THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICYMAKING PROCESS  
Monday 1:30-4:00 pm  
Fall 2016

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OBJECTIVES

This course explores the theory and practice of U.S. foreign policymaking, focusing on the  
process by which international economic and security decisions are actually made. The Obama  
administration has pursued a consistently active foreign policy and an increasingly engaged trade  
policy, both in the context of a sluggish US economy dragged down by both domestic and  
international forces. But in security and economic matters alike, officials and institutions in the  
Obama administration and Congress are being driven, like their predecessors, to compete for  
influence at home even as they seek it abroad, and their decision making processes are being  
shaped at least as much by personalities and political/societal trends as by institutional and  
constitutional prerogatives. Recent examples include the administration’s struggle last year to  
win Congressional acceptance of the Iran Deal on nuclear matters, and current resistance in both  
parties to approval of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on trade completed early this year.

To encourage specific understanding about the actual practice of US foreign policymaking, the  
course presents a mix of historical cases and analyses of the policy process in general (models,  
the executive branch, Congress). After three introductory weeks centered mainly on general  
models and institutions, we will move to examination of economic and national security  
policymaking in specific administrations, beginning with those of John F. Kennedy and Richard  
M. Nixon. Students will examine the roles and inter-relationships of key officials, and how they  
addressed major international security and economic issues. In so doing, we will explore  
repeatedly the relevance of theory to understanding of what actually happens. Readings will  
include contemporary documents, retrospective accounts by participants, and academic analyses.

To encourage focus on the people and processes involved, students will assume the vantage  
points of particular officials (e.g. President’s national security adviser, secretary of the treasury)  
and be prepared to discuss successive issues and administrations from their perspectives.

The full syllabus, course readings and notices, and other relevant materials will be posted on  
CANVAS (elms.umd.edu), Modules page, a web interface open to all students taking the course.
REQUIREMENTS

(1) Writing Assignments:

Students will write two memos and one short paper on a single policy episode of their choice. This must be an actual issue addressed by a post-1945 President and his senior advisors—it is recommended that it be one in an administration treated in the course. Pertinent examples include decisions to impose sanctions against Japan on automobile trade in 1995, abandon support of the dollar in 1971, intervene in Libya’s civil war in 2011, negotiate on nuclear weapons with North Korea in 1994 or 2005, begin or end the Gulf War in 1991, withdraw troops from Lebanon in 1984, drive down the dollar in 1985, go to war in Iraq in 2003, agree to permanent normal trade relations with China in 2000, etc.

In writing the memos, a student should assume the role of a staff aide to a senior official (your boss), such as the secretary of state or defense. You should write as if working for that official at the time the issue was being considered. You should not, therefore, include information that was not available until after the decision was reached.

Memo #1 (due September 30th) is an information memo: it should provide the necessary background concerning the issue, including all the relevant factors needed to arrive at a decision. It may be addressed to your “boss” or to a decision group (eg, National Security Council). It should not include recommendations, and should be sufficiently objective that it will be viewed as such by officials with differing points of view.

Memo #2 (due November 4th) will be a briefing and advocacy memo, addressed to your boss, a Cabinet member or agency head. This should be written to prepare her/him for a meeting (whether historically real or assumed) at which the issue will be decided. This memo should take the information provided in the first memo as given and focus on preparing the agency head for the decision-making meeting by:

(a) describing the state of play on the issue within the Administration;
(b) suggesting the position the agency head should take;
(c) presenting a strategy to enhance the prospect that the issue will be decided as your memo recommends.

Alternatively, this second memo can be written for someone outside the Executive Branch, e.g., a congressman concerned with the issue or the head of an NGO or private business with interests at stake. In that case, the memo should describe the state of play on the issue within the Administration and Congress, recommend a specific policy choice, and present a strategy for getting that choice adopted.

All memos should be no more than three pages in length (Courier 12 point, single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs), within 1" margins. The first memo is to be revised in response to feedback from the instructor and resubmitted as an attachment to the second memo.

There is no one right way to draft a memo, but a few words about style and format are appropriate. First and most important, the writing should be direct and terse (in contrast to the
discursive style of an essay). The central message should be conveyed at the outset, with details to follow. Both sentences and paragraphs should be short. Key points should be highlighted. Major sections should have headings. Pages should be numbered. Throughout, think of yourself as writing for a busy senior official—you must engage her interest, and keep it

** The third writing assignment (due December 9th) will a short analytic paper (about 5 pages, double-spaced, NTE 1700 words) that relates the chosen issue and the decision process thereof to at least one theoretical proposition drawn from course readings. Further instructions will be provided.

Students are welcome to discuss these and other matters during my office hours or at other times when my door is open.

(2) **Roles and Policy Exercises.** To enhance insight into the reality of policy making, students will take on roles of senior US officials and maintain them for several weeks: one role, beginning September 19th, for the national security section of the course, and a different role, beginning November 2nd, for the international economic section. Specific exercises built around these roles will be defined for specific classes—additional information on these exercises will be distributed by the second class, September 12th. Overall, students should do their reading with their specific roles in mind—e.g., what was the perspective of the JCS chairman, or the Under Secretary of the Treasury, during a particular administration and the issues important to it? Consistent, effective, informed participation in the exercises—and in the overall discussion—will be important to a student’s success in the course.

