

POLI 142A: US Foreign Policy

Summer Session I 2025

Instructor: Rachel Yu

Email: rqyu@ucsd.edu



Welcome to POLI 142A!

How does the United States conduct policy overseas? Why are US tariff policies so important for domestic and international politics? Why does the US engage in international conflict and what effects do they have on national security? Should the US play a more active role in international affairs? Why or why not, and what are the implications? These are all questions that scholars and practitioners of US foreign policy have grappled with in the modern era. In this course, we will explore America's role in international politics, what shapes this role, and its potential effects.

Course Information

Course Description	This course explores how the US engages in international politics, the domestic and international sources of US foreign policy, and major dynamics shaping US foreign policy today. This class bridges important insights from International Relations and American Politics. <i>No prerequisite knowledge required.</i>
Meeting Time and Location	Monday & Wednesdays, 2:00PM - 4:50PM SOLIS 109

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and describe the various internal and external factors that shape American foreign policy
2. Examine the effects of modern US foreign policy across different regions of the world
3. Apply knowledge about foreign policy development to evaluate contemporary issues in US foreign policy

Contact Information & Office Hours

Instructor: Rachel Yu

Office: [Social Sciences Building](#) 447 (next to RIMAC)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:00am - 11:00am, sign up [here](#).

Email: rqyu@ucsd.edu

* If you need to meet over Zoom and/or at a different time, please send me an email.

Course Materials and Tools

There are no required texts for this course. All readings can be found on the Canvas page for the course or linked on the syllabus.

A Typical Week in This Course & Important Dates

Mondays	• Readings, videos, and/or podcasts to be completed <i>before class</i> • Lecture
Wednesdays	• Readings, videos, and/or podcasts to be completed <i>before class</i> • Lecture • Office Hour Availability
Fridays	• Quizzes and/or Discussion Post Activities due at 11:59PM

Important Course Deadlines

- Policy Memo Rough Draft: Wednesday, July 23 @ 2:00PM
- Peer Review: Friday, July 25 @ 11:59PM
- Final Policy Memo: Friday, August 1 @ 11:59PM

Important Administrative Deadlines:

- Last Day to Drop w/ Refund: July 7
- Last Day to Drop without a W (without refund): July 11
- Last Day to Drop w/ a W: July 18

Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Pre-Class Survey	ungraded	Friday, July 4 @ 11:59PM
Quizzes x 4	20%	Fridays @ 11:59PM
Discussion Posts x 4	20%	Fridays @ 11:59PM
Policy Brief Rough Draft	5%	Wednesday, July 23 @ 2:00PM
Peer Review	10%	Friday, July 25 @ 11:59PM
Policy Brief	35%	Friday, August 1 @ 11:59PM
Participation	10%	N/A
Resume and Cover Letter	5 points (extra credit)*	Friday, July 25 @ 11:59PM

* Extra credit points will be added to the student's Final Policy Memo grade

Grading Scale*

A+ = 97-100% **B+** = 87-89% **C+** = 77-79%
A = 93-96% **B** = 83-86% **C** = 73-76% **D** = 60-69% **F** = 59%-below
A- = 90-92% **B-** = 80-82% **C-** = 70-72%

*Grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, an 89.50 will be rounded to a 90. An 89.49 will be rounded to an 89.

The following section gives a brief overview of each graded assignment in this course. Please refer to the Assignments page on Canvas for more detailed instructions and rubrics.

Quizzes (4): Quizzes will be administered through Canvas and cover the domestic sources of US foreign policy that are covered in the first four sessions of the course. These untimed quizzes will be a series of multiple choice and short answer questions. These are graded for accuracy, and students will have two attempts for each quiz; the highest score out of these two attempts will be recorded.

Discussion Posts (4): Discussion posts will be administered through Canvas. The first discussion post will ask students to introduce themselves, and the second discussion post will ask students to identify their policy memo topic of interest. The final two discussion posts will ask students to briefly discuss one potential cause and effect of US foreign policy in a region of the world and comment on a classmate's response. Discussion posts will be graded for completing all parts of the prompts.

Policy Memo Rough Draft & Peer Review: On Wednesday, July 23rd, students will participate in an in-class peer review activity. As such, for the activity to be fruitful for all students, all students are expected to bring a rough draft of their final policy memo. The rough draft and

peer review will be graded for completeness and quality of peer review comments (i.e., did you meaningfully engage with your peers' work and give quality feedback?).

Policy Brief: In this brief, you are a desk officer at the US Department of State and tasked with convincing the relevant decision makers (1) about the urgency of a problem related to US foreign policy and (2) the need to adopt the perspective and solution(s) you put forth, based on strong/high quality evidence. These briefs are typically not long (policymakers are busy!!), and the assignment requirement for this class is 1500 – 2000 words. (This translates into ~8 – 10 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1-inch margins. The page count does not include the title page, bibliography, or appendices.) Click [here](#) for more information.

