

MC 492 – Senior Seminar
U.S. National Security: Strategy, Policy, and Process
James Madison College
Michigan State University
Fall 2007

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Hours: Tuesday 3-4, Thursday 10-11, and by appointment (and open door)

Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:40-2:30 pm

Class location: 319L South Case Hall

Course Description

What the United States should do in Iraq is arguably the most pressing issue in contemporary U.S. national security policy. It will be very interesting to see what decisions the Bush administration takes next on Iraq and in the broader strategic framework. Clearly, there are no easy answers even with the United States' preponderance of military power, the guidance of knowledgeable and experienced military and political figures, and the benefits of historical analysis. To help you better understand the world you are encountering and will soon be contributing to, this seminar will be an historic examination of the development and application of U.S. national security policy. It will consider the continuities and changes that have occurred based on the evolution of the United States' capabilities, interests, and position in a world that has changed dramatically over the last 200+ years. We will start by trying to understand how to study and assess national security policy by examining the relationship between strategic doctrines, foreign policy values and goals, institutional capabilities, and policy formulation and implementation. Throughout, we will examine how America's national security institutional infrastructure has been adapted over time to meet new conceptions of threat. We will be testing and developing these concepts through a historical examination of United States national security policy. We will start in the 19th century prior to the United States' emergence as a great power to understand the importance of state capacity and the influence of the international system when evaluating how a state understands its needs for security. We will turn to a consideration of the development and evolution of the United States' Cold War national security strategy. We will look at the development of the strategy of containment, and try to understand how each administration practiced it, but often in a different form. We will then examine the changes that have occurred since the end of the Cold War and after 9/11.

Readings will draw from a variety of sources: books and articles by political scientists, historians, journalists, and policy analysts in addition to presidential addresses and planning documents. Students will be expected to prepare a significant research paper in stages, write several analyses of the course readings, present their own research and comment on others, and lead one class discussion in addition to being a regular classroom participant. You will have wide discretion in selecting a research topic, but it needs to illuminate the interactions among

strategies, institutions, policy design, and policy implementation. We will spend parts of class sessions during the semester discussing research, writing, and presentation strategies. Sharing your experiences throughout the process is expected.

There is some flexibility built into the schedule, so there is the possibility of spending a bit more time on certain topics and rearranging some topics as student interests and current events may warrant. I'll announce any changes in class, giving you enough time to adjust your schedules. I will send out email to the class periodically – be sure to check your accounts that are linked to ANGEL regularly. Please note that this syllabus and the writing assignments are also posted on ANGEL should you misplace them.

Course Model

This is a senior capstone seminar that is designed to demonstrate all of the skills you have developed throughout your Madison career. It should especially build from your experiences in MC 220 and in MC 326 (or another foreign policy class), as well as your research methods classes. You will write a significant research paper, write some shorter essays, and make a number of presentations. You need to be committed to this class in order to succeed. With your effort, I will do everything I can to make that possible. As you will receive 5 credits for this course, you will need to put in a considerable amount of effort inside and outside of class. You will be required to meet with me at least once to discuss your paper, but I expect that number to be a bare minimum. Extra group sessions can also be scheduled to meet student needs. You are also strongly encouraged to become more familiar with the vast amount of resources available at the library. I can help you there, but you should also seek the assistance of MSU librarians.

Feel free to come see me at any point if you wish to talk more about the course or other concerns. I am generally around and available even outside of office hours – feel free to stop in if my door is open or set up an appointment. I will answer email questions, but I will also ask to talk with you in person for subjects that cannot be treated appropriately electronically.

Required Readings (please obtain the appropriate editions)

1. Graham Allison. 2005. *Nuclear Terrorism*.
2. Paul J. Bolt, Damon V. Coletta, and Collins G. Shackelford, Jr. (eds.). 2005. *American Defense Policy*, 8th edition.
3. John Lewis Gaddis. 2005. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, revised and updated 2nd edition.
4. Frederick W. Kagan.
5. Thomas Ricks. 2006. *Fiasco*.
6. Fareed Zakaria. 1998. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*.
7. A number of articles and documents as marked on the syllabus. All are available on line (hyperlinked through the ANGEL version of the syllabus) and on reserve in the JMC library. Citations are provided below.
8. Regular reading of a periodical with good international coverage. *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and/or the *Economist* are preferred. *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*,

Survival, and *International Security* are also recommended journals with more sustained coverage of many of the topics we are studying. They are also good resources for your papers and presentations. Knowledge of current events is expected.

