

American Foreign Policy (PLS 320 - 001)

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:25–2:15pm

Strong Hall 0301

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Assistant Professor Michael Masterson

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Office hours: Wednesday 2:30 pm –5 pm & Thursday 1:30–4:00 or by appointment.

My office is in Strong Hall 330, and you should feel free to come in during office hours without an appointment. When scheduling a meeting outside of my office hours, please strive to contact me at least 2 days in advance. I will do my best to respond to emails by the end of the business day. There is no guarantee of a response to emails sent during non-business hours until the next business day.

Course Overview

This course will cover the major recent events and debates about American foreign policy. Key topics include: the Cold War, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, US-China relations, international trade and technological competition, the war in Ukraine, and environmental cooperation.

Lectures

The lectures are intentionally designed to cover content *not* included in the assigned readings to further expand student learning. For this reason, it is important that students *both* attend lecture and complete the assigned readings.

Assignments

Quizzes

For 7 of the Friday class sessions, I will administer an in-class pop quiz on the required readings for that week. The quizzes will have multiple choice questions, which I will read aloud. The quizzes will usually take place at the beginning of class and no one may begin a quiz after the first quiz is turned in, so be sure to come on time. A student may drop their lowest quiz grade, but there will be no makeup quizzes outside of exceptional circumstances, such as medical or family emergencies.

Big Question Project

Each student will choose one of the following big questions about US foreign policy to answer in both a paper and a presentation.

- Was the war in Afghanistan inevitable after 9/11 or could and should the United States have avoided the war?

- After the beginning of the war, what should the United States have done differently to achieve a better outcome in Afghanistan?
- After the beginning of the war, what should the United States have done differently to achieve a better outcome in Iraq?
- If military conflict breaks out between China and Taiwan, should the United States get involved?
- Where on the spectrum from engagement to hostility should United States' China policy fall?
- What kind of policy should the United States adopt regarding the export of technology used to produce advanced computer chips?

Big Question Paper

The paper should explain the importance of the question, describe what the major debates and positions are, and make an argument for the student's chosen answer to the question. The paper should show that the student has researched the topic substantially and should cite at least 6 high quality sources, such as books, peer reviewed articles, and institute reports, beyond the required readings. The paper should be 5–6 doubled-spaced pages. The paper is due at the end of the day on *Friday November 10*.

Big Question Presentation

Each student will give 5–6 minute presentation to the class about their paper, covering the main debates over their question, what conclusion they reached, and what evidence led them to this conclusion. The presentations will take place on the following Wednesdays: 11/8, 11/15, and 11/29.

Guidelines for all Written Assignments

Papers should have 1 inch margins. They should use a font size of 11 or 12 and one of the following fonts: Times, Calibri, Liberation Serif, Computer Modern, or Helvetica. *Bibliographies do not count towards page length requirements.* Papers should follow the [Chicago](#) author-date citation style. Your paper should include both a parenthetical reference with page numbers in the portions of the text in which you engage with each source as well as a full bibliography at the end. The file that you upload to Blackboard should be in PDF format.

The use of AI text generation tools is a form of plagiarism and is not permitted.

Exams

The exams will cover both the lectures and readings. However, as the quizzes focus on the readings, the exams will put more emphasis on the lectures. The exams will be cumulative. The midterm will be on **10/6** during our normal class time, and the final exam will be on **12/13 from 1:15–3:15pm** in our normal classroom. Students will need a *Blue Book Exam Booklet* (available from the University Book Store) for each exam.

Grading

- Quizzes 20%
- Attendance and Participation 20%
 - Students' attendance scores are based on attending each class and arriving on time. Students must earn participation points from participating in class discussions that will take place during each lecture. However, *if you are sick and may be contagious, please do not come to class*. Instead, seek medical attention from your doctor or at Mager's Health and Wellness Center. They can provide you a medical excuse and advise you when it is safe to return to class. Contact me to let me know that you are sick and will not be in class. We can work together to ensure you will be able to keep up with readings and assignments through the Blackboard course site.
- Midterm 10%
- Final 20%
- Big Question Paper 20%
- Big Question Presentation 10%

Late Work Policy

If you believe you may be late turning in an assignment because of an event, such as a medical or family emergency, then you should email me as far as possible in advance of the due date of the assignment to request an extension. Late assignments not granted an extension prior to the due date will lose 10 percentage points and an additional 10 percentage points for each day late after the first day. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted, and late quizzes will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Course Readings

Required Books

The American War in Afghanistan: A History by Carter Malkasian and *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology* by Chris Miller.

Other Readings

All of the readings, except those from the two required books are available through Blackboard.

University Policies

Please see the [University Policy Statement Page](#) for up-to-date university policies that apply to this and all courses on the following issues: Nondiscrimination, Disability Accommodation,

Title IX Policy, Lauren's Promise, Religious Accommodation, Mental Health & Stress Management, Chosen Name Policy, Suicide Prevention, Student Requirements for Technology, Academic Integrity, Cell Phone Policy, Audio/Video Recording of Course Activity, Dropping a Class, Emergency Response, and Cultural Competence Statement.

Reading Course Schedule

The dates listed below give the final class day of each week by which you should have completed the readings. All of these fall on a Friday except for Wednesday August 30, Wednesday October 11th, November 8th, and Wednesday December 6th because there are no classes on those Fridays.

August 25th: Introduction

No readings

Wednesday August 30: Cold War

The Global Cold War: Intro and Part I

No Class Friday: American Political Science Association Conference

September 8th: End of Cold War

Ghost Wars Ch 4

Armageddon Averted Ch 4

September 15th: Post-Cold War

Empire of Humanity Ch 9

Ghost Wars Prologue

September 22nd: 9/11 and Start of War in Afghanistan

The American War in Afghanistan Ch 4 and Ch 7

September 29th: Turning Points in the War in Afghanistan

The American War in Afghanistan Ch 11 and Ch 14

October 6th: US Withdraw from Afghanistan

The American War in Afghanistan Ch 20–21

Wednesday October 11th: Decision to Invade Iraq

Confronting Saddam Ch 7 and Ch 8

No class Friday (fall break)

October 20th: End of Combat Operations in Iraq and ISIS

The Endgame Ch 1

Degrade and Destroy Ch 1

October 27th: US-China Economic and Human Rights Relations

The China Reckoning

The Failures of the 'Failure of Engagement' with China

Chip Wars Intro

November 3rd US-China Security Relations

How China's Military is Slowly Squeezing Taiwan

How the US is Deepening Military Alliances

The China Trap

Wednesday November 8th Technology Competition

Chip Wars Ch 11-14

Chip Wars Part VIII

No Class Friday: Peace Science Conference

November 17th: Trade

The Trouble with Trans-Pacific trade

What's next for WTO

Global Subsidy War

US Weighs Tougher Export Restrictions on China

November 24th

No readings (Thanksgiving break)

December 1st: Ukraine Conflict

How Putin Blundered into Ukraine — Then Doubled Down

Ukraine Conflict at the Crossroads

What Ukraine is Not About

How Much Aid Has the US Sent Ukraine

Wednesday December 6th: Environmental Policy

Last Day of Class

CFR Backgrounder on Climate Change

How can the US Meet its Climate Goals

Guide to US Inflation Reduction Act
The Window is Closing COP 28