Participation: Participation will be graded on a number of factors: showing up to lecture, having completed the readings, and being ready to engage meaningfully with the class discussion. Students will have plenty of in-class opportunities to participate in active discussions. If you have trouble participating in class for any reason, please send me an email and we can work something out.

Course Policies

Extensions and Late Work

Please reach out to me ASAP if you have an illness or documented family emergency. We will work out an extension with no penalty. If you do not have a reason, I will accept late assignments with a penalty of 5% for each calendar day. Students will max out at a 25% reduction. Because of grading deadlines, we cannot accept the final policy brief or any late work past Saturday, August 2nd. **There is no late work accepted for the rough draft assignments since this will be required for the peer review activity. Additionally, late work for the extra credit assignments will not be accepted.**

Absences

- Each student will get one excused absence, no questions asked, that will not count against their grade. This policy is designed to ensure you are covered in the event of a one-time unanticipated event (e.g., job interview, car won't start, etc.)
- Any excused absence (i.e., illness, disability flare, family emergency, etc) beyond the first absence will require a short, written makeup assignment related to that week's topic to avoid any negative impact to your grade. If you need to request a make up assignment, please email me before the class that you will miss (or as soon as possible following) and I will assign the makeup. You will have until the following week to submit the assignment.

Academic Integrity & AI

Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating, falsely claiming others' work as your own, or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by

cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result in sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University. Please note that as an instructor, I am required to report all instances of academic dishonesty. A good rule of thumb to ask yourself: a) is what I'm about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, please feel free to reach out! (Source: UCSD Academic Integrity Office, 2018)

Generative AI is becoming more integrated in our academic, professional, and social lives. Thus, my challenge as an instructor is to best equip you with the tools to succeed in this rapidly changing world. AI literacy is important, as is "traditional" writing, research and thinking skills such as originality, writing, organization, idea generation etc. In some professional settings, such as government positions that require classified information, generative AI is simply inaccessible. Thus, this class has a "responsible use" policy for all generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepSeek, etc.)

Students are allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT) critically on assignments in this course **if that use is properly documented and credited**. For example, text generated using ChatGPT should include a citation such as:

"Chat-GPT. (YYYY, Month DD of query). "Text of your query." Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>" Material generated using other tools should follow a similar citation convention.

Please note that generative AI does not count towards your required 10 citations in the policy memo.

tl;dr: cite all of your sources and all AI use, don't abuse AI tools, and prioritize your own learning and growth.

Technology Policy

You are permitted to use your laptop or tablet in class only for purposes directly related to class (e.g., note taking). A growing body of research shows that laptop multitasking interferes with your own learning, as well as the learning of those around you. Our class is small enough that I will notice, and it will probably hurt your participation score, so please be respectful of me and your fellow classmates by refraining from non-class-related activities during class. As long as everyone behaves responsibly, devices are permitted, but I reserve the right to revoke this privilege at any time.

Accommodations and Accessibility

[More info here.](#) | Email OSD: osd@ucsd.edu

Any student with a disability is welcome to contact us early in the course to work out accommodations to support their success in this course. Students requesting accommodations

for this course due to a disability should work through the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Instructors will receive Authorization for Accommodations Letters from the OSD online portal. Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department in advance of any assignments.

Inclusion

This class will feature candid discussions about policies and events that might host a range of different perspectives and experiences. The classroom is a place to expand our knowledge and experiences safely, while always being respected and valued. *Everyone, including the instructional team, is expected to maintain the highest levels of respect for each other.* If at any point during the course, you have concerns about this, please reach out to me immediately.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Title / Topics	Complete BEFORE Class:
1	Monday June 30	<i>Course Introduction</i> • Introduction • Analytical Foundations • Overview of Topics in USFP	Read/ Watch/ Listen: 1. This Syllabus 😊 2. The White House. 2002. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, pp. iv–vii (preface) and 1–2. Skim the rest. 3. “Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony”, May 28, 2014. 4. US State Department Fact Sheet: “100 Days of an America First State Department”, April 29, 2025 5. The Hidden Brain. “The Double Standard” (Spotify, Apple Podcasts) Complete before first class : • Introduction Discussion Post • Pre-Class Survey
	Wednesday July 2	<i>Sources of USFP (1)</i> • Constitutional Foundations of USFP • Primer on American institutions	Read/ Watch/ Listen: 1. Skim: U.S. Constitution, Articles I and II. The National Constitution Center provides an interactive version of the U.S. Constitution 2. Scott Anderson. November 9, 2023. “The Underappreciated Legacy of the War Powers Resolution”. <i>Lawfare</i>. 3. Bomboy, Scott. “Explaining the president’s foreign affairs powers”. The Constitution Center. 4. Watch: Crash Course. “Separation of Powers”

