

Summer Courses, Summer 2017
AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY
Instructor: Aaron Friedberg
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This course will provide an introduction to the concept of grand strategy and an overview of how US grand strategy has evolved since the founding of the republic. Particular attention will be paid to the role of ideology in determining how successive generations of American leaders have defined objectives, perceived threats, and formulated plans to reshape the world.

Monday, July 31, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

The Founders and the Grand Strategy of the Early Republic

Reading:

- Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?*, pp. 1–16
- Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, pp. 71–129
- Publius, *Federalist* No. 8

Discussion Questions:

What Good Is Grand Strategy?

1. What is grand strategy? How is it different from foreign or military policy?
2. Why is grand strategy important to effective statecraft? What five difficulties does it address?
3. What are the obstacles to devising a coherent grand strategy? Are democratic politics a help or a hindrance to grand strategy?

Chapter 3, *Dangerous Nation*

1. How has American foreign policy been shaped by liberalism, according to Kagan?
2. Why was liberalism such a potent engine for American expansion? How did Americans justify their conquest of Indian and Spanish lands?
3. How did American commercial interests shape its early foreign policy?
4. In what way was the Early Republic a “globalizing” power, according to Kagan?
5. What principles guided American grand strategy in the era of the Early Republic?

Chapter 4, *Dangerous Nation*

1. What was the “battle over foreign policy in the 1790s”? What were the two competing visions of US grand strategy, and how did they each approach the US relationship with Great Britain and France?
2. What was Washington’s purpose with his Farewell Address? What vision of grand strategy does it offer?

Federalist No. 8

1. Does *Federalist* 8 offer a vision of American grand strategy? If so, what is that vision?

2. What is the relationship of liberty and national security?

Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

Woodrow Wilson and the Grand Strategy of Liberal Internationalism**Reading:**

- Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, pp. 44–81
- Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, pp. 29–55
- Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points” January 8, 1918

Discussion Questions:***Reluctant Crusaders***

1. What were the alternatives for US grand strategy after World War I?
2. Why did the US choose disengagement? What were the international and domestic factors that shaped America’s strategic choice?
3. Why did Wilson fail to realize his vision of a League of Nations?
4. From a realist perspective, what would have been the optimal strategy for the US to take?

Diplomacy

1. How did Theodore Roosevelt understand America’s role in the world? How did Woodrow Wilson?

“Fourteen Points”

1. Why did the US enter the war, according to Wilson? What were its war aims?
2. What was Wilson’s vision of American grand strategy? How did it differ from the grand strategy of the Early Republic? Are there any continuities?

Wednesday, August 2, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

The Cold War and the Grand Strategy of Containment**Reading:**

- Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, pp. 82–113
- G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 163–91
- “NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,” April 14, 1950 in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds. *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945–1950*, pp. 385–93

Discussion Questions:***Reluctant Crusaders***

1. What were the alternatives for US grand strategy after World War II?

2. Why did the US adopt a strategy of containment? What were the “distinct characteristics” of this strategy?

After Victory

1. How did the international order change after WWII? What was America’s strategic situation?
2. Describe the two postwar settlements.
3. What were the competing visions of US grand strategy postwar? How did they differ? What did they all share?

NSC 68

1. What is the “fundamental design of the Kremlin,” and what is the “nature of the conflict” between the US and the USSR?
2. What are America’s objectives, and what means are available to it?
3. Describe the vision of US grand strategy articulated in NSC 68. How does it compare to earlier visions of US grand strategy?

Thursday, August 3, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

The End of the Cold War and the “Global War on Terrorism”

Reading:

- Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, pp. 114–46
- Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” September 21, 1993 [Excerpted in Alvin Z. Rubenstein, ed., *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader*, pp. 20–27]
- Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?*, pp. 144–89
- George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, September 2002, pp. i–iii

Discussion Questions:

Reluctant Crusaders & “From Containment to Enlargement”

1. What were the alternatives for US grand strategy after the Cold War?
2. What was the America’s strategic situation post-Cold War?
3. How did the Clinton administration conceive of US grand strategy?

What Good Is Grand Strategy? & NSS 2002

1. How did the 9/11 attacks reshape US grand strategy?
2. Describe the Bush administration’s grand strategy. What were its objectives, and how did it seek to achieve those ends?

Friday, August 4, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

The Rise of Revisionist Authoritarian Powers and the Future of American Grand Strategy

Reading:

- Azar Gat, *Victorious and Vulnerable: Why Democracy Won in the 20th Century and How It Is Still Imperiled*, pp. 1–13, 59–85
- Aaron L. Friedberg, “Hegemony with Chinese Characteristics,” *The National Interest* (July/August 2011), pp. 18–27
- Walter Russell Mead, “The Return of Geopolitics,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2014), pp. 69–79
- Robert Kagan, “Superpowers Don’t Get to Retire,” *The New Republic*, May 20, 2014 (<https://newrepublic.com/article/117859/superpowers-dont-get-retire>)
- Barry R. Posen, “A New U.S. Grand Strategy,” *Boston Review*, July 1, 2014

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did democracies win the great struggles of the twentieth century? What role did the US play in that victory?
2. What explains the rise of nondemocratic great powers like Russia and China? How are they different from earlier authoritarian regimes like Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan?
3. How have the ambitions of Russia and China reshaped the international order?
4. What are the alternatives for US grand strategy in the current moment?