

PSCI 5805 F
Foreign Policy Analysis
Thursday 11:35am – 2:25pm
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Brian C. Schmidt
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Office Hours: Monday 3-4, Tuesday 10-12
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I. Course Description and Objectives

This is a course that focuses on the study of foreign policy as a sub-field of International Relations. Within the discipline of Political Science, the study of foreign policy is most frequently referred to as Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). FPA attempts to explain how a state formulates and implements its foreign policy. Although there are many different approaches to FPA, this course concentrates specifically on the realist tradition of analyzing foreign policy behavior. We will be examining classical realism, structural realism (both defensive and offensive), and neoclassical realism.

The objective of the course is for students to learn the theories of classical, structural, and neoclassical realism. The second, and closely related objective, is to apply these theories to the conduct of foreign policy; how do classical, structural, and neoclassical realists attempt to explain state behavior. These objectives will be achieved by examining several different historical cases in general, and specifically ~~by~~ the foreign policy decision that you analyze in your research paper. An underlying theme of the course is the role that rationality plays in the study and practice of foreign policy.

II. Course Format

This class will meet “face to face” and will be conducted as a seminar. Since the course is a seminar, you are required to participate actively in class discussions. The reason for this is simple; seminars do not work if there is no student participation. Therefore, you must be fully prepared for each class and complete all the assigned reading. You should aim to contribute to every seminar by engaging with the assigned reading.

III. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize historical facts, details, and information about different countries' foreign policy in general and American foreign policy in particular.
- Critique and defend different interpretations of American foreign policy.
- Analyze foreign policy decision-making.
- Understand the role of rationality in explaining foreign policy behavior.
- Appreciate the limits of rationality in foreign policy decision-making.
- Explain realist theories of foreign policy.
- Differentiate classical, structural, and neoclassical realism.

IV. Course Texts

There are two required texts for the course that are available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore. Both books are also available on Amazon as well as from the publishers (Yale University Press and Princeton University Press). The required texts have been placed on reserve at the Carleton University library.

1. John J. Mearsheimer and Sebastian Rosato, *How States Think: The Rationality of Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023). \$26.00pb
2. Jonathan Kirshner, *An Unwritten Future: Realism and Uncertainty in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022). \$41.00pb

The weekly reading assignments have been placed on reserve in the library. You can access many of the assigned journal articles by using JSTOR and other search engines that are available on the Carleton University library website (<https://library.carleton.ca/>). All of the assigned readings can be directly accessed through ARES, which can be found on the course Brightspace page.

V. Course Requirements and Grading Policy

All assignments are to be submitted via Brightspace.

- A. Class participation (15%)
- B. Week review paper (15%)
- C. Oral presentation of assigned reading (10%)
- D. Paper proposal (10%) **Due: February 5, 2026**
- E. Oral presentation of research paper (10%)
- F. Research paper (40%) **Due: April 6, 2026**

VI. Explanations

- A. Your presence and active participation in class is an integral part of this course. Since the course is a seminar, you are required to participate actively in class discussions. The reason for this is simple; seminars do not work if there is no student participation. It is necessary that you complete all the reading assignments prior to coming to class so that you are fully prepared to engage with the assigned material. We will be discussing the

assigned material in class and if you fail to participate in class discussions and do not engage with the assigned material this will be taken as a sign of inadequate preparation and result in a grade reduction. Attendance is mandatory and missing class will result in a grade reduction. In addition to attendance, your class participation grade will be determined by both the quantity and quality of your comments in class. After each class, I will note whether you participated at a high, medium, or low level.

- B. You need to select one of the week's assigned readings and write a 5-7 page critical summary. There are two parts of this assignment: first, to summarize succinctly the assigned readings and two, to provide a critical review of them. You may focus on a specific reading or two, but you still must provide an overview of the assigned reading for a particular week. You may pick any week you like but be sure to select a week before the oral presentations begin. The assignment is due one week after the week you selected (if you select week 3, January 22, for example, the assignment will be due on January 29).
- C. Each student will select a specific week and provide a 15-minute oral presentation of the assigned material. There will be two students presenting together each week and you will need to coordinate your presentations. I am not looking for a point-by-point summary, but rather an overview of the assigned material—what is the topic, what are the main arguments, strengths and weaknesses of the material, how do the readings help us to understand foreign policy, how are they similar or different from previous weeks' material? A core aim of the assignment is to generate class discussion about the assigned material. In this regard, articulating specific questions, debates, and controversies are welcomed.
- D. You are required to submit a 3-4 page research proposal that identifies the topic that you will be researching this semester. As explained below, you need to select a significant foreign policy decision. The proposal should specify the decision that you have selected and provide some historical information about the decision. The proposal should also provide a bibliography of the sources that you will be using in your research paper.
- E. Each student will provide a 10-12 minute oral presentation of their research paper. Students will select the date of their presentation. Your aim is to first summarize succinctly the foreign policy decision that you have researched and secondly, to discuss your theoretical analysis of the decision.
- F. Each student is required to select a major, significant foreign policy decision made by a particular country (e.g. United States, China, Russia, Canada, France, Great Britain, Brazil, Nigeria, etc.). This could be a recent decision (e.g. Russia's decision to invade Ukraine, US decision to invade Iraq), a decision that occurred during the Cold War (e.g. Cuban missile crisis, US decision to pursue war in Vietnam, British decision to retake the Falkland Islands from Argentina) or further back in history (e.g. British appeasement policy). The aim of the first part of the assignment is to provide a historical account of the