			5. Supplemental: a. Federalist Papers: Federalist Paper #11 Federalist Paper #64 Federalist Paper #70
	Friday July 4		DUE @ 11:59PM: ● Quiz 1 ● Quiz 2 ● Discussion Post 1: Introductions ● Pre-Class Survey
2	Monday July 7	<i>Sources of USFP (2)</i> ● The Presidency ● Bureaucracy ● Congress	Read: - Marc J. Hetherington and Michael Nelson. 2003. "Anatomy of a Rally Effect: George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism." PS: Political Science & Politics 36(1): 37–42. - Tyler Jost, Joshua D. Kertzer, Eric Min, and Robert Schub, "Advisers and Aggregation in Foreign Policy Decision-Making", International Organization, 78:1 (Winter 2024), 1-37. - Patrick Hulme. 2023. "A Not-So-Imperial Presidency." Lawfare (March 9, 2023). - Supplemental: - Elizabeth N. Saunders, Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 1-19, 186-211. - Canes-Wrone, B., Howell, W. G., & Lewis, D. E. (2008). Toward a broader understanding of presidential power: A reevaluation of the two presidencies thesis. <i>The Journal of Politics</i>, 70(1), 1-16. - Patrick Porter; Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment. <i>International Security</i> 2018; 42 (4): 9–46. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00311
	Wednesday July 9	<i>Sources of USFP (3)</i> ● Politicization and Polarization	Read: Myrick, R. The reputational consequences of polarization for American foreign policy: evidence from the US-UK bilateral relationship. <i>Int Polit</i> 59, 1004–1027 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-022-00382-z

		Organized and Elite Interests	- Matthew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter. 2019. "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in the Age of Social Media." Journal of Politics 81 (2): 747–756 - Listen: Deep Dish on Global Affairs. "How Partisan is US Foreign Policy?". Chicago Council on Global Affairs (Spotify, Apple Podcasts) - Supplemental: - Milner, H. V., & Tingley, D. (2015). Sailing the water's edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy.
	Friday July 11		DUE @ 11:59PM: - Quiz 3 - Quiz 4 - Discussion Post 2: What will your final policy brief be about?
3	Monday July 14	<i>USFP, Grand Strategy, and International Relations (1)</i> - Unipolarity - The Liberal International Order - Rising Discontents	Don't worry, these are shorter articles. Read critically and evaluate the arguments the authors are making. See if you can find similarities and points of contention. - Charles Krauthammer. 1990. "The Unipolar Moment." Foreign Affairs 70(1): 23–33 [in Canvas] - Thomas Wright, "The Folly of Retrenchment: Why America Can't Withdraw From the World", Foreign Affairs (March-April 2020), pp. 10-18 [in Canvas]. - Hal Brands, "The Emerging Biden Doctrine: Democracy, Autocracy, and the Defining Clash of Our Time", Foreign Affairs, June 29, 2021. pp. 1-9. - Tanisha M. Fazal, "The Return of Conquest? Why the Future of Global Order Hinges on Ukraine", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 101, No. 3 (May/June 2022), pp. 20-27 [in Canvas]. - Dan Caldwell and Reid Smith. "Trump Must Not Betray 'America First': The Case for a Foreign Policy That Eschews Primacy and Embraces Restraint", Foreign Affairs, Nov 13, 2024.
	Wednesday July 16	<i>USFP, Grand Strategy, and International Relations (2)</i> Terrorism and the Forever Wars	Read: - Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." International Security 31(1): 49–80. - Melissa M. Lee. 2021. "How Not to Build a State." Modern War Institute (October 5, 2021).

		2. USFP in the Middle East	3. Joshua D. Kertzer. 2021. "American Credibility After Afghanistan: What the Withdrawal Really Means for Washington's Reputation." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> (September 2, 2021) [in Canvas]. 4. Supplemental Readings: ○ Carter Malkasian. 2021. <i>The American War in Afghanistan: A History</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. 53–102. ○ Thomas E. Ricks. 2006. <i>Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq</i>. New York: Penguin Press. 29–111.
	Friday July 18		DUE @ 11:59PM: ● Discussion Post 3: Unipolarity, the LIO, and Rising Discontents
4	Monday July 21	<i>USFP, Grand Strategy, and International Relations</i> (3) ● Indirect Rule, Hierarchy, and Proxy Foreign Policies ● Workshop (1)	Read: 1. David Lake. 2024. Indirect Rule. Cornell University Press. Chapters 1 and 5 2. Supplemental Readings: ○ Melissa M. Lee. <i>Crippling Leviathan: how foreign subversion weakens the state</i>. Cornell University Press, 2020.
	Wednesday July 23	<i>Professional Development</i> ● Diplomacy ● Career Development ● Peer Reviews ● Workshop (2)	Read: 1. UCSD Resume Tips 2. Resumes and Cover Letters (HBS) 3. Writing a Federal Resume 4. Listen: What's Happening to USAID? CSIS: The Truth of the Matter with Andrew Schwartz (Spotify, Apple Podcasts) Due before class: ● Rough Draft of Policy Brief
	Friday July 25		DUE @ 11:59PM: ● Discussion Post 4: USFP in the Middle East ● Peer Review Completion ● CV + Cover Letter (<i>Extra Credit</i>)
5	Monday July 28	<i>USFP, Grand Strategy, and International Relations</i> (4)	Read: 1. Council on Foreign Relations. Timeline on US-China Relations