9. Following the “new media”. I recommend occasionally perusing Thomas P.M. Barnett’s blog: <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/weblog/>. I will share others throughout the semester. Please feel free to do the same.
10. Any other readings as assigned – these would typically be short newspaper articles or other primary sources on a topic pertinent to the course.

Evaluation (every assignment must be successfully completed to pass the course)

1. **Active Engagement:** This is a SEMINAR. What that means is that you need to take some ownership and initiative over the course discussions. Your grade in this area will be a composite of four primary components and comprise **20% of your course grade**:
 - a. **Participation in Seminar Sessions:** My lecturing will be much less than in other courses, and many times I hope just to participate on an equal footing with most of you. I expect that while we might all disagree on certain issues throughout the semester that all discussions will be civil and everyone should respect each other. Excessive absenteeism (more than two) will hurt your grade. There should be no absences during the paper presentation sessions near the end of the semester.
 - b. **Reading memos:** You will need to write a single-spaced one-page reaction memo on some aspect of the readings once per week. The day of the week you write on will be decided at the first class meeting. These are meant to be tightly focused reflections on some aspect of the reading for that day, and they should provide you with a way to involve yourself in the class discussions. You cannot cover all of the readings here, nor summarize any of them completely. Thus, you are to pull out and comment on one or two key points or questions that struck you as interesting, enlightening, confusing, or mistaken. I reserve the right periodically to propose the questions to be addressed. During paper presentation sessions, you will write a memo on one of the papers per each class session, and your memos will be provided to the paper author. The memos will be graded on a check, check plus, check minus system. They need to be posted to ANGEL by 11pm the night before the class session for which they are due. These will be worth half of your engagement grade.
 - c. **Discussion Leader:** At one point throughout the semester, you will be responsible (either individually or jointly) with introducing the session and beginning the discussion. You will have 10-20 minutes (20-30 if a pair) to pull out the main points of the readings (do NOT just summarize them) and make some sense out of what is most important and why. You should also bring up what you think was wrong or missing. Introducing insights from another source (academic or journalistic) not on the syllabus is **expected** as it would add to the seminar experience. See me for suggestions and assistance in this process.
 - d. **Paper Discussants:** Everyone is expected to read everyone’s paper drafts for the session that they will be presented. Thus, everyone is expected to participate in the discussion of that paper. However, I will begin the discussions session by

directly calling on one or more of those who wrote critiques to begin the discussion for that day. The expectation (for the oral and written comments) is that you will comment and critically evaluate the paper of one classmate. A critical evaluation is not just a negative one. A good critic clearly highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the paper (in terms of argument, evidence, writing) to assist the author during the revision process. These more pointed comments should lead to a broader class discussion of the topic.

2. **Analytical Reading Review:** A critical analysis and evaluation of the Ricks book set in the context of other class readings. Further details will follow, but this paper will help you integrate much of the material from the semester and act as a capstone exercise/final exam. You can likely work on it throughout the semester. The paper will be 10 pages long and due Friday, November 2 at 4 pm. **25 % of course grade**

