**America First?**

**President Trump and the Future**

**of American Foreign Policy**

**Spring 2019**

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**Course Description**

"America First" was a slogan and a perspective on foreign policy adopted by isolationists like Charles Lindberg in the 1930's. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and the Second World War, a strong bipartisan consensus emerged around the principles of liberal internationalism and isolationist/unilateralist perspectives were marginalized in American foreign policy. Appreciating this historical context is essential to understanding President Trump’s highly controversial approach to world politics. With his election in November 2016, the American presidency is now in the hands of someone who proudly claims the “America First” mantle. As the course unfolds, students will develop a keen understanding of the contrast between the views of Trump and those of the American foreign policy establishment over issues such as NATO & Russia, China, North Korea, conflicts in the Middle East, nuclear proliferation, immigration and trade, terrorism, and the future of American grand strategy and leadership in the world.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

Our expectations of you are especially high.  The pedagogical design of this seminar is highly interactive. Achieving the course learning objectives relies heavily on your extensive preparation and participation in class. Students should only enroll if they are prepared to work hard, focus and meaningfully participate in seminar discussions. Towards that end, here are the course requirements:

1. **Class Participation**. 30% of final grade.

We will have 13 class meetings.  The first will be 20-25 minutes long and organizational in nature. By the end of that meeting students will understand the structure and requirements for the course. That will be followed by 12 substantive meetings.  These classes will meet on Monday evenings for 2 hours and 40 minutes (with a 10 minute break at the midpoint).  We expect that students will spend between at least 5-6 hours each week preparing for our Monday sessions. Each week a number of students will present on the readings (see next requirement for more information) and the rest of the class will be expected to engage meaningfully in discussion, reacting to the student presentations, assessing and evaluating the readings.  *Students will also have a formal counseling session with the instructors prior to spring break to receive feedback on their class participation (including their grade for Class Participation I which will constitute 15% of the final grade) in the course up to that point. Class Participation II will be worth 15% of the final grade and will be assessed following completion of all seminar meetings.*

**b)**   **2x Commentaries on the readings/facilitating class discussion.** 20% of final grade.

When presenting on the readings (each student will present on the readings twice during the semester), students will write an 800 - 1,000 word analytical essay (op-ed length) critically analyzing the reading in relation to the week’s focus *and then discuss their piece with the class*. Your piece should react to the readings, containing an overall thesis and supporting points.  See the example at appendix 1 to better understand what an “A” level effort looks like.

**c) Mid-term Analytical Essay.**20% of final grade.

Each student will submit a 2500 word analytical essay due high noon, Thursday, March 14th. The prompt will be handed out at the conclusion of Lesson 4.  This will be a thought piece requiring you to engage with the readings and demonstrate understanding of the previous traditions in US grand strategy that President Trump is consciously rejecting.  You will be expected to assess Trump’s critique of so-called “Establishment” or “Globalist” strategic thinking.

**d) Final Analytical Essay.** 30% of final grade.

Each student will submit a 2500 word analytical essay due at high noon, Thursday, May 16th. The prompt for that will be handed out at the conclusion of Lesson 10.  This will be a comprehensive thought piece requiring you to engage with the readings, synthesizing and evaluating aspects of President Trump’s Grand Strategy.  See the example at appendix 2 to better understand what an “A” level effort looks like.

**Teaching Assistant**: xxxx is the TA for the class. yyyy can be reached at  [@williams.edu](mailto:dsh1@williams.edu).

**Required Materials**

*America First? Trump and the Future of American Foreign Policy - Course Reader Volumes I and II.* These course packets will be picked up by students in Schapiro 223 prior to the organizational meeting.

**Course Outline**

**Jan 30: Organizational Meeting**

Course Syllabus

**Feb 4: Lesson 1 American Grand Strategy: Constitutional Foundations and the original expression of “America First”**

Mark Landler, “Trump, the insurgent, breaks with 70 years of American foreign policy,” *NY Times*, December 28, 2017.

Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy?* Preface and Introduction.

Amy Zeigart, “A Foreign Policy for the Future.”

Richard Kohn, “The Constitution and National Security: The Intent of the Framers.”

US Declaration of Independence

President George Washington, “Farewell Address.”

President James Monroe, “The Monroe Doctrine.”

Walter Russell Mead, “The Jacksonian Tradition in American Foreign Policy.”

President James Polk, “First Inaugural Address.”

President Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address.”

President Theodore Roosevelt, “Naval War College Address,” June 2, 1897.

President Theodore Roosevelt, “State of the Union Message” December 3, 1901.

