PLSC 376
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
FALL 2008
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Professor Bidisha Biswas
Phone: (360) 650-6596 (off-campus) or x6596 (on-campus)
Email: bidisha.biswas@wwu.edu

Class time and location: Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:50
CH 133

Office hours and location: Tuesday, 12:30-1:30 PM
Wednesday, 10AM-11AM
or by appointment
AH 411

This course is an introduction to the basic concepts, theoretical debates and issues in American foreign policy. In the first part of the course, we will evaluate some competing theoretical approaches to the study of foreign policy, in order to understand the different actors and structures involved in making foreign policy decisions. Next, we will examine some key events and understand the specific institutions and actors involved. Third, the class will look carefully at US policy towards North Korea, Afghanistan and Iran in order to understand the complexities involved in the making of foreign policy.

Course Materials
Required reading
- Among Nations Reader (AN), available at the bookstore.

You are required to pay a supplemental lab fee of $12 for participation in the ICONS simulation. This is payable, directly to ICONS, by credit card. More details will be given in class.

Recommended reading

Additional reading assignments are either available online or at library reserve. Please note that you are expected to be familiar with the use of online library resources available at Western Washington University. If you are unfamiliar with the use of these resources, please see a librarian immediately.
Course Requirements
Your final grade in this course will be based on:

15% Foreign Policy Simulation I: North Korea
20% Foreign Policy Simulation II: Afghanistan
25% Reaction papers (2)
25% Take-home Exam
15% Class participation

Discussion
In-class discussion will be encouraged throughout the class. You are required to do your reading assignments before each class session. You are also expected to be aware of current world events. Possible news sources include (but are not limited to) www.washingtonpost.com, www.nytimes.com, www.bbc.com. Good journals to consult on an ongoing basis are Foreign Policy and Foreign Affairs. **Note that failure to keep with current events will make it significantly more difficult for you to meet the requirements of the course.**

Students are expected to respect the opinions of other students and to engage in discussion and debates in a sensitive and respectful manner.

Netiquette
E-mail correspondence with the instructor should follow basic etiquette, as you would use in business communication, such as applying for a job. Make sure you include a subject in the subject line. Please write your emails using appropriate grammar, spelling and tone. **I will not reply to correspondence that neglects to follow these guidelines.**

Take-home exam
A take-home exam will be given. More details will be provided in class. **The exam will be due on December 2. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.** Please plan your schedule accordingly.

Class participation
Your class participation will be based on active engagement with the discussions. For the topic under discussion, you are required to **have a set of two to four analytical questions about the arguments, concepts, themes and issues raised by the readings.** These questions should be critical and thought-provoking. In other words, ask how and why questions. Raise questions about the arguments, the nature of the evidence, possible bias and implications for public policy. Compare the conclusions, evidence or concepts of one author with that of another. **You must post these questions on Blackboard by 7PM the day before class. You are encouraged to read and respond to each other’s questions. Be prepared to ask and discuss your questions in class. The questions posed by the students will be the basis of class discussion.** You must submit responses to **at least three of the topics listed on the syllabus** (note that some topics are discussed over two sessions). You will lose participation points for additional misses.

Reaction paper
You will be asked to submit written reaction papers for **two** of the class sessions. The paper should provide a brief summary of readings. The bulk of the paper should provide analyses and criticisms of the readings and include references to class discussions. You should conclude with your own reaction and opinion. Your position must be argued with reference to the readings and class
discussion. You are required to refer to a **minimum of two of the assigned articles**. Approaches include: identify and respond to a central theme in the reading; review a controversy that emerges among the authors of the week or consider how the arguments of a given author or authors differ with or support conclusions drawn by previous readings; consider the implications of the week’s readings for various historical (or current) cases, etc. Bonus points will be awarded if you draw from external readings that are not on the assigned list. These papers should be **4-6 pages long** (Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced). Due dates for each reaction paper are marked in the syllabus. All papers must be submitted in hard copy by the due date, in class. **Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.**

Foreign policy simulation I: North Korea
Details on the simulation are given at the end of the syllabus. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

**October 9:** Instructor will assign group choices  
**October 23:** Online simulation. **Please arrange to have computer and Internet access for your group between 10am and noon on Thursday, October 23.**  
**November 6:** Individual reaction papers due

Foreign policy simulation II: Afghanistan
Details of the simulation are provided at the end of the syllabus. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

**October 21:** Group choice, with names of all team members, due by email at noon. First come, first serve  
**November 4:** Draft statement due  
**November 13-20:** Presentations  
**November 25:** Final policy statement due

The policy statements should be between **4-6 pages, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced.** I will not accept papers that are longer or shorter than this stipulation.

**Discussion group meetings**
The “1-hr. arranged” component of this course consists of a weekly discussion group meeting outside of class. Groups can meet at times of their choosing. They may also meet with me during my office hours or by prior appointment. You may also use the discussion time to discuss the simulations.

All students must join a discussion group by **October 14.** The groups should have 3-4 persons. One group member must email the names of all the persons in their group by October 14. Anyone not yet in a group by that deadline will receive have points deducted from their class participation grade. **On or before Friday, December 5th, each group member must submit a grade for their group members.** This should be emailed to me and will be kept confidential. Failure to submit a grade for your group members by the deadline will adversely affect your participation grade.

**Summary of group assignments**
- You choose group for weekly meeting  
- You choose group for Afghanistan simulation  
- Instructor chooses group for North Korea simulation
Peer grades must be submitted for each group assignment.

