International Affairs 4250: American Foreign Policy

School of Public and International Affairs, University of Georgia

Class Meeting: LeConte Hall 101, 255-3:50

Instructor: Dr. William Acosta

Office: Candler Hall 214

Office Hours 11:00-11:50, 2:00-2:50, MWF

Course Description

What is America's responsibility to the world? Since 1945, the United States has shaped and sustained the global order through its power, its ideals, and its policies. This course examines how the US remade the world in the aftermath of World War II and how that legacy continues to define international politics today. We will explore the foundations of American hegemony, the creation and evolution of global institutions, and the ways in which the US manages its vast network of alliances. Students will analyze the international political economy that underpins US influence, the strategic choices behind alliance expansion, and the ongoing debates over America's duty to protect and defend global human rights.

We will do this by performing five simulations throughout the semester. First, we will examine how the US remade the world at Yalta in 1945 in the face of a rising Soviet Union and a British Empire determined to remain a great power. Then we will discuss the political economy of US hegemony—can the US afford to help its allies and enemies, and what do we get in return? To understand this, we will simulate the decision to send foreign aid to North Korea during a famine in the 1990s. Next, we will consider the expansion of NATO and debate whether Ukraine

should join. Finally, we will simulate the US actions or inaction during the 1994 Rwanda genocide to determine how far the responsibility to protect truly goes.

Ultimately, the question I will ask you in this course is: What responsibility does the US have to the world?

Required Reading Material

- Moser, John, and Nicolas W. Proctor. (2024). *Yalta, 1945: Security, Self-Determination, and Empire.* New York: Reacting Consortium.
- McFall, Kelly. (2024). *The Needs of Others: Human Rights, International Organizations, and Intervention in Rwanda, 1994.* New York: Reacting Consortium.
- All other required material will be provided via eLearning Commons (eLC).

Be Prepared

For the course to function smoothly, students should complete all assigned readings before the class meeting for which it is assigned (see schedule below).

Course Requirements

1. Participation (30%): Your 30% is divided into three 10% subcategories
    a. In-class contribution (10%): Students will be evaluated on in person attendance, contribution to class discussion, and participation during in-class activities. Each of these is required. I will take attendance every day. Attendance is critical in this course because missing will adversely affect not only you but also your classmates. Some assignments cannot be made up.

b. Simulation participation (10%): The simulations have role specific assignments that students must complete. Students should submit these assignments via eLC.

c. Reading quizzes (10%): To ensure that you are keeping up with the readings, I will give 6 unannounced reading quizzes. These will be in class and handwritten and will be turned in during class. These cannot be made up. If you anticipate being absent on any day, please inform me ahead of time.

d. **Friday classes are not optional**

2. Written Assignments (70%): Over the course of the semester, you must complete four written assignments.

   a. Assignment 1: Since 1945, the United States has positioned itself as the principal architect and guarantor of what is often called the Liberal World Order, a system based on open markets, collective security, and the rule of law among nations. This order grew out of the same wartime diplomacy your Yalta simulation explored, where the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union negotiated over spheres of influence, self-determination, and the creation of postwar institutions like the United Nations. In this essay, analyze whether the United States has a responsibility to set and enforce a rules-based international order, or whether such a role contradicts democratic principles and exceeds the nation's strategic and moral limits. Consider both historical and contemporary evidence. **Due February 16th**

   b. Assignment 2: Does the United States still have the ability to shape the rules of the international economic order? **Due March 16th**

   c. Assignment 3: Should Ukraine be allowed to join NATO? **Due March 30th**

d. Assignment 4: Are there limits to the responsibility to protect? **Due April 26th**

Course Guidelines

1. Students are expected to read the assigned course materials before all class meetings and participate actively within in-class discussions and activities.
2. Check eLC regularly for updates on the course.
3. The class will follow a primarily seminar (i.e., discussion) format. I will lecture when necessary.
4. Assignments are due on the dates and times given. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is late. After 5 days, the work will be maxed out at 50%.
5. Attendance is required. You are permitted one unexcused absence and one excused absence before it begins to affect your grade. However, much of the work we do in class cannot be made up.
6. If you need extensions, please **inform me via email**. If you tell me in person I will forget.
7. Be respectful to one another. I will not tolerate students being disrespectful or making others uncomfortable. We will discuss controversial topics in this class. Passion is fine but respect is necessary. Furthermore, only one person speaks at a time. Do not interrupt or speak over each other.
8. This is a digital free space unless I say otherwise. No laptops, tablets, or phones are allowed. Thus, bring hard copies of your talking point for your personal use. Do not work on other coursework in this class. It is disrespectful to both me and your classmates.

