

## **American Grand Strategy – POL 3085**

Spring 2021, January 11 – April 27  
University of Cincinnati, Department of Political Science  
Synchronous online course  
Monday / Wednesday / Friday, 12:20 – 1:15

Instructor: Dr. Andrew A. Szarejko (szarejaa@ucmail.uc.edu)  
Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 3:30 – 4:30, and by appointment

### **Course Description and Goals**

How does the United States use available tools to achieve its objectives in world politics? In this seminar-style class on American Grand Strategy, we will focus on this process by which U.S. policy-makers seek to ensure the country's long-term security and prosperity. We will examine different ways of thinking about "grand strategy," the actors that shape American grand strategy, the tools available to policy-makers, the history of American grand strategy, and contemporary debates about how best to align means and ends given the challenges of world politics. We will conclude the course by reflecting on the potential futures of American grand strategy. Through the readings, writing assignments, class discussions, and guest talks, this course will seek to help you think about how U.S. policy-makers navigate a world of uncertainty and resource constraints and how theories of International Relations can inform debates over U.S. foreign policy.

### **Requirements**

#### *Attendance & Participation*

Due to COVID-19, this course will be conducted online and synchronously. That is, we *will* have mandatory live meetings via Microsoft Teams. I will run this course as a seminar—I will provide brief lectures at the beginning of each week, and we will have weekly guest talks for most of the course, but this will primarily be a discussion-based class. Participation will thus constitute a large portion of your grade. Good participation in this course will entail making comments or asking questions that provide evidence of having done the readings and having paid attention to lectures—that is, it is not the quantity but the quality of your in-class participation that will determine your participation grade.

Attendance is a necessary but insufficient condition for a good participation grade in this class. In addition to making routine contributions to in-class discussions, I will designate at least one of you as a "first mover" for each week. After I start the week with a short lecture on the topic, I will ask the first mover to present their own 5- to 10-minute summary of the day's reading. Your summaries should focus on the questions authors are asking, the answers they provide, and how they substantiate their answer. That is, what methods do they use, what evidence do they provide, and how (if at all) do they engage with plausible counter-arguments? After the first mover provides the day's summary, I will ask a question about the reading to start our discussion. We will not have any first movers in the first or last week of class, and first movers do not have any responsibilities when we have a guest speaker. I will use the first week to solicit

your preferences as to when you would like to be a first mover, and I will aim to assign everyone their first or second choice if possible.

My lectures may make use of PowerPoint slides, and when they do, I will post the slides on Canvas. For your summaries as first mover, you are not obligated to use slides, but if you do prefer to use some, you are not required to send them to me. I will generally record our sessions, including guest talks (unless a guest speaker asks for the session not to be recorded), and I will post the recordings to Canvas.

Please notify me as soon as possible if any documented medical, family/personal, or religious exceptions are likely to interfere with your regular participation in the course. Emergencies may not allow you time to e-mail in advance; in such cases, just notify me as soon as possible via email. I hope that you all stay well this semester, and I will try to be flexible as exigencies arise.

Note that lectures and other class materials should not be disseminated to anyone outside the class.

### Readings

Each week includes two or three readings depending on how many class sessions we have that week, and they are arranged in order. (There is one week that includes four readings, and we will discuss the two shorter readings that Friday.) For a week with three readings for three class sessions, you should complete the first reading before our first class session of the week (and so on). If possible, however, I would recommend completing all of a week's assigned readings by the beginning of each week. I will make all materials freely available online through Canvas and/or through a link on the syllabus. Please note that I may change any of the readings or assignments listed below, but I will communicate any such changes in advance. If you have any trouble accessing any required or optional materials, please let me know.

Good participation and paper grades alike will require you to have a strong comprehension of the material covered in both the readings and the lectures. I have tried to keep the reading load manageable while also covering essential material. In some cases, I have assigned blog posts or similarly public-facing pieces instead of peer-reviewed journal articles to ensure we can cover an appropriate range of material without over-burdening you. I do assign many journal articles and book excerpts, however, and the methods some scholars use may be unfamiliar to you. I will discuss methods used in Political Science in the first week of the course, but you don't need to understand every methodological choice that appears in the readings—rather, you should focus on identifying the core argument and trying to understand why it does or does not seem convincing to you. If unfamiliarity with any method impedes your understanding of a piece, please feel free to raise the issue in class or in office hours.

In addition to the specific assigned reading for the class, you should be reading the international affairs section of a major national newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, on a daily basis. Although this is not a class focused on current events, many of our discussions will make reference to such events, and familiarity with ongoing developments will be useful in approaching the subject.