Additional points:
Students are responsible for following the academic honesty guidelines provided in the WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure. The penalty for academic dishonesty can and will include a failure in the course.
Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the semester.
While every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule provided below, unforeseen circumstances might compel changes. Adequate notice, to the extent possible, will be given about any changes to schedule.

Course Schedule
Session 1, September 25
- General introduction
- Review of IR theories

*Session 2, September 30
Revisiting and Developing Theory.
- Review of IR theories
- Questions: What is foreign policy? Who are the primary decision makers of American foreign policy?
- Discussion on directions for US policy
- Reaction paper due October 7

Recommended reading
- PC 2008

*Session 3, October 2
Actors in Foreign Policy: Bureaucracy and Individuals
- Reaction paper due October 7

*Session 4 & 5, October 7 & 9
ICONS
Actors in Foreign Policy: Ideology, Culture, Public Opinion
- Instructor will provide ICONS briefing on October 7

**Reaction paper due October 14**
**Instructor will assign North Korea simulation groups by 5PM on October 9**

*Session 6, October 14*  
The End of the Cold War  
• Kennan, George. “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”. (AN)  
  Chapter 7, A Case Study of Gorbachev. Available through library reserve.

**Reaction paper due October 21**
**Discussion group choices due by 4pm on October 14**

Recommended reading  
• PC

*Session 7 & 8, October 16 & 21*  
The Bush Administration and Beyond  
  Available through course reserves.  
  Available online. (recommended)

**Reaction paper due October 28**
**Afghanistan simulation group choices due by email by 2PM on October 21**

Session 9: October 23  
No class meeting  
ICONS simulation
Session 10, October 28

The Israel Lobby?

- ICONS debriefing

Recommended Reading

- “Setting the Record Straight”, http://www.israellobbybook.com/Setting_the_Record_Straight.pdf

- Reaction paper due November 4

Session 11: November 4

Readings on Iran

- Introduction: KP, Chapter 1, Pp. 3-4, 18-26.
- Cold War and the Shah: Chapter 2-4
- Draft statement on Afghanistan simulation

Session 12: November 6

Readings on Iran

- The Revolution: Chapter 5
- ICONS reaction paper due

November 11: No class. Veteran’s Day

Session 13: November 13

Readings on Iran

- Iran-Iraq War: Particular focus on US role
- Team simulation presentations

Session 14: November 18 & 20

Readings on Iran

- The Bush I and Clinton Years: Chapter 9; Chapter 10-pp. 293-302, Chapter 11, pp. 303-327, 340-342
- Team simulation presentations on November 18 & 20

Session 18: November 25

- KP, Chapter 12-13
- Iran: The Way Forward
- Afghanistan simulation paper due
• Take Home Exam will be posted on Monday, November 24

November 27: No class. Thanksgiving

Session 19: December 2
Wrap-Up
• Take home Exam due on December 2

Good luck on your finals and Happy Holidays!

Take-home exam is due in both email and hard copy formats by 5pm on Tuesday, December 2nd. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances. Exam question will be posted on Blackboard on November 24th.

Foreign Policy Simulation I: North Korea

This simulation, administered online, will explore the complexities of negotiating an end to a crisis in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and mistrust. North Korea’s nuclear program has been an ongoing concern for the international community, and in this simulation events have precipitated a crisis that threatens to ignite a regional conflict. This simulation will place you in teams representing China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States as they attempt to determine the cause of a recent explosion in North Korea and de-escalate tensions between the parties.

You will be provided with the scenario and a role sheet in advance of the simulation. You should meet with other members of your group, preferably with computer access, to look over the materials available at www.icons.umd.edu. It is your task to pursue the national interests of your country, regardless of the effect that this might have on other parties or your personal preferences. Your role materials are confidential and should not be shared with the other teams. More information will be provided in class.

Foreign Policy Simulation II
The U.S. and the War in Afghanistan - Charting a Strategy that Protects U.S. Interests

The Situation: It is November 2008 and the situation in Afghanistan is fraught with problems. While fears grow about the Taliban’s resurgence, a number of US allies are questioning their continued presence in Afghanistan. In the mean time, Pakistan’s domestic instability is exacerbating its already tense relations with Afghanistan. The new administration in the US must come up with a feasible plan to address the situation.

The Questions: The new President seeks an immediate status report on the war in Afghanistan.
His chief of staff has convened a group of experts (YOU!) to seek advice. It is your job to write a report that answers the following question from the perspective of the group that you are representing:
1. What are U.S. interests and policy objectives?
2. What are the policy options? What are the projected gains and risks?
3. What recommendations, if any, should the president include in his first report to Congress on the next steps in Afghanistan?
4. What are the consequences of those recommendations?

In **groups of three**, you will choose one of the following identities.

1. National Security Council
2. Department of State, Middle East Desk
3. Department of Defense
4. Central Intelligence Agency
5. House Committee on International Relations
6. Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs
7. Center for Strategic and International Studies
9. Heritage Foundation
10. American Enterprise Institute
11. Brookings Institution
12. Washington Institute for Near East Policy

There are three components to this assignment

1. You will provide a **brief outline (1 page, bullet-points are fine)** of your overall approach and draft recommendations. I will return this outline to you with comments. These comments should be incorporated in the final paper.
2. You will make a **8-10 minute presentation to the class** on your findings and arguments. Be brief and concise.
3. You will submit a **final paper (4-6 pages, double spaced) on your findings and arguments** where you will answer the questions outlined above. Be specific in your answers.

There are a number of sources you can consult to formulate your position. These include Council on Foreign Relations, *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy* are useful sources. The recommended books are good references.