

Carleton University  
Summer 2010  
Department of Political Science

**PSCI 5915**

**Special Topics in Political Science: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Obama Era**  
**Mondays and Wednesdays 14:35 – 17:25 p.m.**  
**Please confirm location on Carleton Central**

Instructor: Jeffrey Ayres  
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**Course Description:**

U.S. foreign policy-makers in the year 2010 face a variety of unpredictable challenges in what might be called the unfolding “post-post Cold War” world. Rather than simply map out tactics based on a known adversary as was common during the Cold War, the Obama Administration and related agencies must rapidly respond to (and identify) new events, trends and concerns. The continued fallout from terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, including the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the evolving and unpredictable global financial crisis, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, accelerating global climate change, growing numbers of failing states and other transnational threats demonstrate that a “new security dilemma” has increasingly replaced the historic concern of controlling states as threats to national security. At the same time, the Obama Administration has both distanced itself and at times embraced legacies of the previous administration’s “Bush doctrine,” while questions continue to be raised about the imminent decline of the United States in a world of rapidly changing and diffusing distributions of power.

This seminar will focus on this challenging and rapidly changing international environment facing the United States, with a central concern focusing on whether the U.S. is in fact in decline or poised for renewal. The course goals include: 1) improving critical reading, research, writing and presentation skills; 2) deepening student interest and knowledge of the many challenges facing U.S. foreign policy makers at this time of global turbulence, and; 3) developing the ability to work with theoretical or conceptual frameworks to apply them to better understand challenges facing the U.S. in the international arena.

### **Texts: (required)**

Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, (New York: WW Norton, 2009).

Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*, (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2008).

The remaining readings are available through the Carleton University library electronic index.

### **Course Format**

This course is designed as a seminar, which encourages creative dialogue and the exchange of ideas with one another, all with the guidance of a professor. I do not intend to lecture at all, but instead I will strive to provide background material to frame the major themes set up for discussion and analysis for that class session. We are meeting twice a week for approximately three hours in each session, and I expect all of you to attend all sessions and to participate actively in the class. The course is framed around the readings and contemporary events, so it is essential that all of you read the material assigned before each class session.

Following the first class session, students will lead discussions, present critical analyses of the readings (not boring summaries), and pose questions for the entire class from the readings for that day. Ordinarily, following a general discussion and introduction of the material for that class session, I will break up the class into small groups to discuss readings that we assign to those groups during the previous class session. During those small group sessions, those of you assigned to a particular article or chapter(s) will discuss the material and identify one person to serve as the presenter for your group of the material to the entire class.

### **Press Reports: Staying Current**

It is imperative that you read consistently a newspaper that covers U.S. and international politics during this course. My favorites, which I peruse daily, include the *New York Times* ([www.newyorktimes.com](http://www.newyorktimes.com)), the *Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) and the *Toronto Globe and Mail* ([www.globeandmail.com](http://www.globeandmail.com)). Once a week, all of you will search for a recent article from a news source, which should address one of the themes that we will be covering that week in the course. Yes, this is glorified current events and we will use the beginning of each class session to set the current tone for challenges facing U.S. foreign policy-makers (half the class will present on Monday and the other half Wednesday). The news article should be accompanied by a short but intelligent commentary of roughly one double-spaced typed page. Grades issued for press reports will include presentation in class discussions.

## **Course Requirements:**

**Participation: 40%.** Your participation grade will be broken down into four categories, including attendance, overall contribution to class discussion, individual presentation and weekly press reports.

**Proposal/Bibliography: 10%.** An outline of your research paper (three to five typed, double-spaced typed pages) including a preliminary bibliography is due on Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. Please discuss your research topic with me early in the course. Please expect to present briefly your proposal to the rest of the class for discussion.

**Research Paper: 50%.** A research paper of approximately 20 typed, double-spaced typed pages (not including bibliography) will be due on Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. This assignment allows you to research a topic germane to challenges facing U.S. foreign policy-making in depth. I will evaluate the research paper as to whether you a) demonstrate a command of material/ideas covered in the seminar; b) present a well-organized and critical analysis and c) organize your paper in a clear, concise and stylistically appealing manner, including proving proper referencing with an acceptable style. No extensions beyond the stated deadline will be granted, except in the case of a medically documented illness.

## **Course Outline**

**Week 1**                      **(M/July 5): Course Introduction**

**(W/July 7): Paradigm Lost**

Readings:            Graham Fuller, "Strategic Fatigue," *The National Interest* (Summer 2006) 84, pp. 37-42.  
James Chace, "Present at the Destruction," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2003) 20/1, pp. 1-5.  
Colin Dueck, "Hegemony on the Cheap," *World Policy Journal* (January-February 2003/04) 20/4, pp. 1-11.  
Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Eagle Has Crash Landed," *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2002) 131, pp. 60-8.  
Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2007), 86/4, pp. 71-83.