foreign policy decision that you selected. Who were the key decision makers, what were they reacting to, what other actors (states or policymakers) were involved, what was the decision-making process, what was the historical context of the decision? The second part of the assignment is to apply two different realist theories (classical, structural, defensive, offensive, neoclassical) to the foreign policy decision you have selected. How do the theories you selected help to explain the foreign policy decision? What are the respective strengths and weaknesses of the two theories? Does one of the theories explain the decision better than the other?

VII. Other Guidelines

- To obtain credit in this course, students must meet all the course requirements. Failure to complete all the assignments will automatically result in a failing grade for the course.
- Late assignments will be downgraded one letter-grade category per day. For example, a B+ paper, one day late, will receive a B.
- “As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.”

VIII. Course schedule and Assigned Readings

Week One (January 8) Course Introduction

- Valerie M. Hudson, “The History and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis,” in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne eds., *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 13-34.
- Walter Carlsnaes, “Foreign Policy,” in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Rise, and Beth A. Simmons eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2013): 298-325.

Week Two (January 15) How States Think I

- Mearsheimer and Rosato, *How States Think*, chs. 1-5.

Week Three (January 22) How States Think II

- Mearsheimer and Rosato, *How States Think*, chs. 6-9.
- Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis.” *American Political Science Review* 63,3 (September 1969): 689-718.

Week Four (January 29) Classical Realism

- Kirshner, *An Unwritten Future*, Introduction, ch. 1.

- Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions," *American Political Science Review* XLIV (December 1950): 833-854.
- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), chs. 4-6.
- George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* XXV, 4 (July 1947): 566-82.

Week Five (February 5)

Structural Realism I

- Kirshner, *An Unwritten Future*, 2.
- Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics is Not Foreign Policy." *Security Studies* 6 (1996): 54-57.
- Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, 2 (Fall 1993): 44-79.
- Kenneth N. Waltz, "The New World Order," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 187-195.

Week 6 (February 12)

Structural Realism II

- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2001) chs. 1,2.
- John J. Mearsheimer, "Reckless States and Realism." *International Relations* 23 (2009): 241-256.
- John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith eds., *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism as Tragedy." *Review of International Studies* 30 (2004): 427-441.

Week 7 (February 19)

No Class – Reading Week

Week 8 (February 26)

Classical Realism and Foreign Policy

- Kirshner, *An Unwritten Future*, chs. 3-5.
- Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, 2 (April-June 2008): 191-220.

Week 9 (March 5)

Neoclassical Realism

- Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy." *World Politics* 51 (1998): 144-172.

- Randall L. Schweller, "The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism." In: Elman C and Elman MF (eds.) *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp.311-347.
- Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford: oxford University Press, 2016), chs. 1-2.
- Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, 2 (April-June 2008): 294-321.

Week 10 (March 12) Realism and the Rise of China

- Kirshner, *An Unwritten Future*, chs. 6-7.
- Stephen M. Walt, "Hedging on Hegemony: The Realist Debate over How to Respond to China," *International Security* 49, 4 (Spring 2025): 37-70.
- John J. Mearsheimer, "The Inevitable Rivalry: America, China, and the Tragedy of Great Power Politics," *Foreign Affairs* 100, 6 (November/December 2021): 48-58.
- Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security* 36, 1 (Summer 2011): 7-40.

Week 11 (March 19) Realism and Canadian Foreign Policy

- David G. Haglund, "The Paradigm that Dare Not Speak its Name: Canadian Foreign Policy's Uneasy Relationship with Realist International Relations Theory," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 72, 2 (June 2017): 230-242.
- Kim Richard Nossal, "Right and Wrong in Foreign Policy 40 Years On: Realism and Idealism in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 62, 2 (June 2017): 263-277.
- Kim Richard Nossal, "The Imperatives of Canada's Strategic Geography," in Thomas Juneau, Philippe Lagasse, and Srdjan Vucetic eds., *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 11-28.
<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-030-26403-1.pdf>

Week 12 (March 26) Presentations

Week 13 (April 2) Presentations

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special 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

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

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

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

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#). Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

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