

American Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: European Union, East Asia, Middle East, and Eurasia.

Summer 2023 – 42 Contact Hours

Classroom Location: Universidade Católica, Lisbon

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This short-term course aims to increase our understanding of the critical aspects of American Foreign Policy, that is, the U.S. relations with the European Union, the Middle East, East Asia, and Eurasia. It is a Political Science class, thus part of the Social Sciences – a branch of scientific knowledge that investigates human behavior as it interacts in the public sphere of politics, economics, cultural settings, and societal issues.

We will study the primary foreign policy-making institutions and bureaucracies in the United States and some of the most critical contemporary foreign policy debates. For instance, we will examine the challenges the United States faces abroad in the post-cold war world, including its military involvement abroad, nuclear proliferation, the U.S. role in Middle East politics, and the rise of U.S. economic competitors in Asia.

With the support of a variety of texts focusing on the substance of U.S. Foreign Policy towards different world regions, the course should take us to consider the relevance of the international world order created by the United States in the aftermath of WWII and explore the status of that liberal order: Is it failing? If it is, what are the causes of its decline? If it declines, will the international order institutions (U.N., for instance) survive? And if the international liberal order ends, what is on the horizon to replace it?

This course demands regular class attendance and participation. It also requires time and dedication regarding the assigned readings and assignments.

This course emphasizes writing skills, ideas, and critical thinking through different assignments and class activities. All learning activities and class materials are an integral part of this course; test questions will come from any of them.

The course stresses acquiring knowledge in an active and collaborative learning environment. This means an actual engagement in the learning process, a reasonable amount of time dedicated to readings and assignments, a willingness to listen, and the ability to work in teams. Students are required to work in groups.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This short-term intensive course on American Foreign Policy examines the centrality of the United States in world affairs and analyzes the status of the United States' relations with countries in the European Union, Eurasia, East Asia, and the Middle East. Classroom lectures, readings, audiovisual materials, and student class presentations will be enhanced with field visits in Lisbon that will bring students into direct contact with local organizations and experts in world affairs.

Our classes will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays comprising of:

- a) Classroom teaching and learning, including student class presentations and
- b) External activities (site visits) consisting of meetings with local organizations and experts in world affairs.

Course materials include readings, audiovisuals, PowerPoint presentations, and other learning resources distributed in class.

Required readings

- Articles posted online every week (as specified in the course calendar below)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete the requirements of the course will:

- Understand contemporary issues in U.S. foreign policy.
- Acquire familiarity with U.S. relations with the European Union, the Middle East, East Asia, and Eurasia.
- Sharpen writing, teamwork, and public policy skills.
- Apply knowledge and skills to real-world situations in U.S. Foreign Policy.
- Take an analytical approach to the subject matter.

Students' Responsibilities

- Attend classes and participate in all course activities, aware that absences will negatively impact the final grade.
- Personal travel is not a valid reason for missing classes. Make your plans accordingly.
- Keep abreast of course activities; follow the syllabus; • Be responsible for all class materials.
- Behave professionally and respectfully towards classmates and faculty.
- Don't disrupt our sessions: Avoid parallel conversations and inappropriate use of electronic devices:
- Complete all assignments by the deadline.
- Pay due attention to the instructor's email messages.
- Comply with the rules of academic integrity: no cheating, no fabrications.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

1. Midterm Exam (on the course's second week) – 30 percent
2. Student's Class presentations (based on selected articles) – 25 percent
3. Final Exam (on the last week of classes) – 35 percent
4. Class Participation (100 percent attendance) – 10 percent

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed in a separate handout.

Evaluation

Course grades will be based on class participation and course engagement. All students are expected to contribute to a collaborative learning environment by:

1. Regular class attendance, including site visits.
2. Avoiding distractions such as cell phone use and headphones
3. Taking notes, contributing to group activities, and offering relevant and informed insights.
4. Respecting others' opportunities to speak and promote a free-speech community where ideas may be challenged, but people are not attacked.
5. Submitting assignments as required.
6. Quality of your academic work.
7. Demonstration of knowledge.
8. Commitment to learning.

Grade Scale

100-95 A; 94-90 A-

89-87 B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 B-

79-77 C+; 76-74 C; 73-70 C-

69-67 D+; 66-63 D; 62-60 D-

59-0 F

- Class attendance is required as well as participation in all external course activities.
- Only those with 100 percent attendance will earn points for course participation—no excuses (except in case of documented illness).
- Attendance (in all course activities) is integral to the final grade. If you cannot attend class, please inform the instructor ahead of time and provide documentation to justify your absence. Accepted documents include a doctor's or hospital report or official paperwork about a life emergency. Drug prescription slips and personal travel are not valid to excuse absences.
- Academic integrity: This course will follow standard University policies regarding academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism.
- Incomplete is only available in the event of a verified medical emergency. The proper documentation is required.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICIES

There is a correlation between class attendance and learning. As we learn, we increase our chances of earning higher grades. Therefore, this course emphasizes presence and class participation. Attendance will be taken regularly, and absences will be marked. See how absences will affect your grade:

- a) I will show audiovisual materials (without prior announcement), and their components will appear on tests and other assignments.
- b) Lectures will bring topics that do not necessarily come from the readings. Tests will be based on any course material or class activity.
- c) You must attend a class on the day of your presentation to earn points associated with the assignment.