3. **Seminar Paper** (further details will be provided)
 - a. **Topic statement and initial sources:** This is not graded, but is formally required. It will contain a preliminary suggestion as to your topic and a working bibliography of 10 sources. You will also be required to meet with me soon after, if not prior to, this assignment to discuss the direction of the paper. It will be due Monday, September 19 at 4pm.
 - b. **Formal Proposal with literature review and annotated bibliography:** This is a 7-10 page first cut at the research paper where you propose the research topic/question, your working hypothesis, your data and methodology, and submit an expanded bibliography. It will be due Friday, October 12 at 4pm. **10% of course grade**
 - c. **First Draft:** This is a polished draft of your paper that will form the basis for your oral presentation. It is also what your classmates will see and write their responses on. It will be posted on ANGEL for easy dissemination. It will need to be 15-20 pages. It will be due on Friday, November 9 at 4 pm. **15% of course grade**
 - d. **Final Paper:** This is the final version and should show significant revision based on comments from your peers and from me, as well as your own continued hard work. It should be 25-35 pages long with a comparable number of research sources. It is due on the day scheduled for the final exam, Monday, December 10 at 3 pm. **20% of course grade**

4. **Paper Presentation:** You will make a formal presentation of your paper (highlighting your arguments and evidence) to the class in the last part of the semester. This is a significant presentation of about 15 minutes that you will need to prepare for diligently. **10% of course grade**

Academic Honesty: Of course, no form of academic misconduct (on papers and exams) will be tolerated. All violations will face the harshest penalties allowed under MSU policy (which, at the minimum, is a 0.0 for the course). In part, the JMC's Student Handbook reads:

The faculty recognize that it is the responsibility of the instructor to take appropriate action if an act of academic dishonesty is discovered. It is further understood that a student may appeal a judgment of academic dishonesty to the Student-Faculty Judiciary. The Faculty Assembled recommend that in cases involving proven academic dishonesty, the student should receive, as a minimum, a 0.0 in the course and that a record of the circumstances, sanctions, and any appeal, be placed in the student's confidential file. (In accordance with University policy, the record may be made available to faculty if such information is deemed necessary in the discharging of their respective responsibilities). The individual faculty member or the Dean may recommend further action, including dismissal from the University, to the Student-Faculty Judiciary. If a second case of academic dishonesty should occur, the recommendation is that the faculty, through the Office of Academic Affairs, should seek the student's dismissal from the College and the University.

That said, virtually all violations can be avoided if you speak to me first. Not waiting until the last minute to finish assignments helps to avoid most problems.

Schedule

Please read the material before the class meeting for which it is assigned. If (when) discussions run over the listed dates, we will catch up quickly. The different topics appear neatly defined, but we will soon see how they are all linked together. The success of this seminar is highly contingent on you doing the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully for the dates assigned. I have tried to select the most appropriate set of readings, and seminars are intended to carefully dissect the arguments made and evidence used in each reading. I will announce any changes in readings or assignment due dates in class and with enough time for you to make the appropriate adjustments to your schedules. Everything will be clearly communicated to you.

Part I: Where does it come from? The philosophic, historical, and theoretical roots of American grand strategy leading up to the Cold War

Tuesday, August 27: Introduction to the course: what is a senior seminar? What are we doing here? How will we work this semester?

Read: [Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman. 2007. "Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield." *Comparative Political Studies*. 40\(2\): 170-195.](#)

Review your notes/readings from MC 295 or a comparable research design course

Start reading Ricks' *Fiasco*

Recommended: Stephen Van Evera. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*.

Thursday, August 29: How does the United States understand its place in the world?

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapters 1 and 2 (except for Gaddis)
[David Hastings Dunn. 2005. "Isolationism Revisited: Seven Persistent Myths in the Contemporary American Foreign Policy Debate." *Review of International Studies*. 31\(2\): 237-261.](#)

Tuesday, September 4: How do we understand foreign and security policy theoretically? What role do institutions play? What is strategy?

Read: Zakaria, chapters 1 and 2
 Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 5
 Terry Deibel. "Introduction: Defining Strategy." In his *Foreign Affairs Strategy*, p. 1-32 (on reserve in the JMC library)

Thursday, September 6: What was it supposed to be? Understanding the Framers' intent and the role of the Constitution in understanding national security policy.

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapters 4 and 10
[George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796](#)
[Monroe Doctrine of 1823](#)
[War Powers Resolution of 1973](#)

Tuesday, September 11: America's growing pains. Continental Expansion as national security

Read: Zakaria, chapters 3 and 4
[Peter Trubowitz](#). 1992. "Sectionalism and American Foreign Policy: The Political Geography of Consensus and Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly*. 36(2): 173-190. {note that empirical matter is off our timeline; but see the theoretical implications}

Thursday, September 13: The American state is catching up. State capacity and actions abroad.

