PS 0189-19
American Primacy

Professor Michael Beckley                Spring 2015
Office: Packard Hall, 307                Tu 6:30-9pm
Hours: Th 1-2:30pm

This course reviews the major challenges, both foreign and domestic, to American primacy. Please note that the emphasis is on national security issues; the course does not cover all issues in U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

Requirements:

(1) Complete all assigned readings before the class sessions in which they will be discussed. Quizzes may occur at any time, and unprepared students will be downgraded. All of the readings are posted on Trunk under “resources.”

(2) Attend class meetings. Students are allowed a maximum of one absence. More than one absence for reasons other than a certified medical excuse will incur a penalty in the final grade.

(3) Participate sensibly in class discussions. Students who seldom contribute, or who blather ceaselessly, will be downgraded. You can expect to be called on if you do not volunteer. For those who feel nervous about talking in class, come see me early in the semester so that we can develop strategies for effective participation.

(4) Research, prepare for, and participate in a debate. Each class, two students will face off in a debate on a specific policy issue related to the readings. The topics for each week and the debate assignments are listed below along with the readings. One debater will affirm the stated resolution while the other debater will negate the resolution.

Each debater will give 2 speeches: an 8-minute opening, and a 4-minute closing. During their 8-minute opening speeches, each debater will lay out the best arguments and evidence for their position. The use of charts and graphics is encouraged though not required. During their 4-minute closing speeches, the debaters will refute the arguments made by their opponents and drive home the main arguments in favor of their side of the resolution. Each debater will be given 1 minute of preparation time before his/her closing speech.

After the speeches, the other students will vote individually and anonymously for the winner of the debate. Professor Beckley will then collect the ballots, announce the
winner, and call on several students at random to explain their reasons for their decisions. In the event of a tie, Professor Beckley will cast the deciding vote and explain his reason for decision.

These debates are a significant portion of your final grade, and it is critical that you prepare extensively. Your grade will NOT be affected by the outcome of the debate; in fact, the loser of the debate may earn a higher grade than the winner. However, Professor Beckley will ask the judges to base their decisions on the same two factors that he will use to determine your grade, which are:

1. **Quality of evidence.** Smooth talk is great, but it is no substitute for cold hard facts. To do well in the debate, you need to present evidence that is more relevant, persuasive, and based on more-qualified sources than your opponent’s. To do that, you will need to conduct extensive research at least a couple weeks in advance of your debate. The class readings are a good place to start your research, but your best evidence is likely to come from sources specific to your debate topic.

2. **Elegance of style.** After gathering your evidence and putting your case together, you should craft a polished opening speech and practice it many times to make sure it fits within the 8-minute time limit. You might also prepare answers to arguments you think your opponent is likely to raise so that you are ready to go for your 4-minute closing speech. The more you prepare beforehand, the better you’ll sound during the debate; and the better you sound during the debate, the more likely you’ll win and earn a high grade.

The debates will start at the beginning of class, so it is critical that everyone show up on time. The affirmative side speaks first, so the speech order will look like this:

1. **Affirmative Opening Speech** – 8 minutes
2. **Negative Opening Speech** – 8 minutes
3. **Affirmative Closing Speech** – 4 minutes
4. **Negative Closing Speech** – 4 minutes

(6) Write a research **paper proposal** done strictly in the format stipulated at the end of this syllabus, *due by noon, February 2* via email to Professor Beckley. Professor Beckley will meet with each of you individually on February 3 to discuss your proposals. Paper topics should stem directly from one of the topics covered in this course and integrate the assigned readings. The scheduled meeting times on February 3 are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:30-6:35pm</td>
<td>Connor Adams</td>
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<td>6:35-6:40pm</td>
<td>Elissa Bowling</td>
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<td>6:40-6:45pm</td>
<td>Robert Collins</td>
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<td>6:45-6:50pm</td>
<td>Sarah Debebe</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:50-6:55pm</td>
<td>James Downer</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:55-7:00pm</td>
<td>Christopher Enos</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00-7:05pm</td>
<td>William Glazier</td>
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</tbody>
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7:05-7:10pm Samuel Kelly
7:10-7:15pm Emily Lewis
7:15-7:20pm Patrick McGonagle
7:20-7:25pm Carley Minkler
7:25-7:30pm Julius Moye
7:30-7:35pm Justin Rheingold
7:35-7:40pm Claire Sleigh
7:40-7:45pm Benjamin Spevack
7:45-7:50pm Stephanie Tercero

(7) Present your paper to the class on April 21. Each student will have a maximum of 8 minutes to present. Presentations should do four things: identify the research question, explain its importance, discuss the existing literature on the topic (i.e. briefly lay out the sides of the debate on the topic), and present your findings.