Important Note: You can only pass the course if you complete all assignments and have a good attendance record. Act strategically, plan your activities, pay attention to the syllabus and course calendar, and annotate your tasks using a personal appointment book (available on computers, tablets, and cell phones).

ASSESSMENT

All your assignments will be evaluated according to the following general criteria:

- a) Your command of the course materials – Do you understand the basic facts, the context, and the background of the issues we address in class? Can you distinguish between issues or events of primary and secondary importance? Are you able to analyze the issues from different perspectives? Can you relate issues and events to the theoretical work reviewed in the course?
- b) Your writing, organizational, and language skills –Is your writing organized with a good articulation of ideas? Are your sentences constructed properly? Do you choose words appropriately? Are the words spelled correctly?
- c) Your attention to the assignments – Is your work submitted on the scheduled dates? Are your assignments well-organized and thoughtful, showing your dedication to them? Are you taking part in all learning activities?

ATTENTION:

- Class presentations are required, and there is no makeup for them. Those who miss their scheduled presentations won't earn the activity's corresponding points. Those who refuse to join a group will not receive any points connected to the activity.
- Participation in all field visits is required. Those who miss them won't earn attendance points.
- You must observe the following rules for site visits: a) punctuality (arriving on time and attending the entire event); dress appropriately (no flip-flops, no short pants, no beach attire by any means). In case of non-compliance, you will have to leave the event and thus will lose attendance points.
- The course requires student engagement in class activities and familiarity with the course materials. Be punctual (arrive on time) and leave the class at the scheduled time.

- Exams will be based on what is studied in the classroom and what we will learn from experts' information. Articles and all other learning materials will be featured on the exams.

I am an accessible faculty member. Please email me if you have questions about the course and learning materials. All messages will receive an answer. In case of disabilities or special needs, please let me know.

Office hours are available upon request. Please email me to schedule an appointment:
ivani.vassoler@gmail.com

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 - U.S. and E.U.: Alliances and Critical Issues

First day of Classes: Course Overview; Syllabus Presentation; Expectations

- Session A. Founding Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy

Read: "How U.S. Foreign Policy is Made", p. 1-4

Read: "What is in the 2022 National Defense Strategy, by Melanie Sisson, 2022, p. 1-12

- Session B. EU and U.S. Relations

Read: "Europe and America Are Moving Closer on China", by Julia Pallanch and Bonnie Glaser, Oct 2022, p. 1-5

Audiovisual Materials

The EU: Past & Present

The European Union

Site Visit: European Union Commission in Portugal

WEEK 2 – U.S. in the Middle East: Forever There?

- Session A: U.S., Israel & Palestinians, and the Arab World

Read: "America's Middle East Purgatory", Mara Karlin and Tamara Cofman Wittes, Jan-Feb 2019, p. 88-100

Audiovisual Materials

The U.S. and the Middle East – An Interview

Middle East Wars

- Session B: Student Class Presentation

Based on: "U.S. Strategic Interests in the Middle East', by Karl P. Mueller, Becca Wasser, Jeffrey Martini, Stephen Watt, in *Perspective*, Rand Corporation, p. 1-12

Site Visit: Biblioteca Pública do Médio Oriente e Norte de África, Lisbon; The Islamic Observatory, Lisbon.

Midterm Test

WEEK 3 – U.S. and East Asia: China and the Thucydides Trap?

- Session A – The Rights and Wrongs?

Read: “The China Reckoning”, Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, Mar-Apr 2018, p. 60-70.

Read: “A Course Correction in America’s China Policy”, by Ryan Hass, Patricia Kim and J. Bader, p. 1-11

Audiovisual Materials

The Belt & Road Initiative.

The South China Sea Challenge

- Session B: Student Class Presentation:

Based on: “U.S-China Relations in the Tank: A Handbook for an Era of Persistent Confrontation,” by Michael Mazarr, Center for Strategic Studies, Nov 2022, p. 1-13

Site Visit: Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa; Fundação Oriente, Lisbon

WEEK 4: U.S. and Eurasia: Facing Russia Again

- Session A: Relations Adrift

Read: The Reset That Wasn’t: The Permanent Crisis of U.S.-Russia Relations, Robert E. Hamilton

Audiovisual Materials:

U.S.-Russia Relations: The Challenges.

Gravitas: Putin singles out US as biggest threat to Russia

- Session B: Student Class Presentation

Based on: “US-Russia relations Geopolitical, security, economic and human dimensions”, by Martin Russell, European Parliamentary Research Service, 2018, p. 1-12

Site Visit: Meet José Milhazes, Portuguese journalist, and author of several books focusing on Russian history, politics, and society.

Final Exam