

PSCI 4606 A
American Foreign Policy
Thursdays 8:35 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
Check Location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Eric Van Rythoven

Office Hours: By Zoom appointment on Tuesdays between 10:00am – 12:00pm

Email: ericvanrythoven@cmail.carleton.ca

Contact Policy: Email is the best way to contact me. I will normally reply within 24-48 hours, weekends excluded. Please include the course code in the subject line of the email. For longer questions I recommend scheduling a Zoom appointment. All email must be through an official Carleton university email account.

1. Course Overview

This course examines continuities and disruptions in American Foreign Policy. Taking place amid the start of a second Trump term, it questions the prevailing framing of Trump as a fundamentally disruptive figure who breaks with the longstanding conventions of American Foreign Policy. To better understand where and why Trump's behaviour can be considered disruptive, we place it within the longer tradition and history of American Foreign Policy. In doing so this course examines this tradition through a series of central themes—including empire, liberal order, and exceptionalism—as a means to better assess patterns of change and continuity.

2. Aims and Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should have:

- A solid understanding of the key institutions and actors of American Foreign Policy.
- A well-informed knowledge of different perspectives in American Foreign Policy including liberal, realist, constructivist, feminist, as well as critical approaches.
- A deep familiarity with the central themes and debates in American Foreign Policy.
- An ability to research and write in a clear and lucid manner on American Foreign Policy and its impact on contemporary global politics.

3. Course Format

We will meet in person in the assigned classroom.

4. Required Texts

All required readings will be posted on Brightspace.

5. Statement on Generative AI

The use of generative AI for any assignment for this course—with the exception of Grammarly—is expressly forbidden and will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

I also highly recommend students do not use generative AI to create class notes, study guides, practice questions, summarize readings, outline assignments, or for any other academic exercise in this course. I recommend this for two reasons. First, large language models like ChatGPT are notoriously inaccurate. Some people call these errors 'hallucinations' but this reflects a misunderstanding of how these models work. ChatGPT is not designed to tell you what is accurate. It can only tell you what is the statistically likely next word in a string of text based on the data it was trained on.

Second, you are taking this course to develop your own skills and knowledge. Having ChatGPT read an article for you is not going to make you a better reader, expand your vocabulary, or make you more informed about the world. You would not pay to go to the gym and then have someone else exercise for you. You should not pay to take a class and then have an AI do assignments for you.

I reserve the right to ask students to submit evidence of their own research and/or call-in students for an oral defense of any submitted assignment to test their familiarity with the arguments and sources that they have used.

6. Evaluation at a Glance

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Participation	25%	Weekly, starting on January 9 th
Social Reading	20%	Alternating weekly with Group Red starting on January 16 th and Group Blue starting on January 23 rd
Short Commentary	15%	Before we discuss the readings in class
Research Paper	40%	Detailed Outline (10%) on February 25 th Paper Workshop (5%) on March 20 th Final Paper (25%) on April 7 th

All written assignments must provide a full list of sources used and avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity. The preferred citation style is the Chicago author-date style which uses author-date citations in the text and a bibliography at the end (see <https://library.osu.edu/find/resources/citation-examples/chicago-author-date/>). In this style, footnotes or endnotes are used only for explanatory digressions or notes of

clarification. All papers submitted should be formatted with the 12-point font and page numbers.

7.Evaluation in Detail

Participation (25%)

As a 4th year seminar this class relies on the active participation of students. A significant portion of our time will be focused discussing academic arguments, probing their strengths and weaknesses, and debating how well they explain real-world issues. For this reason, participation counts for a large portion of your grade and attendance at weekly seminars is mandatory. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance throughout the term, as well as the quality and quantity of your participation in discussions.

Students are expected to have completed the required reading before the seminar and to arrive prepared to discuss the week's material. Ways to show me that you are participating include:

- Engaging in our discussion of the material.
- Having detailed notes and highlighted readings out in front of you.
- Asking questions about the material.

Every student will be given one 'pass' for the semester where they can miss class with no penalty to their grade and no questions asked. Email the instructor to let them know you are using your pass.

Weekly Social Reading (20%)

Students will cover a portion of the class reading for each week through the social annotation platform Perusall. In an assigned group students will asynchronously read, highlight, raise questions, post comments, and interact with each other in a conversation anchored to a class reading. Other students in your group, as well as the Instructor, will be able to see your annotations and respond directly to them. You can use annotations to:

- Highlight key definitions, concepts, arguments, and types of evidence
- Flag passages you find interesting or relevant to international politics or contemporary events more broadly
- Raise questions about material you do not understand
- Offer criticism of an author's argument (e.g. evidence, logic, conclusiveness)
- Signal connections to other readings and material we have covered in class
- Respond to other students' comments (e.g. signaling points of agreement or disagreement)

The goal of social reading is to approach challenging academic texts in a cooperative manner, rather than have students read them in isolation.