(7) Complete the paper, within a length limit of 7,000 words and according to the guidelines at the bottom of this syllabus. Papers that exceed the length limit will be penalized. Papers must have normal margins and type size no smaller than 12-point. The paper is due by noon, May 8 via email. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstance besides serious medical emergencies.

Course Grades will be determined as follows:

- Class participation 25%
- Debate 25%
- Presentation 10%
- Final paper 40%

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January 20: Course Info and Introductions

January 27: Grand Strategy

- John Western and Joshua Goldstein, “Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age,” Foreign Affairs, (November/December 2013)
- Benjamin A. Valentino, “The True Cost of Humanitarian Intervention,” Foreign Affairs 90, no.6 (November/December 2011)
February 3:  *Meetings with Prof. Beckley on paper proposals*
6:30-6:40pm  Connor Adams
6:40-6:50pm  Elissa Bowling
6:50-7:00pm  Robert Collins
7:00-7:10pm  Sarah Debebe
7:10-7:20pm  James Downer
7:20-7:30pm  Christopher Enos
7:30-7:40pm  William Glazier
7:40-7:50pm  Samuel Kelly
7:50-8:00pm  Emily Lewis
8:00-8:10pm  Patrick McGonagle
8:10-8:20pm  Carley Minkler
8:20-8:30pm  Julius Moye
8:30-8:40pm  Justin Rheingold
8:40-8:50pm  Claire Sleigh
8:50-9:00pm  Benjamin Spevack
9:00-9:10pm  Stephanie Tercero

February 10:  *Imperial Overstretch*
Debate
• Resolution: The United States should substantially reduce its number of forward-deployed troops and abrogate all of its standing alliances.
• Affirmative: Connor Adams
• Negative: Stephanie Tercero

Readings
• Sebastian Rosato, “Relax, America: Why Overstretch Is a Myth,” Noble Institute, Oslo, Norway, 2012, **pp. 1-16 only.**
• Isiah T. Billings-Clyde, “Imperial Overstretch? American Defense Burdens in Historical Perspective.”

February 17:  *Balancing*
Debate
• Resolution: The United States should grant China a sphere of influence in East Asia and the Western Pacific.
• Affirmative: Elissa Bowling
• Negative: Benjamin Spevack

Readings

**February 24: Diffusion**

**Debate**

- Resolution: The United States should grant permanent residency to foreigners who earn doctorates from U.S. universities in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields.
- Affirmative: Robert Collins
- Negative: Claire Sleigh

**Readings**

- Fareed Zakaria, *Post-American World*.
- Edward Steinfeld, *Playing Our Game*.

**March 3: Nuclear Weapons**

**Debate**

- Resolution: The United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal to 500 total warheads and publicly adopt a No First Use policy.
- Affirmative: Sarah Debebe
- Negative: Justin Rheingold

**Readings**


**March 10:**
Meeting with Research Librarian, Connie Reik. Location TBD.

**March 17:** Spring break

**March 24:** Energy
Debate
• Resolution: The United States should lift all restrictions on U.S. exports of oil and natural gas.
• Affirmative: James Downer
• Negative: Julius Moye

Readings

**March 31:** Investment
Debate
• Resolution: The United States government should establish a national infrastructure bank to fund public works projects chosen by panels of experts.
• Affirmative: Christopher Enos
• Negative: Carley Minkler

Readings
• Fareed Zakaria, “How to Fix America” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2013).
• Mariana Mazzucato, The Entrepreneurial State (NY: Anthem, 2013), chs. 3-5.
• Amar Bhide, Where Innovation Creates Value, Mckinsey, 2009.

April 7: Domestic Politics

Debate

• Resolution: The United States federal government should mandate that all states hold open primaries and establish independent, nonpartisan commissions to redraw congressional districts.
• Affirmative: William Glazier
• Negative: Patrick McGonagle

Readings

• Mickey Edwards, “How to Turn Republicans and Democrats Into Americans,” The Atlantic, June 7, 2011.

April 14: Inequality and Corruption

Debate

• Resolution: The United States government should raise the federal minimum wage to $10.10 per hour and index it to inflation each year.
• Affirmative: Samuel Kelly
• Negative: Emily Lewis

Readings

• Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, Ch. 4.
• Scot Winship, “Overstating the Costs of Inequality,” *National Affairs*, 15 (Spring 2013)

**April 21: Presentations**

1. Benjamin Spevack
2. Carley Minkler
3. Christopher Enos
4. Claire Sleigh
5. Connor Adams
6. Elissa Bowling
7. Emily Lewis
8. James Downer
9. Julius Moye
10. Justin Rheingold
11. Patrick McGonagle
12. Robert Collins
13. Samuel Kelly
14. Sarah Debebe
15. Stephanie Tercero
16. William Glazier

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**Guidelines on Research Proposal and Paper**

Begin thinking about your research paper topic immediately. Your research question should be related to one of the topics in this course, so a great way to spur your thinking is to look at the class readings assigned under the general topic that interests you most.

