughout the class.
  - **Rubric:**
    - 930- 1000 points: A
    - 900- 920 points: A-
    - 870- 890 points: B+
    - 830- 860 points: B
    - 800- 820 points: B-
    - 770- 790 points: C+
    - 730- 760 points: C
    - 700- 720 points: C-
    - 670- 690 points: D+
    - 630- 660 points: D
    - 600- 620 points: D-
    - 590 points and below: F

- **Structure:** The course will be divided into essentially four units. In our first unit, we will review relevant international relations and comparative politics theories that often apply to foreign policy and countries' interactions with one another. We will then cover various sources of foreign policy making in the US. In our third unit, we will talk about several important historical episodes in US foreign policy. Finally, we will learn about contemporary issues in US foreign policy.
- **Assignments:** This course is reading and writing intensive. You are expected to complete all the reading assignments prior to each class session and be prepared to discuss those readings with your classmates and me. **All writing assignments should be in a 12-pt standard font (ex. Times New Roman, Calibri, Garamond) with normal (1") margins. Writing assignments should have proper citations as necessary using a recognized citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago).**

The primary course learning activities will be reading the required readings for each week, actively participating in discussions about those readings, writing four response papers (one for each unit), a presentation about a news item related to US foreign policy, participating in a simulation, and preparing for and contributing to a mini-conference at the end of the semester. Summaries of these activities are listed below, but further information will be posted to theSpring.

- **Attendance and participation (200 points (20%)):** For everyone's benefit, I expect you to attend each class session and to participate actively in class. We will be regularly working together in class to practice the skills outlined in the learning objectives. Missing class will result in a missed opportunity for practice and feedback and should be avoided. Additionally, missing class means that you cannot participate in class discussion that day and we will lose out on your potential contributions. Therefore, missing class should be avoided as much as possible. However, I understand that many things can happen over the course of a semester and an absence may be necessary. **Students are permitted three unexcused absences throughout the semester, no questions asked. Students with more than three unexcused absences will lose 30 points from their overall course grade for each additional unexcused absence.**
- **Foreign Policy in the News Presentation (100 points (10%)):**<sup>2</sup> In order to enable you to become an effective 'consumer' of foreign policy decisions and outcomes, you will present a "Foreign Policy in the News" article to the class. This will encourage you to critically assess whether historical theories work for current challenges. During the second week of the course, you will sign up for a class session when you will post a link to a foreign policy article (in the "Foreign Policy in the News" Discussion Board in our course site on theSpring) that you have come across in the news (from 2014 on) that relates to US foreign policy. During class, you will have 5 minutes to present the article. More information about this assignment as well as a sign-up sheet will be available by the end of Week 2.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Dr. Felicity Vabulas, University of Chicago.

- **ICONS Simulation:** Genocide in Darfur: The Inter-Agency Process **(150 points total (15%): 50 points for position paper, 50 points for participation, 50 points for debriefing paper):** In this course, you will participate in a class-wide simulation that draws upon what we learned about US foreign policy-making. The class will be split up into teams and assigned specific roles. Each person is responsible for writing one short paper at the beginning (the position paper) and end of the simulation as well as actively participating in the simulation. **The position paper is due March 22 by 12 pm and the debriefing paper is due April 10 by 11:59 pm on theSpring. More information about the simulation and the assignments will be available at the end of February.**
- **Response papers (200 points total (20%), 50 points each):** As mentioned, the class will be structured into essentially four topical units: theories, sources of foreign policy, the history of US foreign policy, and contemporary foreign policy challenges. Beginning in Week 2, you will write a response paper to the readings and discussion for one of the classes in each unit (a total of four response papers over the course of the semester). The best papers will be those that contain a brief summary of the key ideas of the readings (with informal citations), synthesis of the readings (i.e., how the readings relate to one another), original analysis, and critical reflection. Papers should draw from **at least two** of the assigned readings and go beyond mere summaries. Papers should be 1.5-2 pages typed and double-spaced (350-500 words). The due dates for the response papers are as follows:
  - **Unit 1 Response Paper: Due February 21**
  - **Unit 2 Response Paper: Due March 20**
  - **Unit 3 Response Paper: Due April 10**
  - **Unit 4 Response Paper: Due May 2**
- **Joint Mini-Conference Project, "Justice in the International System": (350 points total (35%)):** Researching, presenting one's work to a variety of audiences, and working as a part of a team are important skills in political science. To that end, our semester-long project will be to conduct a research project in teams culminating in a mini-conference about "Justice in the International System" with Professor Balogun's IR of the Global South course at the end of the semester, open to the rest of the College. Your projects will examine an aspect of the conference theme from a US foreign policy perspective. This is a scaffolded assignment, composed of several smaller pieces due throughout the semester leading to the conference. **More information about this assignment will be available during Week 3.**

**Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments Due for Class</b>
Week 1	January 24		Course Introduction	
	January 26		Introduction to US Foreign Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoover Green (2013): "How to Read Political Science"</li> <li>• <a href="#">"What is Foreign Policy?"</a></li> <li>• Porter (2018): "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment"</li> </ul>
Week 2 <i>February 6: Drop/Grade Option (S/U) Deadline</i>	January 31		US Hegemony?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kochin and Taylor (2020): "Introduction: An Independent Empire"</li> <li>• Kindleberger (1981): "Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy: Exploitation, Public Goods, and Free Rides"</li> <li>• Nye (2010): "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective"</li> </ul>
	February 2	<b>Unit 1: Theoretical Foundations</b>	Neorealism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mearsheimer (2021): "Structural Realism"</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hunt (2017): "The anchor of the system: The Iran deal and the decline of realism in US foreign policy"</li> </ul>
Week 3	February 7		Perception and Misperception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisher (2012): "The Cuban Missile Misunderstanding"</li> <li>Jervis and Rapp-Hooper (2018): "Perception and Misperception on the Korean Peninsula"</li> </ul>
	February 9		Liberalism and Democratic Peace Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doyle (1986): "Liberalism and World Politics"</li> <li>Mastanduno (2019): "Liberal hegemony, international order, and US foreign policy: A reconsideration"</li> </ul>
Week 4	February 14		Nation-Building and Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R. Smith (2010): "Citizenship and the Politics of People-Building"</li> <li>Brands (2017): "U.S. Grand Strategy in an Age of Nationalism"</li> </ul>
	February 16	<b>Unit 2: Sources of US Foreign Policy</b>	The Presidency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Powell (2011): "Presidential Power in War"</li> <li>Burns (2020): "Presidents Were Never Meant to Have Unilateral War Powers"</li> </ul>

Week 5	February 21		Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Unit 1 Response Paper Due</i></b></li> <li>• Howell and Pevehouse (2007): "When Congress Stops Wars: Partisan Politics and Presidential Power"</li> <li>• Tama (2020): "Forcing the President's Hand: How the US Congress Shapes Foreign Policy through Sanctions Legislation"</li> </ul>
	February 23		The Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marsh (2014): "Obama's Surge: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis of the Decision to Order a Troop Surge in the Afghanistan War"</li> <li>• Brands et al. (2020): "In Defense of the Blob"</li> </ul>
Week 6	February 28		Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holsti (1992): "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus"</li> <li>• Barabas (2016): "Democracy's Denominator: Reassessing Responsiveness with Public Opinion on the National Policy Agenda"</li> </ul>

	March 1	<b>Unit 3: Foreign Policy Episodes in Modern US History</b>	The Korean and Vietnam Wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">“The Truman Doctrine, 1947”</a></li><li>• Cumings (2005): “Collision, 1948-1953” (<b>pp. 255-298</b>)</li><li>• Stur (2017): <a href="#">“Why the US Went to War in Vietnam”</a></li></ul>
Week 7	March 6 <i>Guest Lecture, Professor M. Eraldo Souza dos Santos, Panthéon-Sorbonne University</i>		The FBI and CIA during the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saunders (1999): “The Cultural Cold War”</li></ul>
	March 8		The Cuban Missile Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">“The Bay of Pigs Invasion and Its Aftermath, April 1961-October 1962”</a></li><li>• <a href="#">“The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962”</a></li><li>• Vanhoonacker and Wangen (2016): “Graham T. Allison, The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis”</li></ul>
<b>March 9-17: Spring Vacation</b>				
Week 8	March 20		The War on Terror	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Unit 2 Response Paper Due</b></li><li>• Hetherington and Nelson (2003): Anatomy of a Rally Effect: George W. Bush</li></ul>

				and the War on Terrorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cramer (2007): Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed Before the Iraq War</li> <li>• Suasing (2022): The Forgotten War on Terror: How the United States Overmilitarized Counterterrorism in the Philippines</li> </ul>
	March 22		Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Simulation Position Paper Due by 12 pm</i></b></li> <li>• ICONS Materials</li> </ul>
Week 9	March 27		Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Mini-Conference Proposals Due</i></b></li> </ul>
	March 29		Simulation	
Week 10	April 3	<b>No Class- Professor at Conference</b>		
	April 5			
Week 11 <i>April 11: Course Withdrawal Deadline</i>	April 10	<b>Unit 4: Contemporary Challenges in US Foreign Policy</b>	The US Military Abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Simulation Debriefing Paper Due</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Unit 3 Response Paper Due</i></b></li> <li>• Vine (2015): <u>"Where in the World is the US Military?"</u></li> <li>• Allen et al. (2022): "The Domain of Competitive Consent"</li> <li>• Murphy (2023): "Strategic</li> </ul>

				<p>Competition for Overseas Basing in Sub-Saharan Africa"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Optional:</i> Tomacruz (2023): <u>"What will it take for the Philippines and the US to expand EDCA?"</u></li> </ul>
	<p>April 12 <i>Guest Lecture, Prof. Devon Cantwell-Chavez, University of Ottawa</i></p>		Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Climate and Environment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How the United States can return to credible climate leadership</a></li> </ul>
Week 12	<p>April 17 <i>Guest Lecture, Dr. Nakissa Jahanbani, West Point</i></p>		Counterterrorism and US Foreign Policy Towards Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Reviewing Iran's Proxies by Region: A Look Toward the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How Iranian-Backed Militias Do Political Signaling</a></li> </ul>
	<p>April 19</p>		Economic Sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haass (1997): "Sanctioning Madness"</li> <li>• New York Times (2023): "The Risks of Sanctions, the Tool that America Loves to Use"</li> <li>• <a href="#">Treasury Sanctions North Korean State-Sponsored Malicious Cyber Groups</a></li> <li>• <i>Optional:</i> Early and Preble (2023): "Explanations for</li> </ul>

				Firms' Self-Sanctioning in Response to Russia's 2022 Invasion of Ukraine"
Week 13 <b>April 25: Mini-Conference</b>	April 24		Conference Prep	
	April 26		Course Wrap-Up	
<b><i>Unit 4 Response Paper Due May 2 by 11:59 pm</i></b>				