PPS 590S/ POL SCI 590S-3

MAJOR BIDEN ADMINISTRATION FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES

Professor Bruce W. Jentleson

Duke University Fall 2021
Sanford School of Public Policy Tues 1:45-4:15, Sanford 150

Preliminary Syllabus

Complementing the broad foreign policy and grand strategy courses I and others teach, this course focuses in-depth on three major foreign policy challenges the Biden administration faces: climate change, pandemic prevention (COVID and beyond), and relations with China. We study and discuss all of these as a seminar, and students choose one for research papers/projects.

The course has four core objectives:

- Deepen knowledge of US foreign policy generally and in particular the three issues on which we focus;
- Enhance capacity to evaluate competing theories and arguments;
- Strengthen policy and political analysis research, writing and oral communication skills.
- Foster a learning community that helps achieve these objectives and builds perspectives and relationships of value beyond this course.

As we stand now, we are a small group. This gives me/us some flexibility in designing the syllabus and assignments. This first cut at the syllabus provides details on our first five weeks and an outline to be fleshed out together for the rest of the semester. I also lay out some options for us to consider regarding course requirements.

We are planning to meet in-person, subject to any COVID-affected shifts. A few days before each class I do an asynchronous “scene-setter,” providing background on the topic, questions for discussion, and context for the readings. These get posted on our course Sakai site (Resources tab, Weekly sub-tabs within that).

You are strongly encouraged to keep up with news, events and policy debates related to the course. We’ll dedicate a portion of some classes for discussion of news and events relevant to the course that you want to bring up; I also left the 11/23 class open for general discussion.
You also are encouraged to participate in relevant public lectures and symposia on campus. I will mention events I know about, I encourage everyone to do the same. Of particular interest may be the American Grand Strategy Program, [https://ags.duke.edu/](https://ags.duke.edu/)

Many of our topics are controversial. Many of us have strong views. We want to be able to exchange ideas and pose questions that help the learning experience. That goal is best served if while speaking honestly, we do so analytically not just as advocacy and maintain norms of professionalism, respect and personal courtesy in all discussions.

**REQUIRED READING**

Two books for reading before the 8/31 class (as per my 8/18 e-mail):


Other readings are either posted on the course Sakai site (Resources tab, Weekly sub-tabs within that), available as Duke Library e-books, or accessible via links provided on the syllabus and in Sakai.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING**

I’d like your input on two options.

**Option A:**

**Seminar Papers:** Three (3) seminar papers, 15% each/45% total course grade, 1500-2000 words each, one on each of our main topics. Framing questions/prompts listed on the syllabus for analyzing the readings and helping lead portion of class discussion.

**Final Paper/Project:** 30% course grade, 3000-3500 word paper or multimedia project (podcast, video) with shorter paper; presentations in our 11/30 final class. Choose a particular issue within one of the three broad policy areas. Some illustrative examples ---

*China:* What should US policy be on Taiwan? Uighurs? How effective is the Quad (Indo-Pacific quasi-alliance)? How much of a threat to US interests is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

*Climate Change:* To what extent is climate change a cause of political instability around the world? What should be the key elements of a new international climate change agreement? What is a political strategy for building support for climate change policies in the United States? Is “sustainable capitalism” just greenwashing?
**Pandemics**: What should be key elements of the Biden policy regarding the international aspects of COVID-19 pandemic? How to prevent the next pandemic? How to reform the World Health Organization? What's the optimal US vaccine diplomacy strategy?

**Class Participation (25%)**: I give extra weight to participation in courses that are seminars. Expectations are for attendance at all classes* and for consistent, intensive and creative engagement. That means doing the reading and scene-setters as assigned, giving prior thought to key points, introducing your own thinking into discussions, and generally “digesting” not just “ingesting”. While personal styles vary, all students are expected to be active participants in the course. This is not necessarily measured by “quantity”. Quality matters too, including demonstration of analytic thinking, engaging in constructive critiques (of lectures, readings, student presentations), and other ways of showing digestion not just ingestion. Scale: 95-100 (substantially exceeds expectations); 90-94 (moderately exceeds expectations); 85-89 (meets expectations); 80-84 (consistent attendance, participation below expectations); 70-79: (inconsistent attendance and/or participation substantially below expectations); below 70 (you’ll know).

