

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
Department of Political Science

Political Science 284/495  
American Grand Strategy  
Winter 2009

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Course Description: This course examines the evolution of American grand strategy since 1900, when the United States first emerged on the world stage as a great power. The focus will be on assessing how its leaders have thought over time about: 1) which areas of the world are worth fighting and dying for, 2) when it is necessary to fight in those strategically important areas, and 3) what kinds of military forces are needed for deterrence and war-fighting in those regions. Attention will be paid to issues such as America's entry into World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War; the influence of America's location in the Western Hemisphere on its grand strategy; the superpower competition in the Cold War; the strategies of containment, massive retaliation and flexible response; the impact of domestic politics on US grand strategy; the relationship between America's economic and military position in the world system; the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of al Qaeda on US grand strategy; the future of America's Cold War alliances; the Bush Administration's national security strategy; and whether China is likely to rise peacefully.

Course Requirements: This course is oriented around the readings and the lectures. It is expected that every student will do all the reading and attend every lecture. Moreover, each student will be expected to attend a discussion section once a week. The grade will be based on a comprehensive final examination (75%) and classroom participation in the discussion section (25%).

Readings and Books: These books – all of which are in paperback – have been ordered through the Seminary Co-op Bookstore:

- Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Cornell)
- John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford)
- George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, expanded ed. (Chicago)
- Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Indiana)

All other readings besides the above four books are available on Chalk.

Course Outline:

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

1. January 5, 2004 (M): Organizational Meeting and Overview

2. January 7 (W): Defining Grand Strategy

-- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, pp. 1–81.

Recommended Reading:

-- Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter, 1996–1997), pp 5–53.

## **PART II: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 1900–1945**

3. January 12 (M): Changing American Interests, 1900–1939

-- Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, chaps. 1-4.

-- Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton, 2001), chap. 7, “The Offshore Balancers.”

4. January 14 (W): Development of the Military Instrument, 1900–1939

-- Weigley, *American Way of War*, part 3.

January 19 (M): No class, Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

5. January 21 (Wed): Isolationism, 1900–1941

-- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, chap. 5.

-- Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger* (Westview Press, 1997 [1972]), chap. 2, “The Impending Stalemate in Europe,” and chap. 3, “A Hobson’s Choice for Japan”

6. January 26 (M): World War II

-- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, “Plan Dog” memorandum (Nov. 12, 1940)

-- Weigley, *American Way of War*, part 4

## **PART III: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 1945–1989**

7. January 28 (W): Containment

-- Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” in *American Diplomacy*.

-- Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chaps. 1–2.

8. February 2 (M): The Nuclear Revolution

-- Robert Jervis, “Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn’t Matter,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (Winter 1979–80), pp. 617–633.

9. February 4 (W): The Early Cold War

-- David Alan Rosenberg, “The Origins of Overkill,” *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (spring 1983), pp. 3–71.

-- Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, skim chap. 3–6.

10. February 9 (M): The Third World

-- Steven R. David, “Why the Third World Matters,” *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Summer 1989), pp. 50–85.

-- Stephen M. Walt, “The Case for Finite Containment: Analyzing U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Summer 1989), pp. 5-49.

11. February 11 (W): The Vietnam War–I

- Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap. 8.
- Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War* (Univ. of California, 1999), chap. 12

12. February 16 (M): The Vietnam War–II

- George C. Herring, *America's Longest War*, 3d ed. (McGraw-Hill, 1996), chap. 5, "On the Tiger's Back," and chap. 6, "A Very Near Thing."
- John E. Mueller, "The Search for the 'Breaking Point' in Vietnam," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4. (Dec. 1980), pp. 497–519.
- Guenther Lewy, "Vietnam: New Light on the Question of American Guilt," *Commentary*, February 1978, pp. 29–49.

13. February 18 (W): The Persian Gulf

- Charles A. Kupchan, *Persian Gulf and the West* (Allen & Unwin, 1987), chap. 2, "The Setting, 1946–73," and chap. 4, "Iran, Afghanistan, and the Evolution of the Carter Doctrine."

**PART IV: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 1990–2001**

14. February 23 (M): Unipolarity and "The End of History"

- Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990–1991), pp. 23–33.
- William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5–41.
- Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest*, No. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.

15. February 25 (W): Clinton Administration Grand Strategy

- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, chap. 4.
- Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1996), pp. 16–32.
- Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 2000), pp. 45–62.

**PART V: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY SINCE SEPT.11, 2001**

16. March 2 (M): The Bush Doctrine

- Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (The White House, Sept. 17, 2002).
- Charles Krauthammer, "Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World," 2004 Irving Kristol Lecture at AEI.
- John J. Mearsheimer, "Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism versus Neo-Conservatism," *opendemocracy.com*, posted May 19, 2005.
- Clinton, William J, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (The White House, Feb. 1995).

Recommended Readings:

--Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism," *New York Times Magazine*, February 19, 2006  
-- Michael C. Williams, "What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, Issue 3 (Sept. 2005), pp. 307-337.

17. March 4 (W): The RMA and the Promise of Easy Victories

-- Stephen Biddle, "Allies, Airpower, and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Winter 2005/2006), pp. 161-176.  
-- Max Boot, "The New American Way of War," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (July/Aug. 2003), pp. 41-58.  
-- Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons," *International Security* Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer 2003), pp. 5-46.

18. March 9 (M): The Terrorist Threat

-- John Mueller, "Is There Still a Terrorist Threat? The Myth of the Omnipotent Enemy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (September/October 2006).  
-- Norman Podhoretz, "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win," *Commentary*, September 2004, pp. 17-54.

19. March 11 (W): Can China Rise Peacefully?

-- John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 71-88.  
-- John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History*, Vol. 105, No. 690 (April 2006), pp. 160-162.  
-- Stephen Van Evera, "A Farewell to Geopolitics," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 11-35.

Recommended Reading:

-- Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7-45.

20. March 16 (M): **FINAL EXAM**