### Reading Response Papers

I will ask you to complete three reading response papers throughout the course. The course is divided into five sections, and you will need to complete one reading response each in the second, third, and fourth sections (i.e., “Conceptualizing American Grand Strategy,” “Grand Strategy in American History,” and “Contemporary Debates”). Within those three sections, you will need to pick two assigned readings (not necessarily from the same week, but they must not be from the week when you were a first mover). After choosing your two readings, you should (1) identify a favorite sentence in each reading—something especially important or interesting, (2) explain why you found these items so interesting, and (3) explain how your two chosen pieces complement or contrast with each other. Each paper should be between 500 and 750 words. You should upload a reading response paper no later than 5 PM on the date of the last class in that section (February 19, March 19, and April 16).

### Final Paper/Project

There will be also be a final paper or project—you may choose either of the following options:

- 1) Paper: In 1,500 to 2,000 words, identify a current issue in American Grand Strategy, explain how policy-makers are divided on that issue, make an argument as to how the United States should approach that issue, and conclude with a discussion of how future research could help guide future policy-makers facing this or similar issues. This paper should make reference to at least three course readings and at least three external peer-reviewed journal articles or university-press books.
- 2) Project: Address the same points required of the final paper, but do so in 1) a short film of five to ten minutes, 2) a podcast of eight to twelve minutes, or 3) some other medium of artistic expression (with my approval). Whichever medium you choose, you should also make reference to at least three course readings and at least three external peer-reviewed journal articles or university-press books, but depending on your medium of choice, this could include either a verbal reference to those sources or an annotated bibliography. If you plan to take this option, we will discuss how best to reference sources in your chosen medium.

Whether you choose to write a paper or prepare a project, you should get my approval for your topic by March 26, and the final paper/project will be due by 5:00 PM on April 27. We will discuss all of these assignments further in class, but if anything remains unclear, I encourage you to contact me via email or in office hours.

You should submit all of the written assignments on Canvas as Word or Pages files (.doc, .docx, or .pages, not as PDFs, please), and the documents should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with standard spacing, 1-inch margins, and page numbers in the upper right-hand corner. I ask that you use footnotes as opposed to in-text, author-date citations, and you should submit a bibliography with the final paper or project. I prefer the Chicago Manual of Style for citations (see [here](#)), but I will not deduct points for citations so long as you consistently provide all relevant bibliographical information. Please note that I will not include headers, titles, page numbers, footnotes, or bibliographies in the word count for your papers (but do not abuse the space in the footnotes, please). For the final project, you should be able to submit audio or video files on Canvas as well, but let me know if you have any technical issues with such submissions.

## Procedures

### Office Hours and E-mail Etiquette

I will hold virtual office hours on Teams twice a week, during which you are free to come discuss any relevant academic matters with me. I encourage you to come for substantive questions about readings, lectures, and assignments (e.g., the sort of questions that might be difficult to answer briefly via email), but I am also happy to discuss related academic matters such as post-graduate plans, internship ideas, and the like. I will provide further details on this in our first class session.

I also encourage you to send me questions by email. When doing so, please include POL 3085 in the subject line. Please address me as Dr. or Prof. Szarejko (and please address all our guest speakers in the same way unless they ask you to address them otherwise). If you send me an email and do not receive a reply within 24 hours, please follow up to remind me of your question. If it is a time-sensitive matter, you may follow up sooner as well, but keep in mind that I might not reply immediately to emails sent at odd hours.

### Green Teaching and Learning

I borrow from American University's Center for Teaching, Research, and Learning to encourage "green" teaching and learning [practices](#). For this online class, I would encourage you to read this syllabus and all other assigned readings on a laptop or tablet, and I would also encourage you to take notes on a laptop/tablet rather than on paper. That said, [research](#) suggests that hand-writing notes can be better for recall and comprehension, so the choice of digital or hand-written note-taking is up to you. If you opt for the latter, I would suggest you try to minimize paper usage by writing on recycled paper and maximizing the amount of writing per page. We will discuss optimal means of taking notes on readings on the first day of class.

