MC 492 – Senior Seminar
U.S. National Security: Strategy, Policy, and Process
James Madison College
Michigan State University
Spring 2011

Instructor: Matthew Zierler  Class meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 12:40-2:30pm
Email: zierler@msu.edu  Class location: 319L South Case Hall
Phone: 432-8300
Office: 316 South Case Hall
Hours: Monday 3-4, Thursday 1-2, by appointment, and open door

Course Description
What will be the impact of WikiLeaks on U.S. national security policy? How do the recent death of Richard Holbrooke, the resignation of National Security Advisor Jim Jones, and the expected departure of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates influence the advice President Obama receives and how he engages with others around the world? Does the loss of the House of Representatives to the Republicans truly matter for national security policy? Will New START be ratified? How does the likely end of DADT matter? Is national security really the top priority of this administration? The United States still faces many national security challenges in dealing with the next steps in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the desires of China, Iran, and others to increase their power in the international system and potentially threaten the United States.

Clearly, there are no easy answers as to what to do next 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 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. We will briefly examine the 19th century prior to the United States’ emergence as a great power before turning 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 emphasizing the windy road to our current defense posture. This will include an in-depth analysis of the development and implementation of the “surge” strategy in Iraq.

Readings are drawn from a variety of sources: books and articles by political scientists, historians, and journalists 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, take an exam, 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.

I’ll announce any changes to the schedule in class, giving you enough time to make adjustments. 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 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. You should also meet with me prior to your research presentation. 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 outside of office hours – 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 (all on reserve in the Main Library)
1. Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier. 2008. America Between the Wars – From 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror. PublicAffairs. (paperback or hardcover is fine)
6. A number of articles and documents as marked on the syllabus. All are available on-line (hyperlinked through the ANGEL version of the syllabus).
7. Regular reading of a periodical with good international coverage. The New York Times is typically the most complete (and easy for you to obtain in Case Hall for free), while the Washington Post and the Economist also provide strong coverage. Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, 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.
8. Following the “new media”. I recommend occasionally perusing Thomas P.M. Barnett’s blog: http://globlogization.wikistrat.com/weblog/. Another good resource is the set of blogs linked to Foreign Policy’s website: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/. There you will find blogs by Dan Drezner (ipe and global governance), Marc Lynch (Middle East), Tom Ricks (military policy), David Rothkopf (national security), Stephen Walt (foreign policy), and Peter Feaver and others under the name Shadow Government. You might also get a lot from www.stratfor.com. Stratfor is a private firm providing intelligence reports. I will share other sites throughout the semester. Please feel free to do the same.

9. 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. 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: This is an important aspect of the course. 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 will hurt your grade. There should be no absences during the paper presentation sessions near the end of the semester.
   b. Discussion Leader: At one point throughout the semester, you will be responsible for beginning the discussion and being its most central participant. You will have 10 minutes to pull out the main points of the readings (do NOT 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 and present questions for discussion. Introducing insights from another source (academic or journalistic) not on the syllabus would add to the seminar experience. See me for suggestions and assistance in this process.
   c. Reading Critiques: You will be required to submit three short (3-4 page) critiques of the reading for a given class. The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the day the readings are assigned. You will sign-up ahead of time for the days in which you will write critiques. The papers will be graded on a check (+/-) scale. The papers are designed to ensure comprehension and improve analysis of assigned readings and promote deeper class discussion; they are not summaries of the readings.
   d. Paper Discussants and Peer Review: Everyone is expected to read everyone’s paper drafts for the session that they will be presented and participate in the discussion of that paper. During paper presentation sessions, you will also write a critique of one of the papers per each class session, and your critique will be provided to the paper’s author. The expectation (for the oral and written comments) is that you will comment on and critically evaluate the paper. 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. **Exam:** There will be an in-class exam on Wednesday, April 6 based on all of the course readings and discussions. **25% of your course grade**