**Option B:**

**Two (2) Seminar Papers**, 15% each/30% course grade, rest the same.

**Final Paper/Project**: 4000-4500 words or paper-multimedia project comparable, 40% course grade

**Class Participation**: 30%

All written submissions are to be made electronically in your Sakai Drop-Box as Word documents (12-point conventional font, double-spaced) and not as PDFs as I grade and comment electronically. Papers exceeding the specified maximum lengths will be penalized. Any paper submitted any later than the specified deadline (both date and time) will incur a 10% penalty, and another 10% for every further 24-hour period it is late.

Each assignment is graded on a 100-point basis with percentages as noted. We also will be guided by the grading guidelines set by the Sanford School of a 3.4 mean for 500-level core courses. This is not absolutely fixed but is a guideline. If a final course grade is at the cusp (e.g., between A- and B+), progression over the semester will be taken into account.

**Research Guides**: The Duke Library main research guide page is at [https://guides.library.duke.edu/](https://guides.library.duke.edu/) From there go to the Public Policy and Political Science link.

---

* Exceptions are made for religious holidays and illness consistent with University policy. If other situations or obligations come up, whenever possible requests should be made in advance.
Within that there are even more specialized guides. Ryan Denniston is the Librarian for Public Policy and Political Science; ryan.denniston@duke.edu.

**Academic Integrity:** In all your work you are expected to be familiar with and abide by all rules and norms for academic integrity, as stated in the Sanford School of Public Policy Code of Professional Conduct [https://sanford.duke.edu/code-of-conduct](https://sanford.duke.edu/code-of-conduct)

**Plagiarism** will be dealt with severely. Be scrupulous about documenting sources of material. Guidelines about proper citation are available from the Library, [https://library.duke.edu/research/citing](https://library.duke.edu/research/citing) and the Thompson Writing Program [https://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio/resources-students/sources](https://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio/resources-students/sources)

**On Me:** I hold the William Preston Few Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and also Professor of Political Science. I’ve been on the Duke faculty since 2000 including as Sanford Institute Director (2000-05: we were an Institute for many years, and became a School in 2009). I’ve held a number of foreign policy positions and written numerous books and articles: more when we meet and at [https://sites.duke.edu/bruce7jentleson/](https://sites.duke.edu/bruce7jentleson/). My regular office hours are Mondays 1:45-3:00 in Rubenstein Hall 122 and by appointment (mix of in-person and Zoom). My e-mail is the best contact, bwj7@duke.edu
SCHEDULE (as stands now)

I. Broad Foreign Policy Agenda

Before we focus in on our three main issues, the first two classes get into the broad foreign policy agenda.

8/24  Course Overview, Mutual Intros, Initial Discussion

Central Discussion Question:

*Other than our three main issues, which two Biden foreign policies are you most supportive of and which two are you most critical? Be prepared to make the arguments for your position and to respond to the strongest arguments for the other side.*

8/31  America's Global Role: Key to Order or Source of Disorder?

Scene Setter Video


Andrew Bacevich, *After the Apocalypse: America’s Role in a World Transformed*

Both authors are prominent scholars and public intellectuals; you can Google their bios. The books are short. Read to get the main arguments and key supporting evidence, not every detail.

II. Threat Assessments, Broad Policy Debates

9/7  China (1)

Scene Setter Video

Paper/Discussion Prompt: The first three readings take a more “hawkish” view of the China threat than the second set of three. Choose at least two readings from each set. Present and assess their main arguments, and who you agree with and why.