### Late Assignments

All times in this syllabus are in Eastern Time, but for any of you in other time zones, I am willing to work with you to ensure that paper deadlines occur at a reasonable hour—just send me an email if you think the deadlines will be an issue. Given the state of affairs, I am going to be very lenient with late assignments this semester. You can consider the deadlines listed here to be suggestions designed to keep you on track and to prevent work from piling up. I will only deduct points from reading response papers and final papers/projects submitted after 5 PM on April 29. Any papers/projects submit after that will automatically lose 20 points. If you submit your paper less than 48 hours before the grade submission deadline (5 PM on May 3), I may not have time to grade your paper and may mark it as "Incomplete" until I can get to it.

### Grading

Grades will be based on the merit of your work and your demonstrated mastery of the material. There is no grading "curve" employed in this class. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

|                                    |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Participation (General)</b>     | <b>35%</b> |
| <b>Participation (First Mover)</b> | <b>15%</b> |
| <b>Reading Response #1</b>         | <b>5%</b>  |

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Reading Response #2</b> | <b>5%</b>  |
| <b>Reading Response #3</b> | <b>5%</b>  |
| <b>Final Paper/Project</b> | <b>35%</b> |

I will grade each of the above requirements on the following scale:

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
| 100 to 95 | A  |
| 94 to 91  | A- |
| 90 to 87  | B+ |
| 86 to 83  | B  |
| 82 to 79  | B- |
| 78 to 75  | C+ |
| 74 to 71  | C  |
| 70 to 67  | C- |
| 66 to 63  | D+ |
| 62 to 59  | D  |
| 58 to 55  | D- |
| Below 55  | F  |

An “A” grade means that you have demonstrated a genuinely superior level of understanding of the subject and have provided ample evidence of that insight. I will round up for grades at or above *N.5*. In practice, that means a 94.6 becomes an A, and a 94.4 remains an A-. I will discuss grading standards further in announcements via Canvas.

#### Assignment Feedback

I aim to provide grades and feedback within two weeks of the submission of each piece, and I will provide all feedback on the Canvas course page. If at any point you would like to know if your participation has been satisfactory—or if you would like additional feedback on papers beyond what I provide on Canvas—please email me or come to office hours to ask for more detail.

#### Grade Disputes

You are entitled to a satisfactory explanation for why you received the grade you did. If you are not satisfied with the explanation I provide via Canvas, then you should meet with me in office hours. If, after further discussion, you remain unsatisfied with your grade, you may request that I regrade the assignment, and you should provide a brief (1- or 2-paragraph) explanation as to why you believe your initial grade should be raised. When you request that I regrade an assignment, I may ultimately issue a grade that is better, the same, or worse than the original. You may also appeal your final grade on the grounds of a mathematical error, error in grading procedures, or inequity in the application of policies stated in this syllabus.

## Part I. Introduction

**Monday, January 11 / Wednesday, January 13 / Friday, January 15**

### *Thinking about Grand Strategy*

- Amelia Hoover Green, “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps” (2013). Available [online](#).
- Fiona Adamson, “Beyond ‘Methodological Nationalism’ in Global Security Studies,” *Political Violence at a Glance* (March 29, 2016). Available [online](#).
- Paul C. Avey, Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Robert J. Reardon, “Disentangling Grand Strategy: International Relations Theory and U.S. Grand Strategy,” *Texas National Security Review* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2018): 28-51. Available [online](#).
- **Recommended:** William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, “Elementary Principles of Composition,” in *The Elements of Style* (2000 [1918], Macmillan Publishing Co.) Available [online](#).

## Part II. Conceptualizing American Grand Strategy

**Wednesday, January 20 / Friday, January 22**

### *What is Grand Strategy?*

- Nina Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy’” *Security Studies* Vol. 27, No. 1 (2018): 27–57.
- Richard K. Betts, “The Grandiosity of Grand Strategy,” *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 42, No. 4 (2019): 7-22.
- **Recommended:** Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski, and Simon Reich, “Is Grand Strategy a Research Program? A Review Essay,” *Security Studies* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2019): 1–29.

**\*Monday, January 18 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Monday, January 25 / Wednesday, January 27\* / Friday, January 29**

### *Ordering and Counter-Ordering*

- Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, “The Nature and Sources of Liberal Internationalism,” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 25, No. 2 (1999): 179-196.
- Stacie E. Goddard, “Embedded Revisionism: Networks, Institutions, and Challenges to World Order,” *International Organization* Vol. 72, No. 4 (2018): 763–97.
- Daniel Drezner, “Counter-Hegemonic Strategies in the Global Economy,” *Security Studies* Vol. 28, No. 3 (2019): 503-531.

\*Guest talk: Dr. Stacie E. Goddard, Mildred Lane Kemper Professor of Political Science and Faculty Director of the Madeleine Korbelt Albright Institute for Global Affairs, Wellesley University.

