American Grand Strategy  
IR 461/661.  

Fall 2019

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Office Hours: M, 230-430; W, 1-3; by appointment

Course Description.  
What is the United States’ role in the world? How should the U.S. deploy the immense military, economic, and diplomatic resources at its disposal to create security for itself in a complex world? How have U.S. leaders done so in the past, and what do their past successes (and failures) tell us about the strengths (and drawbacks) of current approaches?

The answers to, puzzles surrounding, and debates over these fundamental questions of international relations fall under the broad topic of “grand strategy.” Grand strategy – a state’s overall “theory” of how it will create security for itself using the resources at its disposal – is central to ongoing questions surrounding U.S. foreign policy, yet remains little studied. To rectify this situation, we will use this class to debate the course and conduct of U.S. grand strategy since 1914; identify different historical and theoretical causes of U.S. foreign engagement; discuss the merits and drawbacks of different strategic approaches; apply these insights to ongoing debate of U.S. strategy in world affairs; and develop analytic prisms through which to engage future strategic discussions. The overarching question driving our engagement is simple: what can theory and past experience tell us about the advantages and disadvantages of different grand strategies, and how do we use this knowledge to improve U.S. strategy going forward? Using a combination of discussion; interactive lecturing; case studies, and individual writing projects, students will assess past strategic approaches and potential future pathways - that is, they will step into the shoes of U.S. leaders grappling with these fundamental problems! Ultimately, we will synthesize and deploy international relations theory and prior historical experience to engage grand strategic debates today.

Hub Learning Outcomes  
By the time the course is finished, students will:

- Discover how to read critically to engage, dissect, and evaluate different primary and secondary texts discussing the course and conduct of U.S. grand strategy, and apply this reading to engage grand strategic debates (Writing Intensive – critical reading);\(^1\)
- Develop written reports evaluating approaches to U.S. grand strategy. Mobilizing evidence from theory and history, students will formulate recommendations, highlight strengths and merits, and propose solutions to alternative strategic options such as: Wilsonian collective security; isolationism; offshore balancing; and hegemony (Writing Intensive – written work);
- Produce a range of written products, including policy and historical memos, assessments of scholarly arguments/claims, and peer reviews. (Writing Intensive)
- Identify both primary and secondary sources detailing the course of and debates over American grand strategy since World War One, covering topics such as collective security, isolationism, containment, and liberal primacy (Research & Literacy);

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\(^1\) A partial list of archival sources for student use is detailed in the Research Appendix to this syllabus.
Select and synthesize materials via the qualitative research process to assess grand strategic debates on the basis of history and international relations theory, and propose approaches of their own. In particular, students will identify causal claims in different grand strategies (e.g., isolationism; primacy; liberal hegemony), develop hypotheses based on these claims, and assess the evidentiary base for these claims using primary and secondary research. Students will thus be able to assess and debate the strengths of alternate strategic arguments (Research & Literacy).

Grapple with and evaluate contemporary policy debates over the future of U.S grand strategy and, specifically, whether and to what extent the U.S. should play an active role abroad (Social Inquiry II) using historical research and international relations theory.

To do so, students will highlight different strands in current grand strategic discussions (e.g. neo-isolationism; deep engagement) and delineate their key arguments.

Mobilize primary and secondary sources to highlight the merits and drawbacks of alternate approaches – connecting insights from international relations theory, historical experience, and current political conditions. Students will thus be able to articulate a recommended course of the United States’ role in the world while acknowledging potential limitations to any given approach. (Social Inquiry II).

**Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning**

This class will operate as a combination of active lecture and seminar-style discussion. Most weeks, the instructor will briefly provide background, context, and expansion of class materials. Most of the time, however, students will be engaged in an active dialogue using Socratic discussion and a range of thematic and application question to facilitate student discussion of core concepts and examples. The ultimate objective is to have students embrace a range of historical examples and international relations theories, to apply these insights to inform grand strategy discussions, and to prepare students for the research-policy analysis process. In particular, lectures and discussions will focus on the “so what?” question – why international relations theory and history matter for policy debates – that will aid students’ ability to apply course content to social scientific inquiry and undertake research that expands upon assigned materials.

In the course of reading, you will note that many of the weeks are designed around a series of core theoretical, historical, and/or policy debates. The readings were selected to this effect, highlighting that grand strategy is regularly contested. Class discussions will reflect these debates and participant reaction thereto. Students should thus read with the idea of identifying different these debates and cleavages. To do so, students should ask themselves what the sources (e.g., different sources of threat or solutions to threats) of these debates entail, as well as consider which arguments they find most compelling and why. Read actively – don’t take the readings as providing an “answer” per se, but as providing entry into theoretical and policy discussions that are contested and – often – ongoing! Doing so will ensure a fluid and engaged classroom experience.

**Assignments and Grading (Undergraduate)**

There are three primary assignments in this class that, when combined with class participation and presentations, will inform your course grade.

Assignments 1-2: Peer Review/Argument Evaluation & Historical Analysis (35 percent of course grade: 15 percent peer review, 20 percent final memo; see also Appendix 1 for details)

- Pick a moment in which U.S. grand strategy was up for debate (e.g., at the end of World War One or Two; the early Cold War) in the 1914-2001 period. Now, pretend you are an advisor to the

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2 For graduate requirements, see p. 5
President serving at that time tasked with analyzing the grand strategic debate. Using at least 10 primary documents (e.g., from the *Foreign Relations of the U.S.* series) and secondary sources from history and/or political science relevant to this time period, describe & assess two of the grand strategies being debated using the analytic framework, theory, & history, developed in this course.