President Theodore Roosevelt, “Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine,” December 6, 1904.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Brands, Zeigart:

Declaration of Independence, Kohn, Washington’s Farewell:

Monroe Doctrine, Mead (Jackson), Polk, Lincoln:

TR speeches, Washington’s Farewell:

**Feb 11: Lesson 2 Wilsonianism, Realism, and the Triumph of Liberal Internationalism**

Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points Address,” January 8, 1918.

G. John Ikenberry et al., *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy* (2009), pp. 10-20. A broad overview of the principles of Wilsonianism.

Arthur Link, “The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1963)

George Kennan, *American Diplomacy* (1951), pp. 55-103.

Robert Kagan, *The World America Made,* pp.3-68.

Hal Brands, “Is American Internationalism Dead? Reading the National Mood in the Age of Trump, May 16, 2017, *War on the Rocks*.

Jeff Colgan and Robert Keohane, “The Liberal Order is Rigged,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2017)

Andrew Bacevich, “Saving America First: What Responsible Nationalism Looks Like,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2017), pp. 57-67.

\*Iskander Rehman, “Rise of the Reactionaries: The American Far Right and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2018), pp. 29-42. This essay is included for an alternative perspective, but it is not required reading.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Wilson, Ikenberry, Link:

Kennan:

Kagan:

Brands, Colgan & Keohane, Bacevich:

**Feb 18: Lesson 3 Republican Establishment Foreign Policy: Conservatives (Reagan) and Neoconservatives (Bush 43)**.

President Ronald Reagan, “First Inaugural Address.”

President Ronald Reagan, “SDI speech.”

President Ronald Reagan, “pre-Geneva speech (1985)”

President Ronald Reagan, “Berlin Wall speech”

President Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on signing Simpson-Mazzoli”

Brad Plumer, “Congress tried to fix immigration back in 1986. Why did it fail?” *Washington Post*, January 30, 2013.

Chris Gibson, *Rally Point*, pps. 19-23.

Fred Kaplan, “Ron and Mikhail’s Excellent Adventure: How Reagan Won the Cold War.” *Slate,* June 9, 2004.

Piece critical of President Reagan’s Grand Strategy - TBD

President George W. Bush, “Axis of Evil address”

President George W. Bush, “Saddam and his sons have 48 hours speech”

Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, chapter 20 “Towards a New Strategy.”

David Sanger, “50 G.O.P. Officials Warn Donald Trump Would Put Nation’s Security ‘at Risk’,” *New York Times*, 8 August 2016. The letter can be accessed [htttp://warontherocks.com/2016/03/open-letter-on-donald-trump-from-gop-national-security-leaders/](http://warontherocks.com/2016/03/open-letter-on-donald-trump-from-gop-national-security-leaders/).

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/is-trump-ending-the-american-era/537888/> (eliot cohen)

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Reagan’s speeches/analytical pieces:

Reagan’s speeches/analytical pieces:

Bush speeches and Mann:

Cohen and Sanger:

**Feb 25: Lesson 4 What Went Wrong? The Nationalist Critique of Globalism and the Return of an “America First” Grand Strategy**

Jeff Greenfield, “Trump is Pat Buchanan With Better Timing,” *Politico* (September/October 2016).

Patrick Buchanan, *The Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025* (2011), Introduction, Chapters 1, 4, 11.

Donald Trump, Speech at Center for National Interest,” April 27, 2016.

Donald Trump, *Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again* (2015), Preface, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 8, 10.

Rex Tillerson, “Remarks to U.S. State Department Employees,” May 3, 2017.

Gary Cohn and H.R. McMaster, “The Trump Vision for America Abroad,”

Henry Nau, “Trump’s Conservative Internationalism,” *National Review*, August 24, 2017.

Randall Schweller, “A Third-Image Explanation for Why Trump Now,” *ISSForum*, February 2017.

Zach Beauchamp, “An Interview with Randall Schweller: The Case for Trump’s Foreign Policy,” *Vox*, January 11, 2018.

Matthew Kroenig, “The Case for Trump’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2017), pp. 30-34.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Greenfield and Buchanan:

Trump, Trump, Tillerson, Cohn & McMaster:

Nau, Schweller, Beauchamp, and Kroenig:

**March 4: Lesson 5 American Foreign and National Security Policy in the Obama Era**

Susan Glasser, “How Does Obama’s Foreign Policy Look a Year Into Trump,” *Politico*, January 15, 2018.

Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Changed Obama’s Foreign Policy,” *The New Yorker* (April 2011).

Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine,” *The Atlantic* (April 2016).

President Barack Obama, “Speech at McDill Air Force Base on Counterterrorism,” December 6, 2016.