Read: Zakaria, chapters 5 and 6
[Platt Amendment of 1901](#)
[Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine \(1904\)](#)
[Wilson's 14 Points of 1918](#)

Part II: United States National Security during the Cold War

Tuesday, September 18: The Origins of Containment

Read: Gaddis, preface and chapters 1-4
[Truman's speech to Congress on March 12, 1947 \(Truman Doctrine\)](#)
[NSC-68](#) (skim)

Thursday, September 20: Implementing Containment in the 1950s and 1960s

Read: Gaddis, chapters 5-7
[Eisenhower's "Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East." January 5, 1957 \(Eisenhower Doctrine\)](#)

Tuesday, September 25: Vietnam and its Lessons

Read: Gaddis, chapter 8
 Kagan, chapter 1

Thursday, September 27: Détente

Read: Gaddis, chapters 9-10
[Nixon Doctrine](#) (Speech of November 3, 1969)

Tuesday, October 2: The Resurgence and Death of the Cold War

Read: Gaddis, chapters 11-12
 Kagan, chapter 2
[State of the Union Address of January 23, 1980 \(Carter Doctrine\)](#)
[State of the Union Address of February 6, 1985 \(Reagan Doctrine\)](#)

Part III: Finding a Way After the Cold War: Linking Strategies, Policies, and Institutions

Thursday, October 4: What to do now? Defining Threats and Grand Strategy After the Cold War (And Before 9/11)

Read: [Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross](#). 1996/1997. "Competing Visions for American Grand Strategy." *International Security*. 21(3): 5-53.
[Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky](#). 1997. "Come Home America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation." *International Security*. 21(4): 5-48.

Tuesday, October 9: The strategic and political challenges of the 1990s

Read: Kagan, chapter 3 and 5
 Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 8 (Posen article only)
[A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement \(Feb. 1995\)](#)
 (skim)

Thursday, October 11: Recent developments in conventional forces and strategic doctrine

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 11 and chapter 2 (Gaddis reading)
 Kagan, chapter 6
[The National Security Strategy of the United States of America \(September 2002\)](#) (skim)

Tuesday, October 16: Military resource allocation and development in an era of change

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapters 6 and 9
 Kagan, chapters 4

Thursday, October 18: Transforming military power and operations

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 7
 Kagan, chapter 7 and 8

Tuesday, October 23: Nuclear Weapons and Terrorism: Inevitable?

Read: Allison, intro and chapters 1-5

Thursday, October 25: Nuclear Weapons and Terrorism: Preventable?

Read: Allison, chapters 6-8

Tuesday, October 30: Missile Defense and Nuclear Doctrine

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 12
[Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press](#). 2006. "The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy." *International Security*. 30(4): 7-44.

Thursday, November 1: Securing the Homeland and Institutional Revision

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 13
[Amy B. Zegart](#). 2005. "September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of U.S. Intelligence Agencies." *International Security*. 29(4): 78-111.

Tuesday, November 6: Understanding the Iraq War

Read: Ricks, *Fiasco* (all)
Kagan, chapter 9

Thursday, November 8: Iraq – What to do now?

Read: [Iraq Study Group Report \(Baker-Hamilton Commission\)](#)
[George S. McGovern and William R. Polk](#). 2006. “The Way Out of War:
A Blueprint for Leaving Iraq Now.” Available on Harpers.org.

Tuesday, November 13: What’s the Pentagon’s New Map?

Read: Bolt, Coletta, and Shackelford, chapter 3
Kagan, chapter 10

Thursday, November 15: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Tuesday, November 20: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Thursday, November 22 – Thanksgiving: No class

Tuesday, November 27: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Thursday, November 29: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Tuesday, December 4: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Thursday, December 6: Paper presentations

Read: Seminar Papers

Final Papers Due: Monday, December 10 by 3 pm