At the beginning of the semester students will be assigned to 'Group Red' or 'Group Blue'. Students will be graded on an alternating weekly basis with students in Group Red starting on January 16th and students in Group Blue starting on January 23rd. **You are not required to do annotations during your group's 'off week'**. You can see the social reading schedule, grading rubric, and instructions for logging into Perusall on the Brightspace course page. We will cover how to sign-up and how to use Perusall in our first class.

Due dates: Your annotations to a reading must be completed before we discuss that reading in class.

Commentary Paper (15%)

You will write a short commentary paper (1000 words) in response to one set of the weekly readings. When citing, refer to the author of the article and page number in parenthesis and I will assume that it corresponds to the reading in the syllabus.

Commentaries may address any component of the weekly readings that piques your interest. Treat the commentaries as editorial reflections on the material at hand. Your commentary may focus in-depth on one particular reading, or discuss themes that carry across multiple readings for that week. This may include specific objections to the literature, broad commentaries, issues you would like to explore, et cetera. Though the direction is up to you, the compositions should avoid trivial concerns or summarizing the readings. **Your paper should begin with an introduction where you make the central point or focus of the commentary clear to the reader.** Commentaries will be graded on the basis of substance and style. I want to see interesting and substantive insights into the content, and clear writing.

Due dates: Your commentary paper must be submitted before we discuss the weekly readings.

Research Paper (40%)

You will write a research paper on a topic of your choice. The essay may cover any issue relating to American Foreign Policy, broadly construed. This is your opportunity to explore an issue that interests you. Topics may flow from classroom conversations, your commentary paper, or discussions of the social reading. Students may also select a topic that is not covered on the syllabus, provided it relates to the course's theme, broadly construed. **I strongly recommend consulting with me first.**

Research papers will be graded in three parts.

Detailed Outline (10%)

Students will submit a detailed 3–4-page outline by **February 25th**. It should include the following elements.

1. Research question: a strong research question that problematizes, challenges, questions, or fills a gap in existing theoretical or policy-research on American Foreign Policy.
2. Working argument/thesis statement: your tentative response to this question. The thesis statement must give an indication of the substance of your argument.
3. Theoretical framework/methodology: this is the HOW part of your essay. How will you approach this question? What theoretical lens/approach will you use? What literature will you draw on?
4. Key Points: Outline the parts/sections of your essay.
5. Annotated Bibliography: Provide a preliminary bibliography of at least 4 academic sources (books or journal articles). The Carleton University Library has a helpful guide and video for writing an annotated bibliography.
<https://library.carleton.ca/help/writing-annotated-bibliography>

Essay Workshop (5%)

Students will present their updated outlines during class on **March 20th**. This will be done in small groups during regular class time (no readings are assigned that week). I will be moving from group to group listening to the presentations and feedback. Detailed instructions for the essay workshop are posted on Brightspace.

Research Essay (25%)

Students will be required to write one substantial research essay of 13-15 pages, doubled- spaced, 12-point font) on a topic related to American Foreign Policy. The essay is due on **April 7th** by 11:59pm. It must include a clearly articulated theoretical approach that informs the analysis. The essay will involve substantial research of the scholarly work related to the topic and will be graded according to the rubric posted on Brightspace.

Late Paper Policy: Papers are deducted 3% for each day they are late (e.g. an 80% grade becomes 77% for 1 day late).

8. Schedule and Assigned Readings

Class 1 – January 9th | Introduction

Hudson, Valerie M. "The history and evolution of foreign policy analysis." *Foreign policy: Theories, actors, cases* (2008): 13-34.

Schmidt, Brian. "Theories of US foreign policy." *US Foreign Policy* (2008): 7-21.

Class 2 – January 16th | Institutions and Domestic Actors

Hastedt, Glenn P. "The Presidency." *Routledge Handbook of American Foreign Policy*. Routledge, 2012. 167-180.

Carter, Ralph G., and James M. Scott. "Congress." *Routledge Handbook of American Foreign Policy*. Routledge, 2012. 231-246.

Robinson, Piers. "The role of media and public opinion." *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases* (2008): 137-154.

Class 3 – January 23rd | Race and Empire

Immerwahr, Daniel. *How to hide an empire: A short history of the greater United States*. Random House, 2019, 3-45.

Gordon-Reed, Annette. "America's original sin: Slavery and the legacy of white supremacy." *Foreign Affairs*. 97 (2018): 2-7.

Nexon, Daniel H., and Thomas Wright. "What's at stake in the American empire debate." *American Political Science Review* 101.2 (2007): 253-271.