3. **Seminar Paper** (further details will be provided)
   a. **Topic statement and initial sources:** Due Friday, January 28 at 4pm.
   b. **Formal Proposal with literature review and expanded bibliography:** Due Friday, February 18 at 4pm. **10% of course grade**
   c. **Draft:** Due Friday, April 1 at 4pm. **15% of course grade**
   d. **Final Paper:** Due on the day scheduled for the final exam, Monday, May 2 at 2:45pm. **20% of course grade**

4. **Paper Presentation:** You will make a formal 20-minute presentation of your paper (with both arguments and evidence) to the class in the last part of the semester and answer questions from the class. **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. 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. 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: The roots and core concepts of American national security policy

Monday, January 10: Introduction to the course: what is a senior seminar? What are we doing here? How will we work this semester? What’s occurring now?
Read: Review your notes/readings from MC 295 or a comparable research design course

Wednesday, January 12: How do we understand foreign and security policy theoretically?
Read: Sapolsky, chapters 1 and 11
      Gelpi, Feaver, Reifler, chapter 1

Wednesday, January 19: How does (has) the U.S. understand (understood) its place in the world?
Read: Sapolsky, chapters 2 and 9
      George Washington’s Farewell Address of 1796
      Monroe Doctrine of 1823
      Platt Amendment of 1901
      Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1905)
      Wilson’s 14 Points of 1918

Monday, January 24: Public Opinion and War
Read: Gelpi, Feaver, Reifler, chapters 2 and 3
Part II: United States National Security during the Cold War

Wednesday, January 26: 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)

Monday, January 31: 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)

Wednesday, February 2: Vietnam
Read:  Gaddis, chapter 8

Monday, February 7: Détente
Read:  Gaddis, chapters 9-10
       Nixon Doctrine (Speech of November 3, 1969)

Wednesday, February 9: The Resurgence and Death of the Cold War
Read:  Gaddis, chapters 11-12
       State of the Union Address of January 23, 1980 (Carter Doctrine)
       State of the Union Address of February 6, 1985 (Reagan Doctrine)


Monday, February 14: What to do now? Defining Threats and Grand Strategy after the Cold War (And Before 9/11)
Read:  Chollet and Goldgeier, chapters 1 and 2

Wednesday, February 16: Humanitarian Crises as National Security Threats
Read:  Chollet and Goldgeier, chapters 3, 4, and 8

Monday, February 21: Clinton in action: How did he adapt to the world around him?
Read:  Chollet and Goldgeier, chapters 5-7

Wednesday, February 23: Changing World /Changing Administrations: From Clinton to Bush
Read:  Chollet and Goldgeier, chapters 9-11
       The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (September 2002)
Monday, February 28: Understanding the Modern U.S. Military
Read: Sapolsky, chapters 3-4 and 7-8


Wednesday, March 2: Developing and Procuring Weapons in an Era of Change
Read: Sapolsky, chapters 5-6


Spring Break – No class on March 7 or March 9

Monday, March 14: Intelligence and Homeland Security
Read: Sapolsky, chapter 10


Wednesday, March 16: Cyber-Security


Monday, March 21: Public Opinion and the War in Iraq
Read: Gelpi, Feaver, Reifler, chapters 5 and 6

Wednesday, March 23: Iraq: Understanding counterinsurgency warfare
Read: Ricks, chapters 1-4

Monday, March 28: Iraq: From short war to long war
Read: Ricks, chapters 5-8

Wednesday, March 30: Iraq: Defining Progress, Success, and the Future
Read: Ricks, chapters 9-12
Monday, April 4: From Bush’s World to Obama’s
Read: Gelpi, Feaver, Reifler, chapter 7
National Security Strategy of May 2010
Others to be determined

Wednesday, April 6: Exam

Monday, April 11: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Wednesday, April 13: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Monday, April 18: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Wednesday, April 20: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Monday, April 25: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Wednesday, April 27: Paper presentations
Read: Seminar papers (but write on one)

Final Papers Due: Monday, May 2 by 2:45pm