**Monday, February 1 / Wednesday, February 3 / Friday, February 5\******Tools of American Grand Strategy***

- Barry Posen, “Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of US Hegemony,” *International Security* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2003): 5-46.
- Dong Jung Kim, “Choosing the Right Sidekick: Economic Complements to US Military Grand Strategies,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 39, No. 5–6 (2016): 899–921.
- Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, “Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric,” *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2007): 35–66.

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, Professor of International Studies, American University

**Monday, February 8 / Wednesday, February 10 / Friday, February 12\******Domestic Politics and the Making of American Grand Strategy***

- Bastiaan van Apeldoorn and Naná de Graaff, “Corporate Elite Networks and US Post-Cold War Grand Strategy from Clinton to Obama,” *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 20, No. 1 (2014): 29-55.
- Patrick Porter, “Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment,” *International Security* Vol. 42, No. 4 (2018): 9-46.
- Robert Ralston, *Make Us Great Again: The Causes and Consequences of Declinism in Great Powers* (2020): excerpts as assigned.
- **Recommended:** David M. Edelstein and Ronald R. Krebs, “Delusions of Grand Strategy: The Problem with Washington’s Planning Obsession,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 94, No. 6 (2015): 109-116.

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Robert Ralston, Postdoctoral Fellow, MIT Security Studies Program and Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School

**Monday, February 15 / Wednesday, February 17 / Friday, February 19\******Antecedents and Analogies***

- Felix Kuhn, “Much More Than Tribute: The Foreign Policy Instruments of the Ming Empire,” *Journal of Chinese History* Vol. 5 (2021): 59-82.
- Julian Go, “Global Fields and Imperial Forms: Field Theory and the British and American Empires,” *Sociological Theory* Vol. 26, No. 3 (2008): 201-229.
- Christopher J. Fettweis, “Restraining Rome: Lessons in Grand Strategy from Emperor Hadrian,” *Survival* Vol. 60, No. 4 (2018): 123-150.
- **Recommended:** James Palmer, “Oh God, Not the Peloponnesian War Again,” *Foreign Policy* (July 28, 2020). Available [online](#).

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Christopher J. Fettweis, Associate Professor of Political Science, Tulane University

## Part III. Grand Strategy in American History

**Monday, February 22 / Wednesday, February 24\* / Friday, February 26**

### *Isolation or Expansion?*

- Charles Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (Oxford University Press, 2020): 29-60.
- “Richard Maass on American Expansion, Race, and Empire,” *Interviews for Teaching World Politics* (Nov. 27, 2020): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ktexx\\_y81UI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ktexx_y81UI).
- Michael J. Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783* (Columbia University Press, 2017): 17-55.
- **Recommended:** Andrew A. Szarejko, “The Frontiers of American Grand Strategy: Territorial Expansion in Principle and Practice, 1783-1890” (working paper).

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Richard W. Maass, Associate Professor of Political Science, Old Dominion University

**Monday, March 1 / Wednesday, March 3\* / Friday, March 5**

### *A Great Power?*

- Ross A. Kennedy, “Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and an American Conception of National Security,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 25, No. 1 (2001): 1-31.
- Miles Evers and Eric Grynawski, “Entrepreneurs and Imperialism: Commodity and the US Pacific Empire, 1800-1900” (working paper): 1-40.
- Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (2020): 47-79.
- **Recommended:** Bear F. Braumoeller, “The Myth of American Isolationism,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 6, No. 4 (2010): 349-371.

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Miles Evers, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Connecticut

**Monday, March 8 / Wednesday, March 10 / Friday, March 12\***

### *A Bipolar World*

- John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, revised and expanded edition (Oxford University Press, 2005 [1982]): 3-36.
- Mark Atwood Lawrence, “Explaining the Early Decisions: The United States and the French War, 1945–1954,” in Mark Philip Bradley and Marilyn B. Young (eds.), *Making Sense of the Vietnam Wars: Local, National, and Transnational Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2008): 23–4
- Michael D. Brenes, *For Might and Right: Cold War Defense Spending and the Remaking of American Democracy* (2020): Ch. 1.
- **Recommended:** Tony Smith, “Democratizing Japan and Germany,” in *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1994): 146-176.

