



EAST TEXAS A&M

UNIVERSITY

FOREIGN POLICY PSCI 437-01E Spring 2026

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**Office Hours: T-Th 9.30 am-11.00 am
2.00 pm-3.00 pm
and by appointment**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a broad-based introduction to the major theoretical trends and scholarly traditions that define, organize, and drive foreign policy analysis. The overall aim of the course is to enable students to broaden their understanding of world politics by using foreign policy decision making as an analytical tool. The course will specifically focus on the politics of the Middle East. Students will study the social, economic, political and cultural factors that affect the events in the region through a variety of traditional and non-traditional foreign policy decision making frameworks. Students will also be exposed to the U.S. policies towards the Middle East and encouraged to examine the actions of American and Middle Eastern policymakers as defined by a variety of constraints that limit their options and decision-making.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will become familiar with foreign policy decision making paradigms, theories, and concepts and develop critical and analytical skills in discussing international issues and world events.
- **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate an awareness of societal and/or civic issues in the international arena.
- **Personal Responsibility:** Students will form their own research agendas in foreign policy analysis and will practice academic honesty in their writing assignments.
- **Communication:** Students will enhance their oral skills and communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with evident message and organizational structure.
- **Empathy skills:** Students will develop empathy skills and be encouraged to see the world from multiple perspectives.

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REQUIRED TEXTS

- Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne. 2024. *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, 4th Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0192863072
- David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas. 2018. *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics and Ideologies*, 6th Edition. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0813350585

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

The class will be a mix of lectures, seminar discussions and debates. An outline of the reading schedule is provided in the syllabus. Students are required to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. Half of the course is designed as a seminar where all participants will share responsibility for the success of each individual session.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Participation: Attendance is vital to your success in class. More than 3 unexcused absences will automatically drop your final grade by one letter grade (e.g. if the student earned a “B” in the course, the final grade would be a “C”). Acceptable excuses include health and family emergencies. Participation points are earned through your contribution to class discussions and debates. If you’re not in class, you can’t earn participation points.

Weekly News Brief: Every week, Thursday, we will start the class with a weekly news analysis of US Foreign Policy. For this portion of the class, the student on duty will introduce a current US foreign policy issue (or issues) to the class and present it for general comments. Students are expected to explain the significance of this issue for US Foreign Policy as well as their personal views on the topic.

Weekly Reflections: Throughout the first 5 weeks of the class, you will write a total of 5 weekly reflection pieces which are expected to be 500-750 words in length (not more, not less). The deadline for submitting each reflection paper is every Sunday, 11.59 pm, on D2L. To complete this assignment, you need to first specify a certain US foreign policy decision. You can specify your empirical case by either perusing the foreign policy/world politics pages of newspapers and picking a case from current events or pick a case of US foreign policy issue that you are personally interested in. The main idea of the assignment is to analyze the real world cases in US foreign policy by using the foreign policy decision making paradigms we learn in class. You are required to do the following:

- Briefly explain the US foreign policy decision you picked and its political context.
- Explicitly relate the case you picked to the readings assigned for that week. You’re expected to deploy your critical thinking skills to apply and reflect upon what you’ve learned in class in the context of the real world case you work on.
- Be thoughtful and articulate but use your own voice. This exercise is intended to get you more informed in real world issues in US foreign policy and complete the course readings. However, more importantly, you are a citizen on planet earth, with only one life to reflect on the world you inhabit.

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Discussion Leaders: Starting with the 7th week of classes, we will switch to seminar style. Each student will be responsible for running one discussion session throughout the semester. The responsibility of the discussion leader is to run a dynamic seminar discussion regarding the chapter covered by the session. The purpose of these sessions is not to summarize the readings but to run the seminar by sparking new insights into the subject at hand, bringing in thoughtful remarks, highlighting the critical aspects of the readings and raising informed questions to set the stage for productive discussion throughout the session.

Policy Paper: To complete this assignment, you are required to analyze the chapter that you lead the class discussion on by using the foreign policy paradigms we learned during the first 5 weeks of classes. The paper should sort out the main foreign policy themes and decisions in the chapter and reflect on them by using the analytical tools we learned in class. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to theoretically examine real world issues and elaborate on how particular foreign policy analyses tools enhance our understanding of these real world cases. Policy papers are expected to be 4-5 pages long, or 1000-1500 words. A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for this assignment is available on D2L. For each student, the policy paper is due the second Sunday from the day you run the seminar, 11.59 pm on D2L.

