AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Course Content

In the midst of the Ukraine war and COVID-19, a debate is ranging about what American grand strategy should be, and what kind of foreign policies it should generate. The spectrum of grand strategies that academics, policymakers and the media discuss is broad, ranging from a dominating form of global engagement at one extreme to isolationism at the other. In this course, we review the underlying approaches, examine those current policy debates, and provide an understanding of the context in which they are taking place.

With those goals in mind, in the first section of this course we consider varied definitions of grand strategy, their relationship to foreign policies, and then briefly the postwar history of American grand strategy. In the second section of the course, we consider the major contending views of what contemporary American grand strategy might look like—covering a spectrum that varies from global dominance or empire at one extreme to isolationism at the other. We integrate that with a study of the grand strategies of recent presidents, from Bush to Biden, and how they have applied these different approaches in different regions of the world. In the course’s third section we then examine criticism of the notion of grand strategy in a dynamic global system, before students present their research in the concluding week.

Goals of the Course

This course has three major pedagogical goals:

- To inform students about the content and substance of debates about grand strategy, applying them to the current context on foreign policy.
- To develop professional verbal and written skills for a corporate, policy or academic career.
- To produce an original piece of research suitable as a writing sample for a job or graduate school application, a publishable piece or a discernable component of a doctoral dissertation.

Requirements

Students will be graded according to two criteria.

1. Participation will account for twenty-five percent of their grade. This is composed of a combination of their contribution to class discussion of the
readings; their individual presentations; and their feedback to other students presenting their research.

2. The second, written component constitutes seventy-five percent of the final grade. It will be assessed by evaluating each student’s project proposal (two pages), intermediate report (three pages) and final paper (20-25 pages).

   a. The first paper proposal will discuss the region of the globe they intend to study and the two forms of grand strategy they think that they will compare.
   b. The intermediate paper will provide a simple, short summary of the research findings to date to accompany their presentation.
   c. The final paper, which should be 20-25 pages (double spaced) in length. I will provide you with a template for writing the paper to assist you. Each paper will compare and contrast the applicability of two types of American grand strategy in one region. Each student will work on a different region of the globe by agreement with the course instructor.

Course policies:

Unless there are compelling, documented circumstances, neither a G nor I grade will be granted for this course.

Students in this course will be expected to comply with Rutgers University’s Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination or papers of any individual suspected of violating University Policy.

For details on the policy visit http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/

Accommodation and Support Statement:

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities**: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order
to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a
disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide
documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration,
initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable
accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of
Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give
the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor.
This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as
accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at
ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:** Students are advised to provide
timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious
observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to
an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify
absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or
DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-
5805 or http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/.

- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a
temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at:
https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is
available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. To submit an incident report: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does NOT have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu.

**Learning Resources:**

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)
Readings

There are no required purchases for this course. All readings should be available on Canvas at https://canvas.rutgers.edu or for download via the web where indicated. Several are very short magazine or newspaper articles that are used to demonstrate a point related to the week’s readings.

Timetable and Readings

1. September 8: Introductory week: Grand Strategy, Foreign Policy and the Changing Global Environment

   Subjects: 1. Objectives and content of the course
             2. Studying Grand Strategy
             3. Writing research papers

   Goals: 1. Intellectual goals
           2. Pedagogical goals
           3. Policy goals

   NB. Following class, please contact me via email to see me for a short introductory zoom meeting where we can discuss your research interests and possible paper subject.

   Section 1. Background

2. September 15: What is Grand Strategy? What does it entail? How should we study it?


   Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, Across Type, Time and Space, pp. 11-23.

NB. I have included three additional files under the first week’s readings. They are the proofs for my book with Peter Dombrowski, *The End of Grand Strategy*, parts of which you will use starting in Week 5. So, download them now.


Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, “U.S. Grand Strategy” in Balzacq, Dombrowski and Reich (eds.), *Comparative Grand Strategy*.


**Optional Reading:**

Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*, Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5

4. September 29: The Instruments of Grand Strategy:


Sonnenfeld et al., “Business Retreats and Sanctions are Crippling the Russian Economy,” pp. 3-5, 10-35.

Section 2. Contending Formulations

NB. A Two-page written proposal for your research paper is due before the beginning of class on October 6.

5. October 6: Grand Strategy as Primacy (Think Trump Version 1)

Christopher Layne, The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present, Intro, Chapter 1, 6 & 7.

Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, America Abroad, Chapters 1 & 2.

Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, The End of Grand Strategy, Chapter 3.


6. October 13: Grand Strategy as Leadership (Think Obama)


Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, America Abroad, Chapter 4.


EUISS, “The EU and NATO,” pp. 3-12.

7. October 20: Grand Strategy as Nation Building and Neo-Conservatism (Think Bush)

Niall Ferguson, *Colossus*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 5, 6 & 8.


A Three-Page Update on the Research Paper is due at the beginning of Class on October 27.

8. October 27: Grand Strategy as Sponsorship


Simon Reich and Ned Lebow, *Good-bye Hegemony!* Chapter 5.


See Barry Posen lecture, ‘Why American Restraint Makes Sense in a World Going to Hell,’ [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drDw7PDnBQ&list=UUJkZLKINUXeql9AXxg0Ewog](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drDw7PDnBQ&list=UUJkZLKINUXeql9AXxg0Ewog)


10. November 10: Grand Strategy as Isolationism (Think Trump Version 2)

Eric Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured*, Chapter I-VII


Section 3. The Current Debate

11. November 17: Trump, Biden and Grand Strategy


12. No Class on November 24th due to Thanksgiving. Class time, date and content TBD

Review video of the Brooks versus Posen Debate at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXDA_XSsQYg&t=4s

13. December 1: Course Review and the Future

Dombrowski and Reich, “Across Type, Time and Space,” pp. 23-50.


Section 4. Student Presentations

14. December 8: Student Presentations

Final paper deadline: December 15.