Course Description

This course offers an introduction to various factors that influence how US foreign policy is made. The course will examine how institutions such as the Presidency and Congress determine foreign policy, the role of public opinion and the media, the effect of bureaucratic politics, and lobbying by special interest groups. At the end of the course, students should be able to explain trends in US foreign policy using these lenses and tools. Many of the theories and arguments introduced in the course will also be of use explaining the foreign policy of countries other than the US.

Assessment

Participation 15%

Student participation and discussion is a central aspect of the seminar. This means that it is necessary to do the readings. Students should come prepared with topics of discussion and questions. The assessment of participation will be based on the quality of input into class discussions. To prepare for discussion you should: identify the theory or argument of the readings; identify the method used by the authors in the readings to test their arguments, and evaluate the strength of these method for testing the authors’ argument; and you should think of possible extensions or alternatives to the arguments put forward in the readings.

Response Papers (800 words each) 20%

Students are required to submit two 800-word response papers each worth 10% of the student’s total mark. Students must submit one paper the during the first 3 weeks and one from the remaining two weeks. These response papers should critically evaluate the readings. This means identifying a weakness or limitation in the articles and offering suggestions on how to improve the research. The critical evaluation may focus on the empirical or theoretical aspects of the readings or both.

Presentation 15%

Each student will be required to provide a 10-15 minute presentation on one of the readings. These presentations are intended to stimulate discussion. To this end, the presentation should provide a brief overview of the reading, highlighting the main points. Students should emphasise what the strengths of the reading are and what they believe are the primary weaknesses. Potential questions for discussion should also be raised. Grading will be based on the quality of content and presentation of the argument. A sign up list for the presentations will be distributed in the first week of term.
Seminar Research Paper (3000 words)  50%

For the research paper you should select a substantive issue area of interest— for example, foreign aid, human rights promotion, nuclear proliferation, counter-terrorism—and provide an explanation of US foreign policy choices in this area. This paper should provide a theoretical explanation and provide relevant examples or cases. Grades will be based on the strength of the argument, the clarity of writing, and the supporting evidence provided.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious matter and must be avoided. Students should be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism. Please see http://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/general-regulations/plagiarism.php for further information regarding plagiarism and the university’s policy regarding it.

Course Outline

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class.

Week 1: General Issues

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Week 2: Presidents and Congress

Required Reading:


**Recommended Reading:**


Yarhi-Milo, K. (2014). *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations*. Princeton University Press

**Week 3: Bureaucracy**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 4: Public Opinion and the Media**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 5: Interest Groups**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