## Week 2

### (M/July 12): The “New” Security Dilemma

- Readings: Haas, “The Age of Nonpolarity,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2008) 87/3, pp. 44-56.
- Joseph Masco, “Bad Weather: On Planetary Crisis,” *Social Studies of Science* (February 2010), 40/1, pp. 7-40.
- Richard Falk, “A Radical World Order Challenge: Addressing Global Climate Change and the Threat of Nuclear Weapons,” *Globalizations* (2010) 7/1, pp. 137-155.
- William Tabb, “Resource Wars,” *Monthly Review* (January 2007) 58/8.  
<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0107tabb.htm>.

### (W/July 14): The Complexities of a Post-Post Cold War World

- Readings: Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, Chapters 1-4.

## Week 3

### (M/July 19): The Complexities of a Post-Post Cold War World

- Readings: Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, Chapters 5-7.
- Parag Khanna, “Waving Goodbye to Hegemony,” *New York Times Magazine* (6 March 2008),  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/06/arts/06iht-27worldt.10763879.html?\\_r=1&scp=3&sq=Waving%20Goodbye%20to%20Hegemony&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/06/arts/06iht-27worldt.10763879.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=Waving%20Goodbye%20to%20Hegemony&st=cse).

### (W/July 21): Is the U.S. an Empire?

- Readings: Ewan Harrison, “Engagement or Empire? American Power and the International Order,” *International Affairs* (July 2004) 80/4, pp. 755-768.
- Chalmers Johnson, “Tomgram: Chalmers Johnson, Dismantling the Empire,” (30 July 2009),  
[http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101/chalmers\\_johnson\\_dismantling\\_the\\_empire](http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101/chalmers_johnson_dismantling_the_empire).
- Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *The National Interest* (Winter 2002) 70, pp. 5-17.

Dimitri Simes, "America's Imperial Dilemma," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2003) 82/6, pp. 91-102.

John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2002) 81/5, pp. 44-60.

**Week 4 (M/July 26): Reevaluations and Recriminations**

Readings: Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, Introduction-Chapter 1.

**\*Video: Eugene Jarecki, *Why We Fight* (2006)**

**(W/July 28): Reevaluations and Recriminations**

Readings: Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, Chapters 2-Conclusion.

**\*Research Paper Bibliography Due In Class**

**\*Monday, August 2 No Class Civic Holiday**

**Week 5 (W/August 4): Lessons from the Imperial Presidency?**

Readings: Noam Chomsky, "Imperial Presidency," *Canadian Dimension* (January/February 2005) 39/1,  
<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20041217.htm>.

Jonathan Mahler, "After the Imperial Presidency," *New York Times Magazine* (9 November 2008),  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/09/magazine/09power-t.html?scp=1&sq=After%20the%20Imperial%20Presidency&st=cse>.

Nancy Kassop, "The War Power and Its Limits," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (September 2003) 33/3, pp. 509-529.

Aziz Huq, "Imperial March," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas* (Winter 2008) 7, pp. 44-55,  
<http://www.democracyjournal.org/article.php?ID=6571>.

**Week 6**

**(M/August 9): Another Opportunity?**

Readings: Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, Chapters 1-3

**\*Video: PBS Frontline, *Extraordinary Rendition* (2007)**

[http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/video/video\\_index.html](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/video/video_index.html)

**(T/August 10): Another Opportunity?**

Readings: Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, Chapters 4-6

\*Make-Up Class for Civic Holiday: Classroom for make-up to be announced first week of class

**(W/August 11): Decline or Renewal?**

Readings: Leslie Gelb, "Necessity, Choice and Common Sense,"  
*Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2009) 88/3, pp. 56-72.  
Josef Joffe, "The Default Power: The False Prophecy of  
America's Decline," *Foreign Affairs*  
(September/October 2009) 88/5, pp. 21-35.  
Niall Ferguson, "Complexity and Collapse," *Foreign  
Affairs* (March/April 2010) 89/2, pp. 18-32.  
Gayle Smith, "Beyond Borders," *Democracy: A Journal of  
Ideas* (Winter 2007) 3, pp. 64-73,  
<http://www.democracyjournal.org/article.php?ID=6509>.

**\*Research Paper due on Monday, August 16 by 9 a.m. via Email**

**There will be no class on this day.**

**Academic Accommodations**

**For students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **June 11 2010 for early summer examinations and July 30 2010 for late summer examinations**.

**For Religious Observance:** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance ([www.carleton.ca/equity](http://www.carleton.ca/equity)).

**For Pregnancy:** Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

**Plagiarism:** The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

**Oral Examination:** At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Course Requirements:** Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

**Connect Email Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email [carletonpss@gmail.com](mailto:carletonpss@gmail.com), visit our website at [poliscisociety.com](http://poliscisociety.com), or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.