		• US-China Relations • USFP in East Asia	2. Alastair Iain Johnston; China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations. <i>International Security</i> 2019; 44 (2): 9–60. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00360 3. John J. Mearsheimer, <i>The Inevitable Rivalry: America, China, and the Tragedy of Great- Power Politics</i>, <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 100, 6 (2021): 48-58. [in Canvas]. 4. Supplemental Readings: a. Margaret M. Pearson, Meg Rithmire, Kellee S. Tsai; <i>China's Party-State Capitalism and International Backlash: From Interdependence to Insecurity</i>. <i>International Security</i> 2022; 47 (2): 135–176. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00447 b. Paul Poast. 2022. “No Free Lunches: What the United States Gains from Its Alliances.” <i>Security Studies</i> 31(3): 520–526. c. Weiss JC, Wallace JL. Domestic Politics, China’s Rise, and the Future of the Liberal International Order. <i>International Organization</i>. 2021;75(2):635-664. doi:10.1017/S002081832000048X d. Jessica Chen Weiss. 2022. “The China Trap: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Perilous Logic of Zero-Sum Competition.” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 101(5): 40–58. e. Richard Bush, “A One-China Policy Primer,” Brookings Institution, March 2017
	Wednesday July 30	<i>Looking Ahead</i> • Modern Challenges for USFP • Workshop (3)	Read: 1. Isabelle Desisto. “What Ukrainians think about peace talks and ending the war”. <i>Good Authority</i>. March 3, 2025. 2. Alexander Kustov and Yaoyao Dai. Good to Know: Populism. <i>Good Authority</i>. 3. Freeman, B. (2023). Racial Hierarchy and Jurisdiction in U.S. Status of Forces Agreements. <i>Security Studies</i>, 32(4–5), 748–774. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2023.2246875 4. Jenn Hatfield and Laura Silver. “U.S. adults under 30 have different foreign policy priorities than older adults”. <i>Pew Research Center</i>. July 19, 2024

			5. John Ikenberry, The Plot Against American Foreign Policy: Can the Liberal Order Survive, Foreign Affairs, 96, 3 (May/June 2017), pp.2-9 [in Canvas]. 6. Supplemental Readings: a. Joshua A. Schwartz, Matthew Fuhrmann, and Michael C. Horowitz, “Do Armed Drones Counter Terrorism, Or Are They Counterproductive? Evidence from 18 Countries”, International Studies Quarterly, 6:3 (2022)
	Friday August 1		DUE @ 11:59PM: ● Final Policy Brief

Resources for Support and Learning

Learning and Academic Support	
<u>Ask a Librarian: Library Support</u> Chat or make an appointment with a librarian to focus on your research needs <u>Course Reserves, Connecting from Off-Campus and Research Support</u> Find supplemental course materials <u>First Gen Student Success Coaching Program</u> Peer mentor program that provides students with information, resources, and support in meeting their goals	<u>Writing Hub Services in the Teaching + Learning Commons</u> One-on-one online writing tutoring and workshops on key writing topics <u>Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services (OASIS)</u> Intellectual and personal development support <u>Supplementary Instructional Resources for Quantitative Research in Political Science</u> Refresher on fundamental concepts in quantitative research for political science
Support for Well-being and Inclusion	
<u>Basic Needs at UCSD</u> Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live is encouraged to contact: foodpantry@ucsd.edu basicneeds@ucsd.edu (858) 246-2632 <u>Counseling and Psychological Services</u> Confidential counseling and consultations for psychiatric service and mental health programming <u>Triton Concern Line</u> Report students of concern: (858) 246-1111 <u>Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)</u> Supports students with disabilities and accessibility across campus	<u>Community and Resource Centers Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</u> As part of the <u>Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</u> the campus community centers provide programs and resources for students and contribute toward the evolution of a socially just campus (858).822-.3542 diversity@ucsd.edu <u>Get Involved</u> Student organizations, clubs, service opportunities, and many other ways to connect with others on campus <u>Undocumented Student Services</u> Programs and services are designed to help students overcome obstacles that arise from their immigration status and support them through personal and academic excellence