

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Political Science Department

Political Science 284/495
American Grand Strategy
Winter 2019

Instructor: John Mearsheimer

TAs: Andrea Bartoletti, Alexandra Chinchilla, Maura Cremin, Andres Uribe

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; international politics during the unipolar moment (1990-2016); the future of America's Cold War alliances; the Bush Doctrine; the emerging multipolar system; 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: The books below are in paperback and available at 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All articles, unpublished papers, and book chapters with ** next to them are on Canvas.

Course Outline:

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. January 7, 2014 (Monday): Organizational Meeting and Overview

2. January 9 (Wednesday): Defining Grand Strategy

-- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, chaps. 1-2.

PART II: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 1900–1945

3. January 14 (Monday): Changing American Interests, 1900–1939

- Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea* (Yale, 2009), chap. 5. **
- Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, chaps. 1-4.
- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton, 2001), chap. 7. **

4. January 16 (Wednesday): Development of the Military Instrument, 1900–1939

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

5. January 21 (Monday): No class – MLK Day

6. January 23 (Wednesday): Isolationism, 1900–1941

- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, chap. 5.
- Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger* (Westview Press, 1997), chap. 2. **
- Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History* (Princeton, 2006), chap. 4. **

7. January 28 (Monday): 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

8. January 30 (Wednesday): Containment

- Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power* (Stanford, 1992), Introduction and Conclusion. **
- Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” in *American Diplomacy*.
- Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chaps. 1-2.

9. February 4 (Monday): The Nuclear Revolution

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

10. February 6 (Wednesday): 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.

11. February 11 (Monday): 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. **

12. February 13 (Wednesday): The Vietnam War-I

- Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap. 8.
- Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War* (Univ. of California, 1999), chap. 12. **
- James Thomson, "How Could Vietnam Happen?" *The Atlantic*, April 1968. **

13. February 18 (Monday): The Vietnam War-II

- George C. Herring, *America's Longest War*, 3d ed. (McGraw-Hill, 1996), chaps. 5-6. **
- John E. Mueller, "The Search for the 'Breaking Point' in Vietnam," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4. (Dec. 1980), pp. 497–519. **
- Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win* (Cornell, 1996), chap. 6. **

14. February 20 (Wednesday): The Persian Gulf

- Charles A. Kupchan, *Persian Gulf and the West* (Allen & Unwin, 1987), chaps. 2 & 4. **

PART IV: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 1990–2016

15. February 25 (Monday): Unipolarity and "The End of History"

- Art, *Grand Strategy for America*, chap. 4.
- Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest*, No. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3-18. **
- Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990–1991), pp. 23–33. **

16. February 27 (Wednesday): Is Unipolarity Peaceful?

- Nuno Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/2012), pp. 9-40. **
- William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5–41. **

17. March 4 (Monday): The Pursuit of Liberal Hegemony

- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), chaps 5-6. **

18. March 6 (Wednesday): 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), pp. 2-8. **

- John Mueller and Mark Stewart, *Chasing Ghosts: The Policing of Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), Introduction & Conclusion. **
- Norman Podhoretz, "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win," *Commentary*, September 2004, pp. 17-54. **

PART V: AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY, 2017-2019

19. March 11 (Monday): The Return of Great Power Politics

- *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2017)
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>
- *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Pentagon, January 2018)
<https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>
- Barry R. Posen, "The Rise of Illiberal Hegemony: Trump's Surprising Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (March-April 2018), pp. 20-27. **

20. March 13 (Wednesday): Can China Rise Peacefully?

- Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, "The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (March-April 2018), pp. 60-70. **
- G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (January-February 2008), pp. 23-37. **
- John Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, new ed. (New York: Norton, 2014), chap. 10. **