*******

John Mueller, “China: Rise or Demise?”, Cato Institute Policy Analysis, May 2021


9/14 Climate Change (1)

Scene Setter Video

Paper/Discussion Prompt: The readings/video below are very much on the climate change as a Major Threat side. What is the strongest evidence they present? Which should be a higher US priority, climate change or China?


Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers


9/21 Pandemics (1)

*Scene Setter Video*

*Paper/Discussion Prompt: The readings/podcast below are very much on the pandemics as a Major Threat side. What is the strongest evidence they present? Which should be a higher US priority, pandemics or China?*

Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, read the Summary and selectively as of interest from the Full Report [https://theindependentpanel.org/mainreport/#download-main-report](https://theindependentpanel.org/mainreport/#download-main-report)

*U.S. National Health Security Strategy* 2015-18, read Introduction (pp. 1-8) and Strengthen Global Health Security (pp. 29-32).


### III. Focusing in on Key Issues

9/28 China (2) – General Strategy, Indo-Pacific Security and the Quad, South China Sea

**A lot here, definitely read the first three --- Dosh, Kissinger and Swaine-Lee-Odell --- and as many of the others as you can, hopefully we’ll collectively cover all**

*Scene Setter Video*  

**General Strategy**


Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, Ch. 6, “Toward an Asian Order: Confrontation or Partnership”


The Quad


“Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade,” China-Japan-South Korea, Dec 2019 trilateral summit

*South China Sea*

-Congressional Research Service (CRS), *U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Backgrounds and Issues for Congress*, September 8, 2021

----- Derek Grossman, “Military Build-Up in the South China Sea,” RAND, January 2020

10/5 FALL BREAK

10/12 Climate Change (2) – Grand Strategy, China Climate Change Policy, Economics of Climate Change, U.S. Domestic Politics

** A lot here too, definitely read Litwak, Colgan and Baker-Shultz and as much of the others as you can, hopefully we’ll collectively cover all

*Scene Setter Video*

Grand Strategy


World Resources Institute, *Closing the Gap: The Impact of G20 Climate Commitments on Limiting Global Temperature Rise to 1.5°C*, September 2021, Executive Summary and skim
Climate Action Tracker, various tabs on website, https://climateactiontracker.org/ and “Global Update, September 2021” (pdf in Sakai)

China Climate Change Policy


Economics of Climate Change


US Domestic Politics


10/19 No Class, one on ones during this week re research projects

10/26 Pandemics (2)

*Scene Setter Video*

US global health security strategy, World Health Organization (WHO) and other international institutions, vaccine diplomacy, role of China

**Note for paper writers/discussion leaders and others as of interest: many of these readings have lots of links for further information**

**US Policy**


Global Aspects


The Economist Intelligence Unit, *How Much Will Vaccine Inequity Cost?* (pdf)


RAND Corporation, *COVID-19 and the Cost of Vaccine Nationalism* (2020), read Executive Summary (pdf)


World Health Organization (WHO)


11/2 China (3)

South China Sea (carryover from China [2])

Congressional Research Service (CRS), U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Backgrounds and Issues for Congress, September 8, 2021

Derek Grossman, “Military Build-Up in the South China Sea,” RAND, January 2020

Taiwan

Back to Doshi, The Long Game, pp. 304-06 (in China [2])


Chris Buckley and Steven Lee Myers, “‘Starting a Fire: US and China Enter Dangerous Territory Over Taiwan,” New York Times, October 9, 2021,

Democracy Promotion and Human Rights (Uighurs, Hong Kong, et.al.)


Democracy-Autocracy Global Ideological Competition?


State Department, “The Summit for Democracy,” https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy/


11/9 Climate Change (3)

Paris Agreement assessment, COP 29 Glasgow outlook, developed/developing countries equity. Follow-up on prior session and any additional issues

11/16 Pandemics (3)

Follow-up on prior session and any additional issues

11/23 Optional Class, Open Foreign Policy Discussion (taking into account that this is the day “before” Thanksgiving break day)

12/3, 10:00-12:30, Student Presentations on China, Climate Change, Pandemics