During the second week of the course (January 26-30), go to the library and investigate the range of books, articles, and data sources related to your general topic area. Scan them quickly to see what may be helpful, look more carefully at anything that seems exactly on point, but wait until you have a firmer sense of your topic before investing substantial time in particular sources. As you go along, compile a bibliography of sources that you intend to use.
Keep the problem of researchability in mind as you craft your specific research question. Some interesting questions are only subject to intuition and speculation. You need to address a question that interests you, but also one that is researchable; that is, one on which historical evidence or current data can be brought to bear to suggest an answer beyond intuition.

Remember, a research paper is not just an essay. It must not just make an argument, but in some form support the argument with evidence. A question that is current or forward-looking, aimed at deriving normative advice for policy, is OK, but beware of choosing such a question if there is little data related to it. You may investigate a hot topic, but do not choose a question that can only be addressed by an essay, an assertion of opinion, or deductive logic without empirical support.

Once you have crafted a specific research question, write your research proposal, which you must email to me by noon, February 2. Paper proposals will be graded G (Good), S (Satisfactory), or U (Unsatisfactory). Proposals that do not adhere to the following directions will be downgraded. The proposal may NOT be more than 350 words (excluding bibliography). The purpose is not to present a preliminary version of the paper, but to indicate that you know what you are doing as you begin the process of developing it. Write only what is necessary to demonstrate that. The proposal must be presented under these four headings:

1. **Question and Issue:** What are you investigating and why should anyone care? This section should normally be no more than fifty words.

2. **Hypotheses or Tentative Argument:** Which potential answer to the question seems likely to be correct? (As you develop the paper you are of course free to reach conclusions different from those anticipated at this stage. That is the purpose of research.) Be sure that your argument is a direct answer to the question posed in (1). This section should be less than 100 words.

3. **Research Plan:** How do you intend to analyze the question? What evidence---historical cases or data compilations---will you use to test hypotheses and illustrate your argument? This is the most important part of the proposal, and the one that usually proves most deficient. Do not state questions or arguments here---they belong in (1) and (2). The purpose of this section is to show that you have a plan for exploring and using empirical material to answer your question. This section should constitute close to two-thirds of the proposal (excluding bibliography).

4. **Bibliography:** What sources have you consulted or do you intend to consult to guide your research and provide data? These should normally include some combination of books, articles, datasets, and official publications (e.g., congressional hearings, departmental reports, or declassified document collections).

The substance of the final paper may deviate from the proposal in light of subsequent research and analysis, but wholesale changes in topic must be approved by me. Papers on questions not approved will not be accepted.
As you write your final paper, organize your analysis carefully. In the introduction, state clearly and concisely (1) what the question is that you are addressing; (2) why it is important; and (3) what your argument is. Make clear to the reader where you are going, but keep the introduction short. The conclusion to the paper should not simply repeat what you have said in summary form, but should weave together the strands in the body of the paper and show how the progression of the analysis leads to the two or three points that are the bottom line.

The bulk of the paper between the introduction and conclusion should marshal evidence to test your hypothesis. Figure out what evidence is both relevant and available for doing so. Evidence can be compilations of data on whatever phenomenon you are considering -- for example, trends in defense budgets, or foreign aid to certain countries, or GDPs of countries in question, and so on. Evidence can also come from case studies of comparable events in the past. For example, if you are investigating the effectiveness of military intervention, you might compare some cases of success with some of failure and decide what similarities or differences among the cases best point to the most relevant conclusion.

Write clearly, directly, grammatically, and economically. Avoid cryptic or prolix constructions. Confusing prose indicates confused thought.

Citations must conform to normal academic forms. If you have the slightest doubt about what they are, consult a reputable style manual, or look at footnote form in a university press book or political science journal. I’ll accept footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations, but my first preference is footnotes, second is endnotes, and last is appending a bibliography and citing specific references with the author's name, date of publication, and page number in parentheses at the appropriate point in the text.

For a seminar paper you are not expected to display all of the methodological skills of a professional social scientist. The more rigorous your approach, however, the more impressive your paper will be. For those of you who are academically ambitious, there are numerous guides to research methods and epistemological issues. Examples include: