

HERTOG 2020 POLITICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY

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The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the concept of grand strategy—the components of such strategies and the processes to develop them. The seminar will specifically examine American grand strategy. In looking at examples of US strategy—from the Founding to the present day—we will seek to understand why the leaders took the decisions they did, what the benefits and costs of these decisions were, what alternatives they may have had, and how they harnessed the tools at their disposal to achieve the objectives they set.

Books:

- Course Reader

Discussants: Discussants are assigned to specific questions below and should be ready to offer a reflective response to their assigned question during the seminar. Discussants do not need to prepare a formal written response, but they are encouraged to work from personal notes.

Resources

To learn more about the ideas and figures discussed in this course, we encourage you to explore a project supported by the Hertog Foundation: **The Great Thinkers** (<http://thegreatthinkers.org/>) and **Contemporary Thinkers** (<http://contemporarythinkers.org/>) websites. These sites are aimed at introducing important thinkers in Western thought, with a particular emphasis on politics and philosophy.

Monday, July 13, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET

The American Approach

Readings:

- B. H. Liddell Hart, "Fundamentals of Strategy and Grand Strategy," *Strategy*, pp. 319–44, 353–60
- Publius, *Federalist* No. 8
- Peter Maslowski, "To the Edge of Greatness: The United States, 1783–1865," Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 205–41

Discussion Questions:

1. What is grand strategy? Is it important to policymakers?
2. What are the foundations of a great power? Does it need a vision for itself? Or is material power sufficient?
3. What is that vision, if any, in *Federalist* No. 8?

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET

Theodore Roosevelt v. Woodrow Wilson

Readings:

- Colin Dueck, Ch. 3, *Reluctant Crusaders* (Princeton, 2006), pp. 44–81
- Colin Dueck, “Theodore Roosevelt and American Realism,” *Orbis*, Vol. 61, Issue 4 (2017), pp. 541–60
- Henry Kissinger, Ch. 9, *Diplomacy*, pp. 218–45

Discussion Questions:

1. What was Wilson’s grand strategy? What was the purpose of force for him?
2. What was Theodore Roosevelt’s vision?
3. If they were different, how did they stem out of the same “foundation”? Or are they fundamentally different and even opposed to each other?

Friday, July 17, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET

Cold War: Contain or Disengage?

Readings:

- Colin Dueck, Ch. 4, *Reluctant Crusaders* (Princeton, 2006), pp. 82–113
- X (George Kennan), “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25, No. 4 (1947), pp. 566–82
- NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (14 April 1950)

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the choices for the U.S. after World War II? Does the U.S. have the luxury of choice? Why?
2. What were the similarities and the differences between Mr. X and NSC-68?
3. What are the goals, the means, and the ways of U.S. grand strategy advocated in NSC-68?

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET

Post-Cold War

Readings:

- Draft Defense Planning Guidance for the Fiscal Years 1994–1999
- U.S. National Security Strategy 2002
- Bush Address to Congress, September 20, 2001 (“Bush Doctrine I”)
- Bush Graduation Speech at West Point, June 1, 2002 (“Bush Doctrine II”)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the threat assessment of the post-Cold War era?
2. What are the strategic choices? What are the costs for getting them wrong?
3. What are the goals, means, and ways of the post-Cold War grand strategy?

Thursday, July 23, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET**Obama v. Trump****Readings:**

- Obama National Security Strategy 2010
- Trump Speech in Warsaw, July 2017
- Trump National Security Strategy 2017

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the differences between the two grand strategies?
2. Can the U.S. change the behavior of other states (including rivals)? If so, how? What are the limits of such change?
3. Are there alternatives to these two visions?