Class 4 – January 30th | The Liberal Order

Ikenberry, G. John. *Liberal leviathan: The origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order*. Princeton University Press, 2011, 1-32.

Mearsheimer, John J. "Bound to fail: The rise and fall of the liberal international order." *International security* 43.4 (2019): 7-50.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, and Ayşe Zarakol. "Struggles for recognition: The liberal international order and the merger of its discontents." *International Organization* 75.2 (2021): 611-634.

Class 5 – February 6th | Identity and Exceptionalism

Hixson, Walter L. *The myth of American diplomacy: National identity and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2008, 1-16.

Holsti, Kal J. "Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?." *European Journal of International Relations* 17.3 (2011): 381-404.

Restad, Hilde Eliassen. "What makes America great? Donald Trump, national identity, and US foreign policy." *Global Affairs* 6.1 (2020): 21-36.

Class 6 – February 13th | Gender

Weber, Cynthia. "Performative states." *Millennium* 27.1 (1998): 77-95.

Dean, Robert D. "Masculinity as ideology: John F. Kennedy and the domestic politics of foreign policy." *Diplomatic History* 22.1 (1998): 29-62.

Cohn, Carol. "Sex and death in the rational world of defense intellectuals." *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society* 12.4 (1987): 687-718.

Cohn, Carol. "The Perils of Mixing Masculinity and Missiles." *The New York Times* (2018).

Winter Break – February 20th | No Class

Class 7 – February 27th | America and the Iraq War

Schmidt, Brian C., and Michael C. Williams. "The Bush doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives versus realists." *Security Studies* 17.2 (2008): 191-220.

Butt, Ahsan I. "Why Did the United States Invade Iraq in 2003?." *Security Studies* 28.2 (2019): 250-285.

Subotic, Jelena, and Brent J. Steele. "Moral injury in international relations." *Journal of global security studies* 3.4 (2018): 387-401.

Class 8 – March 6th | Images and Aesthetics

Kennedy, Liam. "Remembering September 11: photography as cultural diplomacy." *International Affairs* 79.2 (2003): 315-326.

Hansen, Lene. "How images make world politics: International icons and the case of Abu Ghraib." *Review of international studies* 41.2 (2015): 263-288.

Duncombe, Constance. "The politics of Twitter: emotions and the power of social media." *International Political Sociology* 13.4 (2019): 409-429.

Class 9 – March 13th | Cruelty and Dehumanization

Serwer, Adam. *The Cruelty Is the Point: The Past, Present, and Future of Trump's America*. One World, 2021, 1-37.

Steele, Brent J. "'The cruelty of righteous people': Niebuhr on the urgency of cruelty." *Journal of International Political Theory* 17.2 (2021): 203-220.

Steuter, Erin, and Deborah Wills. "'The vermin have struck again': Dehumanizing the enemy in post 9/11 media representations." *Media, War & Conflict* 3.2 (2010): 152-167.

Class 10 – March 20th | Essay Workshop

No readings, come prepared to discuss your research essay. Instructions are posted on Brightspace.

Class 11 – March 27th | Popular Culture

Falk, Andrew J. "Popular Culture and US Foreign Relations." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. 2017.

Daniel iii, J. Furman, and Paul Musgrave. "Synthetic experiences: How popular culture matters for images of international relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 61.3 (2017): 503-516.

Gaufman, Elizaveta. "The Trump carnival: Popular appeal in the age of misinformation." *International Relations* 32.4 (2018): 410-429.

Class 12 – April 3rd | Reactionary and Populist Politics

MacKay, Joseph, and Christopher David LaRoche. "Why is there no reactionary international theory?." *International Studies Quarterly* 62.2 (2018): 234-244.

Homolar, Alexandra, and Juan Alberto Ruiz Casado. "Imaginaries of trauma and victimhood: The role of the 'China threat' in Trump's populism of the privileged." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (2024)

Löfflmann, Georg. "'Enemies of the people': Donald Trump and the security imaginary of America First." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 24.3 (2022): 543-560.

8. Appendix

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:

<https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other

extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University. Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more

You may need special

information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with

Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within three working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last day to withdraw from full fall term and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment is September 30th, 2024. The last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or the winter portion of two-term courses is January 31, 2025. The last day for academic withdrawal from full fall and late fall courses is November 15, 2024. The last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses is March 15, 2025.

WDN: For students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term the term WDN will be a permanent notation that appears on their official transcript.

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Fall courses: December 9-21, 2024. **Winter and Fall/Winter courses:** April 11-26, 2025 (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton 2024-2025 Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

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:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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 can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)	B640
Loeb	
Registrar's Office (3500)	300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822)	4th floor Library

Academic Advising Centre (7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608) Nideyinàn	501
Career Services (6611)	401 Tory