IR 230

American Foreign Policy

Fall 2014

Instructor: Phil Arena

O ce: 326 Harkness Halll   O ce Hours: Monday and Wednesday
Email: larena99@gmail.com   1:00-3:00pm
URL: http:// larena.weebly.com/   and by appointment

This course consists of two parts. First, we will discuss the optimal use of various foreign policy instruments. This will help you evaluate arguments about how the national interest should be pursued. Second, we will discuss the policy formation process, assessing the relative impact of the general public, interest groups, Congress, and the president. This will help you understand why the US behaves the way it does.

To construct theoretical arguments about the e ectiveness and implementation of foreign policy, we will utilize game theory. While historical or contemporaneous examples will often be referred to, understand that the goal of this course is to help you think about when certain policies are e ective and why they are or aren't likely to be chosen. I'm more interested in fostering an ability to make sense of future developments in American foreign policy than familiarizing you with current ones or giving you a forum in which to discuss your feelings about them. We will not focus on the details of particular cases, nor will we spend time debating how the world *should* be. That does not much such questions are unimportant| they are. But they will not be the focus of this class.

Grading

Grades will be determined by two take home exams, collectively worth 50% of your final grade, 4 homework assignments (the lowest of which will be dropped), collectively worth 30% of your final grade, and two in-class presentations, collectively worth 20%.

The exams will be multiple choice, each containing 30 questions. Correct answers will be worth 4 points each. Thus, you need only answer 25 questions correctly in order to receive a 100. Many of the questions will require you to *apply* material from class, rather than simply regurgitate it. That is, you will not always find the answers to the questions in the lecture material, no matter how good your notes, but those of you who truly understood the material will be capable of seeing how the arguments presented in class imply an answer.

The homework assignments will require you to work with game-theoretic models presented in class or to interpret the results of some statistical analysis pertaining to those models. Though most of the questions will be technical, they will mostly involve plugging numbers into inequalities or interpreting tables and graphs. I will also provide tips sheets to help walk you through this. Where I expect most students to struggle is with the final part of each assignment, where you will be asked to evaluate a claim about international politics using the material presented in class. The more you engage with the technical material, the easier this part of the assignment will be. You may even notice that the more technical parts of the assignment tend to point you in the right direction when it comes to the last question.

For the in-class presentations, you will be asked to explain one of the key points from that unit of the course| optimal policy for your first presentation and policy formation for the second| and provide an example. The examples may be drawn from current events (which you are advised to remain abreast of), your personal life or that of others, or popular works of fiction. I'm less interested in whether the example pertains to international politics than your ability to demonstrate a keen understanding of the course material.

The first exam must be turned in before 5:00 pm on Friday, October 24th. The second exam must be turned in before 5:00 pm on Friday, December 19th.

Letter grades are determined as follows:

      A 92:50+   *B* 82:50

Class sequence

Optimal Use of Foreign Policy Instruments

1: Intelligence

2: Militarized Coercion

3: Economic Coercion

4: Multilateralism

5: Foreign Aid

6: Trade

Student presentations

Policy Formation

7: The General Public

8: Special Interests

9: Congress

10: The President

11: The International System

Student presentations