(3) **Final Exam?** Based on the overall quality of the discussions and exercises, the professor will decide—by the end of November—whether or not to give a final examination.

(4) **Grading.** If there is no final exam, the instructor will construct a base grade based on a weighted average for memos and papers submitted (assuming improvement, the second memo assignment will count double the weight of the first). This base grade will then be adjusted, upward or downward, based on a student’s seminar participation. If there is a final, its weight will be 25 percent of the final grade.

**READINGS**

The following two books are required reading for the course and should be purchased.


The bulk of the remaining readings will be available via CANVAS. Some will be on electronic reserves; others will be available through links to documents or the web. Two case studies (at casestudies.isd.georgetown.edu) must be ordered directly due to copyright restrictions.

**PART ONE: POLICY MAKING FOR NATIONAL SECURITY**

*August 29: Two Wars*
Reading: Haass, *War of Necessity; War of Choice*. [Book for purchase](#)

*September 12: National Security: Models and Organization*


*September 19: President, Congress, and Public*


Public Law 93-148, November 7, 1973. [Canvas CR or link](#)

September 26: **Kennedy Administration**

**Readings:**  Daalder and Destler, *In The Shadow of the Oval Office*, chap. 2.
Selected Kennedy Documents **Canvas link**
- Bundy to Kennedy, hand-written note, no date (probably May 1961)
- Bundy to Kennedy, June 22, 1961;
- Bundy to O'Donnell, January 5, 1962;
- Bundy to Kennedy re: “Chester Bowles' speech,” September 17, 1962

October 3: **Nixon Administration**

**Readings:**  Daalder and Destler, chap. 3.
George and Stern, pp. 212-14.
Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years*, Little, Brown, 1979, pp. 17-53. **Canvas link**. (Chapter 1, optional reading, is both amusing and illuminating.)
Harold H. Saunders, "What Really Happened in Bangladesh," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2014, pp. 36-42. **Canvas link**
Selected Nixon Documents **Canvas link**
- Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for the President-Elect," December 27, 1968, et. seq.  [Read Documents 1, 7, and 8--skim those in between.]
- Tony Lake, “Memorandum for Henry A. Kissinger” on “Relations with the State Department,” November 14, 1969, with attachments. [Document 86]

October 10: **Reagan Administration**

**Readings:**  Daalder and Destler, chap. 5.
Report of the President’s Special Review Board (The Tower Commission), February 26, 1987, Parts I through V. **Canvas CR**
George and Stern, pp. 222-34.
George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), pp. 863-78. **Canvas CR**
October 17:  *Clinton Administration*  
**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chap. 7.  
PDD2: Organization of the National Security Council, January 20, 1993. [Canvas link](#)  
George and Stern, “Presidential Management Styles, pp. 241-61. [Canvas CR](#)  
James M. Goldgeier, “NATO Expansion,” in Wittkopf and McCormick, *Domestic Sources*. [Canvas CR](#)  

October 24:  *Bush (41) and Bush (43) Administrations: National Security*  
**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chaps. 6 and 8  
NSD-1, “Organization of the National Security Council System,” January 30, 1989. [Canvas link](#)  
NSPD-1: “Organization of the National Security Council System,” February 13, 2001. [Canvas link](#)  
AND EITHER (to be negotiated with instructor):  
George and Stern, pp. 234-41and [Canvas link](#)  
OR:  
Public Law 107-40, September 18, 2001. To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States. [Canvas link](#)  
Public Law 107-243, October 16, 2002. To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. [Canvas link](#)  
Also review appropriate chapters of Richard Haass, War of Necessity; War of Choice.

PART II: POLICY MAKING FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

October 31: Foreign Economic Policymaking


November 7: Nixon Administration
Joanne Gowa, "The Role of Structure and Process" (pp. 88-125), and "The Camp David Meeting" (pp. 147-70), in Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods, (Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 88-125, 147-170. Canvas CR

November 14: Carter Administration

Volcker and Gyohten, Changing Fortunes, ("Experiments in Coordination" Volcker 136-51.pdf ), and pp. 163-74 ("Taking On Inflation") Canvas CR

OPTIONAL: Daalder and Destler, In the Shadow of the Oval Office, chap. 4.

November 21: Reagan and Bush (41) Administrations
Readings: Dryden, "A New Heaven and a New Earth" and "The Turning Point" (pp. 279-329) and "Superwoman Meets Her Match" (pp. 355-80), in Trade Warriors. Canvas Course Reserves

Volcker and Gyohten, "Taking On Inflation" (pp. 174-84) and "Bringing Down Superdollar" in Changing Fortunes. Canvas CR


November 28: Clinton Administration
Readings: Presidential Executive Order 12835 and PDD/NEC-2 Canvas Course Reserves


Case: Vincent A. Auger, Human Rights and Trade: The Clinton Administration and China, Pew
PART III: CONCLUSION

December 5:  *Obama Security and Economic*  
**Readings** [subject to change]:

Daalder and Destler, chap. 9.


and choose two of the following:


One additional article of your choice.

December 12: *The Future*