Debate: Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Once we finish covering the chapters on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, students will split into three groups. Each group will develop a peace plan based on the foreign policy theories we learned in class. We will run a two-session long debate to reach a consensus on a final peace plan for the conflict.

Final Research Project: As a final project, you're required to complete a research paper assignment relevant to the US Foreign Policy in the Middle East. This is a semester-long project which should not be left to the last few weeks of classes. You need to identify an issue/problem/question in US foreign policy in the Middle East and work on it throughout the semester in the context of the foreign policy paradigms we learn in class.

Final research papers are expected to be 7-10 pages in length. A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for this assignment can be found on D2L. Each student will present their draft research paper during Weeks 14 & 15 to get feedback from me. Final papers are due **May 7, 11.59 pm**.

Format Requirements: All assignments must be double-spaced, typed and written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. Sources for each assignment must include books, academic articles and news pieces. All sources must be cited properly and listed in a bibliography or in footnotes/endnotes format. Regarding citations, you may use any academically accepted format.

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GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Attendance & Participation	15%
Discussion Leaders	10%
Debate: Israeli-Palestinian Peace	10 %
Weekly Reflections	20% (4% each)
Policy Paper	20%
Final Project	25%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. You are required to request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline late extension requests will not be granted. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions during class discussions. Any behavior that disrupts the class or impedes other students' ability to fully engage with the course will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult with me during my office hours.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Texas Senate Bill-11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

- 1/13 Introduction to the course/Overview of the syllabus
- 1/15 Understanding Foreign Policy: The Levels of Analysis

Week 2

- 1/20 Realism and Foreign Policy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 2
- 1/22 The National Security State Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 10

Week 3

- 1/27 Strategic Assessment and Grand Strategy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 8
- 1/29 Making Decisions: Rational, Psychological, and Neurological Approaches Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 9

Week 4

- 2/3 Liberalism and Foreign Policy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 3
- 2/5 Public & Aid Diplomacy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 12&13

Week 5

- 2/10 Constructivism and Foreign Policy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 4
- 2/12 Climate Change and Foreign Policy Smith, Hadfield & Dunne Ch 14

Week 6

- 2/17 Theory Overview
- 2/19 Introduction to the Middle East and the United States Lesch & Haas Intro & Ch 1

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Week 7

- 2/24 The Ironic Legacy of the King-Crane Commission Lesch & Haas Ch 2
2/26 US Foreign Policy Toward Iran During the Mussadig Era Lesch & Haas Ch 3

Week 8

- 3/3 The Soviet Perception of the US Threat Lesch & Haas Ch 7
3/5 The Superpowers and The Cold War in the Middle East Lesch & Haas Ch 8

Week 9

Spring Break

Week 10

- 3/17 The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: US Actions and Arab Perceptions Lesch & Haas Ch 9
3/19 The Golan Negotiations: US-Syrian Relations Lesch & Haas Ch 10

Week 11

- 3/24 From Madrid to Oslo to Camp David: The United States and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Lesch & Haas Ch 11
3/26 George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Lesch & Haas Ch 12

Week 12

- 3/31 **Debate: Israeli-Palestinian Peace**
4/2 **Debate: Israeli-Palestinian Peace**

Week 13

- 4/7 The Iraq War of 2003: Why Did the United States Decide to Invade?
Lesch & Haas Ch 14
4/9 What Went Wrong in Iraq Lesch & Haas Ch 15

Week 14

- 4/14 **Draft Research Paper Presentations**
4/16 **Draft Research Paper Presentations**

Week 15

- 4/21 **Draft Research Paper Presentations**
4/23 Ideology and America's Nuclear Crisis with Iran Lesch & Haas Ch 18

Week 16

- 4/28 The United States' Post-9/11 Fight against Al-Qaida and the Islamic State
Lesch & Haas Ch 19
4/30 The Arab Uprisings from the US' Perspective Lesch & Haas Ch 21

Week 17

Finals Week

Final Research Papers due May 7, 11.59 pm.

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