1. Course Description and Objectives

How has the United States sought to protect and promote its national security throughout its history? What changes and continuities have there been in American national security strategy over time? How should the United States deal with contemporary international challenges, such as terrorism and the rise of China and Asia? These questions are the focus of this course.

The first part of the course will focus on change and continuity in American strategy over time. The remainder of the course will assess President Barack Obama’s emerging national security strategy and a variety of proposals for strategies to deal with contemporary security challenges.

The objectives of the course are to:

- Examine major events, trends, and debates in the history of U.S. national security strategy
- Explore changes and continuities in American strategy over time
- Analyze competing arguments about contemporary national security strategy

2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, I expect students to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- Gained in-depth knowledge of the history of U.S. national security strategy
- Evaluated competing arguments and debates about national security strategy
- Applied historical knowledge and other course concepts to current national security challenges
- Demonstrated strong analytical reading, thinking, and writing skills
- Synthesized course concepts and information
- Written an original policy memo
- Delivered an effective oral policy briefing

3. Readings and Course Schedule

Four books that are required reading are available for purchase at the campus bookstore:


The rest of the required readings are available electronically through Blackboard.

**Week 1: August 25**

**Introduction**


*Recommended:*


**Week 2: September 1**

**Early U.S. National Security Strategy**


- George Washington’s Farewell Address, pages 74-76
- The Monroe Doctrine, pages 170-171
- William Appleman Williams, “Manifesto of the U.S. Empire,” pages 181-183

**Week 3: September 8**  
The War of 1898 and America’s Emergence as a Great Power

McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, Chapter 5


- Paul Kennedy, “The United States’ Rise among the Living and Dying Powers,” pages 321-328
- Walter LaFeber, “Preserving the American System,” pages 357-365
- The Roosevelt Corollary, pages 466-467


**Week 4: September 15**  
Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations

McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, Chapter 6

• Wilson’s 14 Points, pages 501-502
• Articles 10-16 of League of Nations Covenant, pages 502-503
• Arthur S. Link, “Wilson’s Higher Realism,” pages 510-515
• Thomas J. Knock, “Wilson’s Battle for the League: Progressive Internationalists Confront the Forces of Reaction,” pages 523-533


**Week 5: September 22**
**From World War II to the Birth of the Containment Doctrine**

McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, Chapter 7


- George Kennan, “Long Telegram,” pages 192-195
- Harry Truman, Address to Congress, pages 202-204

**Week 6: September 29**
**From NSC-68 to the Vietnam War**

Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, Chapters 4, 8

- NSC-68, pages 205-207
- Fredrik Logevall, “Lyndon Johnson and His Bureaucracy Choose War,” pages 437-446
• Robert K. Brigham, “An Unwinnable War,” pages 446-452

Leslie H. Gelb, “Vietnam: The System Worked,” Foreign Policy, Number 3 (Summer 1971), pages 140-167


**Week 7: October 6**
**From Détente to the End of the Cold War**


- Joan Hoff, “Nixon’s Innovative Grand Design and the Wisdom of Détente,” pages 471-480
- Raymond L. Garthoff, “Why Détente Failed,” pages 480-489
- Walter Isaacson, “Kissinger’s Realism without Morality,” pages 489-494

Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, Chapter 11

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, “Who Won the Cold War?” Foreign Policy, Number 87 (Summer 1992), pages 123-138


**Week 8: October 13**
**The Post-Cold War Era**

Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, America between the Wars: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), Chapters 1, 3, 5


**Week 9: October 20**
**George W. Bush’s Strategies**


President George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address (January 20, 2005)


**Strategy memo due on October 25 at 10 AM to tama@american.edu.**

**Week 10: October 27**

**Obama’s Emerging Strategy**

Jonathan Alter, *The Promise: President Obama, Year One* (New York: Simon & Schuster), Chapter 21

President Barack Obama, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech (December 10, 2009)


Obama National Security Strategy (May 2010), read pages 1-16, skim rest of document


Thomas Wright, “Strategic Engagement’s Track Record,” *Washington Quarterly* (July 2010)

**Week 11: November 3**

**Competing Contemporary Strategic Ideas**


Stephen Walt, “Taming American Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2005), pages 105-120


**Week 12: November 10**

**Dealing with Autocratic States and the Rise of China and Asia**


Minxin Pei, “Think Again: Asia's Rise,” *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2009), pages 32-36

Week 13: November 17
Group strategy briefings


No class on November 24

Week 14: December 1
Group strategy briefings


Final paper due on December 10 at 1 PM to tama@american.edu.

4. Course Requirements and Assignments

I will sometimes post on blackboard or e-mail to you announcements related to the course. You are responsible for checking the blackboard site and your AU e-mail regularly and reading any announcements from me. I will also post course materials on blackboard.

