

INTL 4250: American Foreign Policy

University of Georgia – School of International and Public Affairs

Fall 2025 | MWF 3:00–3:50 PM | Baldwin Hall 307

Instructor: Dr. William Acosta

Email: williamacosta@uga.edu

Office Hours: MWF 10:30–12:30 PM, Candler Hall 216

Course Description

This course examines U.S. foreign policy from 1919 to the present, tracing the nation's evolution from a reluctant power in the interwar years to a global hegemon in the post-1945 world, and exploring how this order has been challenged in the post-Cold War and post-2008 eras. Students will engage in two Reacting to the Past simulations (Versailles, 1919 and Rwanda, 1994) to analyze U.S. diplomatic strategy, institutional processes, and debates about America's global role.

Required Texts

Fraser Cameron. *U.S. Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?* (Routledge, 2005). Available via UGA Library eBook.

Reacting to the Past: Peacemaking 1919: The Paris Peace Conference at Versailles. Available for free via eLC.

Reacting to the Past: The Needs of Others: Rwanda, 1994. Requires purchase (Amazon eBook is the cheapest option).

Frontline documentary: Money, Power and Wall Street (Parts 2 & 3 required; Parts 1 & 4 optional).

All additional readings will be provided via eLC.

I highly recommend buying a subscription to *Foreign Affairs Magazine*. I will be a useful source of information in foreign affairs issues throughout the semester and a treasure trove of sources going back to the 1940s.

Grading (100 points total)

Paper 1: Versailles Reflection – 20 pts (Due Sept 22)

Paper 2: Rwanda Reflection – 20 pts (Due Nov 24)

Paper 3: Policy Memo on Bretton Woods or Alliances – 20 pts (Due Oct 20)

Paper 4: Final Essay – “Unmaking the Order?” – 20 pts (Due Dec 2)

Participation (attendance, preparation, simulation engagement) – 20 pts

Course Guidelines

Students are expected to read assigned materials before class and participate actively in discussions and simulations.

Check eLC regularly for course updates, readings, and announcements.

Assignments are due on the dates and times given. Late work will be penalized 10% per day late; after five days, the maximum grade is 50%.

If you need an extension, email me in advance. In-person requests will not be remembered.

Be respectful of others during discussion. Controversial topics will arise, and passion is welcome, but civility is required. Only one person may speak at a time.

Academic honesty is expected in all work. Students must follow UGA's "A Culture of Honesty" policy (www.uga.edu/honesty). Violations will be referred to the Office of Academic Honesty.

Avoid the use of generative AI for assignments, except for reference formatting.

UGA is committed to an inclusive learning environment. Students needing accommodations should register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.drc.uga.edu>) and speak with me early in the semester.

UGA provides well-being and mental health resources, including Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) and Student Care and Outreach.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced in class or on eLC may be necessary.

Course Schedule

Part I: The Post-Hegemonic Era (1919–1944)

- Week 1

1. Wed Aug 13: Course introduction; defining the "Post-Hegemonic Order." No assigned readings
2. Fri Aug 15: U.S. foreign policy from 1919–1944; interwar isolationism and limited engagement. No assigned readings

- Week 2

3. Mon Aug 18: Foreign policy institutions: The President and NSC. Reading: Cameron Ch. 3
4. Wed Aug 20: The State Department and Pentagon in foreign policy. Reading: Cameron Ch. 3
5. Fri Aug 22: The role of Congress in U.S. foreign policy. Reading: Cameron Ch. 4

- Week 3

6. Mon Aug 25: Versailles simulation introduction and role assignments. Reading: Versailles gamebook intro (eLC)
7. Wed Aug 27: Wilsonian idealism and interwar diplomacy. Reading: Versailles documents (eLC)

8. Fri Aug 29: Versailles prep session: Treaty of Versailles and U.S. debate

- Week 4

9. Mon Sept 1: No class (Labor Day)

10. Wed Sept 3: Versailles prep session: League of Nations and U.S. role

11. Fri Sept 5: Versailles Session 0

- Week 5

12. Mon Sept 8: Versailles Simulation – Session 1

13. Wed Sept 10: Versailles Simulation – Session 2

14. Fri Sept 12: Versailles Simulation – Session 3

- Week 6

15. Mon Sept 15: Versailles Simulation – Session 4

16. Wed Sept 17: Versailles Simulation – Session 5

17. Fri Sept 19: Versailles debrief and discussion. Paper 1 due Sept 22

Part II: Remaking the World

- Week 7

18. Mon Sept 22: WWII planning and U.S. vision for postwar order. Reading: Cameron Ch. 7

19. Wed Sept 24: Bretton Woods: Designing a new financial system

20. Fri Sept 26: IMF and World Bank foundations

- Week 8

21. Mon Sept 29: Tariffs and Trade wars: **Readings on eLC**

22. Wed Oct 1: U.S. trade leadership and globalization

23. Fri Oct 3: Policy discussion: Bretton Woods legacy

- Week 9

24. Mon Oct 6: Introduction to Alliances: **Reading on eLC**

25. Wed Oct 8: Alliances and Deterrence

26. Fri Oct 10: Alliances and Deterrence

- Week 10

27. Mon Oct 13: Cold War hegemonic stability: economics and security: No Assigned Readings

28. Wed Oct 15:

29. Fri Oct 17: Paper Workshop. Paper 3 due Oct 20

Part III: Enforcing the Order (Rwanda Simulation)

- Week 11

30. Mon Oct 20: Humanitarian intervention and U.S. hegemony. Reading: Rwanda intro

- 31. Wed Oct 22: Rwanda prep: UN and NGO roles
- 32. Fri Oct 24: Rwanda prep: U.S. Africa policy and faction meetings

- Week 12

- 33. Mon Oct 27: Rwanda prep: Genocide Convention and strategy
- 34. Wed Oct 29: Rwanda prep: Simulation strategies finalized
- 35. Fri Oct 31: No class (Fall Break)

- Week 13

- 36. Mon Nov 3: Rwanda Simulation – Session 1
- 37. Wed Nov 5: Rwanda Simulation – Session 2
- 38. Fri Nov 7: Rwanda Simulation – Session 3

- Week 14

- 39. Mon Nov 10: Rwanda Simulation – Session 4
- 40. Wed Nov 12: Rwanda Simulation – Session 5
- 41. Fri Nov 14: Rwanda debrief and discussion. Paper 2 due Nov 24

Part IV: Unmaking the World Order?

- Week 15

- 42. Mon Nov 17: The 2008 financial crisis: origins. Frontline Part 2
- 43. Wed Nov 19: Crisis response and U.S. leadership. Frontline Part 3
- 44. Fri Nov 21: Aftermath and global order debates

- Week 16

- 45. Mon Nov 24: Post-hegemonic debates?
- 46. Wed Nov 26: No class (Thanksgiving)
- 47. Fri Nov 28: No class (Thanksgiving)

- Week 17

- 48. Mon Dec 1: Course wrap-up and evaluations. Paper 4 due Dec 2