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Michael D. Brenes, Lecturer in History and Associate Director of the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy, Yale University

**Monday, March 15 / Wednesday, March 17 / Friday, March 19\***

***The Unipolar Moment?***

- Mary Elise Sarotte, “Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to ‘Bribe the Soviets Out’ and Move NATO In,” *International Security* Vol. 35, No. 1 (2010) 110–37.
- Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Rethinking Sovereignty: American Strategy in the Age of Terrorim,” *Survival* Vol. 44, No. 2 (2002): 119-139.
- Ahsan I. Butt, “Why Did the United States Invade Iraq in 2003?” *Security Studies* Vol. 28, No. 2 (2019): 250-285.
- **Recommended:** Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security* Vol. 30, No. 1 (2005): 109–39.

\*Guest talk: Dr. Ahsan I. Butt, Associate Professor of Policy and Government, George Mason University

**Part IV. Contemporary Debates**

**Monday, March 22 / Friday, March 26**

***Did Obama and Trump Have Grand Strategies?***

- Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts, “Did Obama Have a Grand Strategy?,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 40, No. 1-2 (2017): 295-324.
- Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, “Does Donald Trump Have a Grand Strategy?,” *International Affairs* Vol. 93, No. 5 (2017): 1,013-1,037.

**\*Wednesday, March 24 – University reading day**

**Monday, March 29\* / Wednesday, March 31 / Friday April 2**

***China and American Grand Strategy***

- Rohan Mukherjee, “Rethinking US Alliances and Partners as Insurance Contracts,” *AsiaGlobal Online Journal* ([February 19, 2020](#)).
- Fiona S. Cunningham and M. Taylor Fravel, “Assuring Assured Retaliation: China's Nuclear Posture and U.S.-China Strategic Stability,” *International Security* Vol. 40, No. 2 (2015): 7-50.
- Paul van Hoof, “All-In or All-Out: Why Insularity Pushes American Grand Strategy to Extremes,” *Security Studies* Vol. 29, No. 4 (2020): 701-729.
- **Recommended:** Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2018).
- **Recommended:** Aaron L. Friedberg, “An Answer to Aggression: How to Push Back Against Beijing,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 99, No. 5 (September/October 2020).

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Rohan Mukherjee, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Yale-NUS College

**Monday, April 5\* / Wednesday, April 7 / Friday, April 9**

***Retrenchment vs. Deep Engagement***

- Paul K. MacDonald and Joseph M. Parent, “Graceful Decline? The Surprising Success of Great Power Retrenchment,” *International Security* Vol. 35, No. 4 (2011): 7-44.
- Carla Norrlof and William C. Wohlforth, “Is US Grand Strategy Self-defeating? Deep Engagement, Military Spending and Sovereign Debt,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 36, No. 3 (2016): 227-247.
- Mira Rapp-Hooper and Rebecca Friedman Lissner, “The Open World: What America Can Achieve After Trump,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 98, No. 3 (May/June 2019): 18-26.
- Stephen M. Walt, “The End of Hubris and the New Age of American Restraint,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 98, No. 3 (May/June 2019): 26-35.
- **Recommended:** Paul C. Avey, Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Robert J. Reardon, “Do US Troop Withdrawals Cause Instability? Evidence from Two Exogenous Shocks on the Korean Peninsula,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2018): 72-91.

\*Guest talk: Dr. Paul K. MacDonald, Associate Professor of Political Science, Wellesley College.

**Monday, April 12 / Wednesday, April 14 / Friday, April 16\***

***New Challenges?***

- Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, “Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion,” *International Security* Vol. 44, No. 1 (2019): 42-79.
- Bruce W. Jentleson, “Refocusing US Grand Strategy on Pandemic and Environmental Mass Destruction,” *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 43, No. 3 (2020): 7-29.
- Nina A. Kollars, “Cyber Conflict as an Intelligence Competition in an Era of Open Innovation,” *Texas National Security Review* (September 17, 2020). Available [online](#).
- **Recommended:** Vladimir Rauta, “Towards a Typology of Non-state Actors in ‘Hybrid Warfare’: Proxy, Auxiliary, Surrogate, and Affiliated Forces,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (September 2019).

\*Guest Talk: Dr. Nina Kollars, Associate Professor of Strategic and Operational Research, U.S. Naval War College

**Part V - Conclusion**

**Monday, April 19 / Wednesday, April 21**

***Renewal or Decline?***

- Richard Haass, “Repairing the World: The Imperative—and Limits—of a Post-Trump Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (November 9, 2020).
- Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, “How Hegemony Ends: The Unraveling of American Power,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 99, No. 4 (July/August 2020).

**\*Thursday, April 22 – Tuesday, April 27 – Exam period**