This course is every year centered on the following themes: We are interested in examining the intellectual foundations of US foreign policy from the presidency of Woodrow Wilson to the end of the Cold War. Broadly speaking, three lines of thought about international policy have competed for dominance during this period: isolationism, collective universalism, and unilateral universalism. In the 1930s, after the discouragements associated with the World War, the majority of Americans accepted the notion that the United States should concentrate its attention on correcting social-economic problems at home and avoid over-involvement with Europe's quarrels and rivalries. Isolationism assumed its most obvious shape in America's refusal to join or cooperate closely with the League of Nations. After Pearl Harbor, the new popular wisdom about international relations held that only in concert with the other great powers--first through the so-called Grand Alliance and then the United Nations--could the United States assure its security. But with the onset of the Cold War, growing disillusionment with the UN, and a general recognition that the United States was not just one of several states but the preeminent one in the West, a presumption developed that the United States must act boldly around the globe--this was the gist of the Truman Doctrine and NSC 68--to protect its wide-ranging interests and to foster a semblance of international stability.

Within these broad lines more specific concepts and ideas have played a role in shaping foreign policy. We shall examine them from the standpoint of their intellectual validity and political influence, and we will be especially concerned to see how they have meshed with other determinants of US policy--such as economic factors, bureaucratic and domestic politics, and the actions of
adversaries and allies.

This Spring 2012, particular attention will be focused on World War II matters and the early Cold War.

Books:

The following books can be purchased at the Boston University bookstore. These same books are also available at the university library.

1. Michael Sherry--In the Shadow of War
2. Michael Bess--Choices Under Fire
3. Seyom Brown--The Faces of Power
4. John Lewis Gaddis--Strategies of Containment
5. John Milton Cooper--Woodrow Wilson
6. Melvyn Leffler--Preponderance of Power
7. Wilson Miscamble--Most Controversial Decision
8. Frederik Logevall and Andrew Preston--Nixon in the World
9. George Herring--America's Longest War

Course Requirements:

Each student will have to write one research/analytical essay (approx. 25 pages) and deliver a class presentation. Essay=3/4 grade. Papers are due April 30--no exceptions. Class participation=1/4 grade.

Discussion Guide:

During the first half of the semester, we shall discuss common readings (per the book list or other recommended texts) and relate them to our concern with evaluating the evolution of foreign policy. The second half of the semester will be devoted to student presentation (and critiques) based on research essays in progress.

1. Introduction
2. Wilson's Legacy
3. New Deal Foreign Policy/World War II
4. Cold War to Eisenhower
5. New Frontier and Vietnam
6. Nixon and Kissinger
7. Human Rights
8. New World Order
9. tba--student presentations