All of your writing for this course should be double-spaced in Microsoft Word, and you should always edit your work carefully to eliminate grammatical errors and maximize its clarity.

Turning in your work on time is important. I will penalize late papers as follows:

- Late by more than one minute but less than one hour: 1/3 grade penalty (A becomes A-)
- Late by more than one hour but less than 24 hours: additional 1/3 grade penalty (A becomes B+)
- Late by more than 24 hours: additional 1/3 grade penalty for every additional day the paper is late

Class participation (20% of grade): You are expected to attend class, and you should come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. I will evaluate your participation based on your attendance and the quality of your contributions to class discussions and debates.
Approved absences are limited to absences for religious observance or for a medical or family emergency. Please contact me if you will need to miss a class for one of those reasons.

The best contributions to class discussion are ones that demonstrate engagement with the course material, familiarity with the reading, thoughtfulness, and respect for the opinions of others. Attentiveness in class is also an important part of participation. It is unacceptable to use a laptop or other electronic device for an activity other than taking notes or making a presentation to the class.

**Response papers (20% of grade):** You must turn in three response papers during the course of the semester, each of which will be worth 6.7% of your final grade. In these papers, you should describe and evaluate competing arguments on a given topic in readings assigned for an individual week. Each paper should be no more than 750 words and should be submitted in hard copy form by the beginning of the class in which we will be discussing the readings covered by the paper.

You can write on any of the following 10 sets of readings:
- Week 2: Perkins, Williams, May (on the Monroe Doctrine)
- Week 2: Stephanson, Hietala (on Manifest Destiny)
- Week 3: Kagan, LaFeber, Offner, Perez (on the War of 1898)
- Week 4: Link, Schulte-Nordholt, Knock (on Wilson and the League of Nations)
- Week 4: Smith, Slaughter (on Wilsonianism today)
- Week 5: Offner, Gaddis (on the origins of the Cold War)
- Week 6: Logevall, Brigham, Gelb, Thomson (on the Vietnam War)
- Week 7: Hoff, Garthoff, Isaacson (on détente)
- Week 7: Gaddis, Deudney/Ikenberry (on the end of the Cold War)
- Week 9: Pape, Lieber/Alexander (on soft balancing against the U.S.)

In the papers, you should summarize the argument of each author, explain how the authors’ arguments differ from each other, and offer your own assessment of their competing arguments.

**Strategy memo (20% of grade):** This assignment is to write a memo to the U.S. National Security Advisor proposing a strategy for dealing with a contemporary national security challenge. (You will choose one of several possible challenges to write about early in the semester.) The memo should clearly describe the nature of the challenge, the objective of your strategy, your strategy for achieving that objective, and specific proposals for implementing the strategy. The memo should also describe how your proposed strategy differs from existing U.S. policy. (Some elements of your strategy can be the same as existing policy.) In addition, the memo should consider potential domestic or international political obstacles to implementing the strategy, and should suggest how any such obstacles can be overcome.

In the memo, you may draw on concepts and knowledge from the course and from your own research on the issue. You do not need to provide citations for factual information,
but you should cite a source when an idea in your memo is drawn from or inspired by it. You should also include a list of references at the end of the memo.

I will evaluate your memo based on its clarity, coherence, persuasiveness, and political feasibility.

The memo should be no more than 1500 words. It is due at 10 AM on October 25. You can submit it by e-mail to tama@american.edu.

**Group strategy briefing (10% of grade):** After writing the strategy memos, you will work with other students who wrote about the same challenge to prepare a 10 minute group briefing outlining a strategy on that issue. This briefing will be delivered to the class, which will be playing the role of the National Security Council, on November 17 or December 1. In preparing the briefing, each group should aim to reach consensus on a strategy so that the group can present its strategy collectively. This will almost certainly require individual group members to make compromises and modify the positions they articulated in their individual memos. If it is not possible for the group to reach consensus, groups can allocate a portion of their 10 minutes to one or more dissenting opinions, but keep in mind that a divided group will probably be less persuasive than a united group. Each presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the rest of the class. All members of the group must contribute significantly to the group’s work, but you can delegate one or two people to deliver the presentation.

Groups will be evaluated based on the quality of the briefing and responses to questions, not on whether the group strategy is similar to or different than the strategy you proposed in your individual memos. You should not begin working as a group until after you have written your memos.

**Final paper (30% of grade):** A final paper of no more than 2500 words will be due at 1 PM on December 10. I will distribute options for paper topics partway through the semester. The topics will require you to synthesize and analyze material from throughout the course. In grading the papers, I will be assessing both your understanding of the history of U.S. national security strategy and your ability to formulate and defend a persuasive argument in response to the question.

### 5. Academic Integrity

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by it. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Academic Integrity Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.
6. Support Services and Disabilities

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don’t hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of SIS, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

7. Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.