Gideon Rose, “What Obama Gets Right,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2015), pp. 2-12.

Paul Miller, “Reassessing Obama’s Legacy of Restraint,” *War on the Rocks*, March 6, 2017.

Bret Stephens, “What Obama Gets Wrong,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2015), pp.13-16.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Lizza, Goldberg:

Obama, Rose:

Miller, Stephens:

**March  11: Lesson 6 Guest Speaker Dr. Nadia Schadlow, former Deputy National Security Advisor, “President Trump’s National Security Strategy.”**

President Donald Trump, “America First: National Security Strategy,” December 2017.

Reading TBD pro-Trump NSS

Reading TBD con-Trump NSS

**April 1: Lesson 7 Trump & the Domestic sources of Grand Strategy: Trade, Jobs, Immigration, Refugees, Border Security, Homeland Security, and the debate on Climate Change**

Mark Landler, “Trump, the insurgent, breaks with 70 years of American foreign policy,” *NY Times*, December 28, 2017.

Polling Data on Jacksonian/populist influences on Trump Grand Strategy

Presidential Candidate Donald Trump, Campaign Kick-off address, June 15, 2015

President Donald Trump, “First Inaugural Address,” January 20, 2017.

President Donald Trump, “America First: National Security Strategy,” December 2017. Preface, pps. 1-24, and Conclusion.

Presidential Candidate Donald Trump, “Make America Wealthy Again,” *Politico*, June 28, 2016.

Peter Baker, “Trump Abandons Trans-Pacific Partnership, Obama’s Signature Trade Deal,” *NY Times,* January 23, 2017.

Patrick J. Buchanan, “An ‘America First’ Trump Trade Policy,” Buchanan.org

Matea Gold, “Paul Ryan warns that the GOP is engaged in a ‘fight for the soul of our party’ over free market principles,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 2016.

President Donald Trump, “Speech on pulling out of Paris Climate Accord,” *The Hill*, June 1,

2017.

Victor Davis Hanson, “The Anti-Trump Bourbons: Learning and Forgetting Nothing in time for 2020,” *American Greatness*, August 14, 2017.

Victor Davis Hanson, “Trump Constructive Chaos,” Hoover Institution, October 18, 2017.

Bob Inglis TED Talk on climate

Jason Guerrasio, “Al Gore explains our chances against climate change, and his fateful meeting with Donald Trump,” *Business Insider*, July 25, 2017.

“Full text of Trump’s executive order on 7-nation ban, refugee suspension,” CNN, January 28, 2017.

“Ann Coulter Unleashes on Trump for ‘Zero’ Progress on Border Wall,” Fox Insider, June 16, 2017.

Ed O’Keefe, “REP Gutierrez: Trump’s immigration proposals ‘an extension of the white supremacist agenda,” *Washington Post,* October 8, 2017.

Article on Jeb Bush and Immigration

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Trump’s approach to economy:

Trump’s approach to trade:

Trump’s approach to climate:

Trump’s approach to immigration, refugees and border security:

**April 8:  Lesson 8 Trump, NATO and Russia’s Challenge to Europe**

Stephen Kotkin, “The Resistible Rise of Vladimir Putin,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2015), pp. 140-153.

Daniel Treisman, “Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2016), pp. 47-54.

John Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2014), pp. 77-89.

Anders Aslund, “Is the West to Blame for Russia’s Aggression in Ukraine?” PIIE*,* August 20, 2014.

Evan Osnos, David Remnick, and Joshua Yaffa, “Trump, Putin, and the New Cold War,” *The New Yorker*, March 6, 2017, pp. 1-29.

Susan Glasser, “Trump’s Russian Schizophrenia,” *Politico*, November 27, 2017.

Graham Allison and Dimitri K. Simes, “Trump and Russia,” *The National Interest* (Jan/Feb 2017), pp.25-34.

Robert Blackwill and Phillip Gordon, “Containing Russia, Again,” *Foreign Affairs* (Jan 2018), pp.1-5.

Michael R. Gordon and Niraj Chokshi, “Trump Criticizes NATO and Hopes for ‘Good Deals’ with Putin,” *New York Times*, 15 January 2017 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/15/world/europe/donald-trump-nato.html>

President Donald Trump, Speech at NATO Headquarters, May 25, 2017.

Susan B. Glasser, “Trump National Security Team Blindsided by NATO Speech,” *Politico Magazine*, 5 June 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/06/05/trump-nato-speech-national-security-team-215227>.

Michael Mandelbaum, “Pay Up, Europe: What Trump Gets Right About NATO,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2017), pp. 108-114.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

\*\* Each of the following groups should integrate the Osnos, Remick, and Yaffa article in *The New Yorker* into their essay.