9. The University of Georgia prohibits students from recording class sessions or classmates. If you have formal recording accommodation from Accessibility and Testing you can record the class.
10. As a University of Georgia student, you are expected to adhere to the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must comply with the standards outlined in "A Culture of Honesty," which can be found at: UGA Academic Honesty Policy. Ignorance of the academic honesty policy is not an acceptable excuse for violations. If you have questions related to course assignments or the academic honesty policy, please direct them to the instructor. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be referred to Judicial Affairs, as mandated by university policy.
11. Avoid using generative AI. While AI has its uses, particularly in creating reference pages, it creates sloppy work.
12. It is the policy and practice of the University of Georgia to create an inclusive learning environment. Students requiring accommodations should discuss such matters with the me at the outset of the course. Students requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center on campus (706-542-8719, http://www.drc.uga.edu).
13. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.
    - Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
    - Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
    - University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

14. Any exceptions to or modifications to these rules or the syllabus are given at my discretion.
15. I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as needed.

Schedule

Week 1

- Monday, January 12th: Welcome and course introduction
- Wednesday, January 14th: The Liberal World Order
    - The Myth of the Liberal World Order
    - Will the Liberal World Order Survive?
- Friday, January 16th
    - Mini-simulation: Multilateralism or Unilateralism?

Week 2:

- Monday, January 19th: MLK Day
- Wednesday, January 21: Grand Strategy
    - Paine, S. C. M. 2025. "By Land or by Sea: Continental Power, Maritime Power, and the Fight for a New World Order." *Foreign Affairs* 104(5): 160–171.
    - Avey, Paul C., Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Robert J. Reardon. 2020. "Disentangling Grand Strategy: International Relations Theory and U.S. Grand Strategy." *Texas National Security Review* 3(2): 28–69.
- Friday, January, 23: Economic Statecraft: Foreign Assistance
    - A Brief History of US Foreign Aid— https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/brief-history-us-foreign-aid

Week 3: Origins of the American World Order

- Monday, January 26th: Yalta, 1945 Set up Session 1
- Wednesday, January 28th: Yalta, 1945, Set up Session 2—Role Distribution
- Friday, January 30th: Yalta, 1945 Game Session 1

Week 4:

- Monday, February 2nd, Yalta, 1945 Game Session 2
- Wednesday, February 4th, Yalta, 1945 Game Session 3
- Friday, February 6th: Yalta, 1945 Game Session 4

Week 5

- Monday, February 9th: Game Session 5
- Wednesday, February 11th: Conclusion and Debrief
- Friday, February 13th: US Foreign Policy Throughout the Cold War

Week 6: Does the US have still the ability to shape the rules of the international economic order

- Monday, February 16th: Who are the World Bank and IMF— https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-are-world-bank-and-international-monetary-fund
- Wednesday, February 18: What is trade policy— https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-trade-policy
- Friday, February 20th: Mini-simulation Trade Policy

Week 7:

- Monday, February 23: Money, Power, and Wall Street Parts 1 & 2
- Wednesday, February 25th: Money, Power, and Wall Street Part 3
- Friday, February 26th: Money, Power, and Wall Street Part 4

Week 8

- Monday, March 2nd: What is Foreign Aid— https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-us-foreign-aid

- Wednesday, March 4th: North Korean Hunger Games Part 1
- Friday, March 6th: North Korean Hunger Games Part 2

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Should Ukraine be allowed to join NATO?

- Monday, March 16th: A Theory of Alliance Treaty Negotiations
- Wednesday, March 18th: NATO Enlargement 1994
    - Sayle (2010) "Promises are Never Enough"
- Friday, March 20th: NATO Enlargement 1994

Week 11

- Monday, March 23rd: The August War, Ten Years On: A Retrospective on the Russo-Georgian War— https://warontherocks.com/2018/08/the-august-war-ten-years-on-a-retrospective-on-the-russo-georgian-war/
- Wednesday, March 25th: "Armed Neutrality for Ukraine is NATO's Least Poor Option— https://warontherocks.com/2025/02/armed-neutrality-for-ukraine-is-natos-least-poor-option/
- Friday, March 27th: Mini Simulation: Should Ukraine Join NATO?

Week 12: Responsibility to Protect: Human Rights and US Foreign Policy

- Monday, March 30th: Prep Session 1— UN Charter and Geneva Convention
- Wednesday, April 1st: Prep Session 2: History of the Rwandan Genocide
- Friday, April 3rd: History/Philosophy of Humanitarian Intervention

Week 13:

- Monday, April 6th: Strategy Session/ US Papers Due
- Wednesday, April 8th: Round 1" UNSC/Press Conference

- Friday, April 10th: Round 2

Week 14:

- Monday, April 13th: Round 3
- Wednesday, April 15: Round 4
- Friday, April 17: Round 5

Week 15:

- Monday, April 20th: Debrief & What Really Happened
- Wednesday, April 22nd: What is the America's responsibility to the world?
- Friday, April 24th: What Does the Future Look Like?

Week 16

- Monday, April 27th: Wrap Up
- Tuesday, April 28th: Reading Day