Kotkin, Treisman:

Mearsheimer, Aslund:

Glasser, Allison & Simes, Blackwill & Gordon:

Gordon and Chokshi, Trump, Glasser, Mandelbaum:

**April 15: Lesson 9 Trump and the Middle East.**

Peter Krause, *Rebel Power: Why National Movements Compete, Fight, and Win* (Cornell, 2016), Chapters 1.

Susan B. Glasser, “Why the Middle East Hated Obama But Loves Trump,” *Politico*, 31 July 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/07/31/donald-trump-middle-east-barack-obama-215441>

Marc Lynch, “Belligerent Minimalism: The Trump Administration and the Middle East,” *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2017), pp. 1-18.

Hal Brands and Peter Feaver, “Trump and Terrorism: U.S. Strategy After ISIS,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2017), pp.28-36.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Krause, Chapters 1:

xxxx:

yyyy:

Glasser, Lynch, Brands & Feaver:

**April 22: Lesson 10 Trump, China, North Korea, and the Future of Asia**

David Shambaugh, “The Illusion of Chinese Power,” *The National Interest* (July/Aug 2014), pp. 39-48.

Brooks, Stephen and William C. Wohlforth, "The Once and Future Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2016), pp. 91-104.

Evan Osnos (1), “Making China Great Again,” *The New Yorker*, January 8, 2018.

Salvatore Balbones, “The Meaning of Xi Jinping Thought,” *Foreign Affairs* (Nov 2017).

John Mearsheimer, “Can China Rise Peacefully?” *The National Interest* (April 2014), pp. 1-22.

Philip Gordon, “A Vision of Trump at War: How the President Could Stumble into Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2017), pp. 10-19. (Please skip the section on Iran).

Evan Osnos (2), “The Risk of Nuclear War with North Korea,” *The New Yorker* (September 2017).

Mark Bowden, “How to Deal with North Korea,” *The Atlantic* (July/August 2017).

John Delury, “Take Preventive War with North Korea Off the Table,” *Foreign Affairs*  (August 2017).

Shambaugh, Brooks &Wohlforth, Osnos (1):

Osnos (1), Balbones, Mearsheimer:

Gordon and Osnos (2):

Bowden and Delury:

**Apr 29: Lesson 11 President Trump and his Advisors**

Michael Warren, “Inside the McMaster-Bannon War,” *The Weekly Standard*, August 2, 2017.

Natasha Bertrand, “It looks like Bannon’s efforts to oust Trump’s National Security Advisor completely backfired,” *Business Insider*, August 18, 2017.

Penny Star, “Report: Trump and McMaster ‘at odds’ on ‘key national security issues’” *Breitbart*, July 28, 2017.

Maggie Habermann and Matt Stevens, “Sebastian Gorka is forced out as White House Advisor, officials say,” *NY Times*, August 25, 2017.

Zeeshan Aleem, “Rex Tillerson Hired a CEO to overhaul the State Department. She quit 3 months into the job,” *Vox,* November 28, 2017.

Robbie Gramer, “Tillerson takes on critics: No ‘hollowing out’ at the State Department,” *Foreign Policy*, November 28, 2017.

Alex Lockie, “Mattis once said if the State Department funding gets cut, ‘then I need to buy more ammunition’” *Business Insider*, February 27, 2017.

David Remnick, “There is no Deep State,” *The New Yorker*, March 20, 2017.

Michael Crowley, “The Deep State is Real,” *Politico*, September/October 2017.

Jon Michaels, “Trump and the Deep State.” Foreign Affairs, September/October 2017.

Annie Linskey, “John Kelly brought stability in Iraq, can he bring order to the White House?” *Boston Globe*, October 5, 2017.

Michael Sebastian, “8 Things to know about General John Kelly, Trump’s White House Chief of Staff, *Cosmopolitan,* October 17, 2017.

“How Long Can John Kelly Hang On?” *NY Times*, February 26, 2018.

Mark Perry, “Are Trump’s Generals in Over their Heads?” *Politico,* October 25, 2017.

Jonah Shepp, “Will the Generals Save Us from Trump? *New York Magazine,* November 2, 2017.

Phillip Carter, “Uncivil Military Relations?” February 22, 2018.

MacKubin Owens, “Civil-Military Relations in the Age of Trump,” *American Greatness*, December 13, 2017.

\*Discussants/Analytical Essay

Trump’s approach to advisors and subordinates:

Nationalists vs. Globalists:

“Deep State?”:

Civil-Military Relations:

**May 6.  Lesson 12 Seminar wrap-up discussion and course critiques**