You must do so in several parts. First, summarize each strategy’s core claims: identify what U.S. interests entail, what threats to these interests exist, how the U.S. should address these threats/secure these interests, and what means are needed to do so. Next, analyze the merits and drawbacks of each approach, using historical and theoretical arguments to evaluate each strategy’s causal claims and the potential consequences of U.S. action. Finally, recommend and justify a specific strategy to the President. The total report (worth 25 percent of the class grade) is due via email to the instructor (iris@bu.edu) by Nov 19 and should be 5-6 double-spaced pages. Additional details on this assignment are in Appendix 1.

- To guide engagement, please submit a 1 paragraph UNGRADED proposal identifying the strategies that you are engaging and listing 5 primary or secondary sources to be utilized. The instructor will review this proposal and provide feedback. Please use this opportunity to flag any questions you have with the assignment so that the instructor can help resolve outstanding ambiguities. The proposal is due Oct 10. Note that you may need to read ahead or conduct outside research (consult instructor) for the proposal.

- In addition, students are required to submit a draft or extensive outline of their paper to the instructor by Oct 28. Students will then be paired to review one another’s drafts/outlines and produce a 3-page memo offering feedback to their peers. The peer review memo should focus on offering feedback that crystallizes description of different strategies; strengthens the paper’s core arguments by considering whether and what additional evidence/research is needed to generate a compelling assessment; and suggests ways to strengthen the writing. Students should then incorporate this feedback in their final papers. This memo is due to both the partner and instructor by Nov 7 and worth 15 percent of the total course grade.

- The combined peer review and final report will enable students to read critically, identify and deploy relevant research materials, synthesize interdisciplinary work (i.e., theory and history) in support of a policy argument, familiarize students with the research and peer review process, and develop writing skills.

- After papers are returned, the instructor will lead a class discussion of the results of the writing assignment and schedule 15-minute individual meetings with students to discuss feedback, incorporating this input in future projects, and any outstanding questions or concerns.

- See Appendix 1 for additional details on this assignment

**Assignment 3: Policy Memo** (35 percent of course grade)

- Congratulations - you have been selected to produce a grand strategy for the United States today!

The proposed strategy should address the following four questions: (1) How should American national interests be defined? (2) What are the most important threats to American national interests? (3) What grand strategy should the United States pursue in response and – using theory, reference to current strategic conditions, and historical examples – is this an effective approach? (4) Why are potential alternative approaches problematic given U.S. interests, threats?
The finished document should be 5-6 pages in length, draw on course material and external research, flow logically from interests to threats to grand strategy, and reference historical experience, political science theory, and current geopolitical conditions when explaining the strategy/evaluating alternative approaches. The final written assignment is due on Dec. 17, and should be emailed to the instructor (jris@bu.edu). Additional details are provided in Appendix 2.

- To ensure the work is on track, students are responsible for submitting a 2 paragraph UNGRADED proposal by Nov 28 (email to jris@bu.edu) that (1) discusses their preliminary thinking surrounding their proposed grand strategy, and (2) identifies areas where additional research/efforts are necessary. The instructor will review these proposals and meet with students individually to go over the proposal. This final assignment emphasizes locating and deploying scholarly research in support of policy analysis, crafting well-integrated arguments, and recognizing the complex set of factors that can influence policy research.

- See Appendix 2 for additional details on the assignment.

**Class participation (20 percent of course grade)**

- This class operates as an interactive seminar and discussion. It cannot succeed if students have not engaged course materials. Accordingly, students are expected to attend each class session having read, internalize, and interrogated assigned materials. While there is no one way to meet class participation, students are generally expected to (1) consume class readings, (2) come prepared to critique the arguments, and (3) think through how to deploy assigned materials to understand policy debates. I am hopeful that we can have a fruitful dialogue!

Of course, not all students are comfortable speaking in every seminar. Do not worry – quality of contribution is more than quantity of contribution. I am looking for thoughtful and insightful comments that advance class discussion as a whole, show efforts to bring the different works read into discussion with one another, and apply the past to study the present. I am not looking for repetition of main themes, but also synthesis, critique, and elaboration. Do the readings for each class and come prepared to challenge me, your classmates, and yourselves on the basis of the material.

- This class requires a lot of reading. Most weeks have between 150 and 250 pages of material.

To facilitate discussion and participation, students are required to email the instructor TWO (2) questions based on assigned materials each week at least 24 hours in advance of the class meeting. These questions can be either analytic – querying the logic or a theme in the readings – or applied – probing the relevance of an argument to policy discussions – in nature. These questions will help the instructor shape class discussions, as well as providing a mechanism for students to showcase engagement with the course outside the classroom setting.

Students will also schedule mid-semester meetings with the instructor to identify strengths and areas for improvement in their class participation.

**Class Presentation (10 percent of course grade)**

- Aside from active participation, students will be responsible for leading class debates. Each week, a specified student or group of students will be responsible for providing a brief (5-10 minute) presentation that synthesizes the readings into a coherent narrative. They are also responsible for producing a 2 page handout to others in the class that summarizes the main themes, arguments, historical developments, or areas of outstanding debate.
• The presentation is NOT intended for students to review the readings in sequence. Instead, students are expected to (1) provide a brief (i.e., 2-3 minutes) overview of the major themes under discussion, (2) the conceptual debates that emerge from the history/theory readings, and (3) elaborate reasons why we, as policy students and analysts, should care.

• Presentations will be graded based on the quality of the substance as well as the clarity of the presentation.

• Sign-ups for these exercises will be at the start of the semester. PLAN AHEAD!

**Assignments and Grading (Graduate students)**
Graduate student requirements and assignment weights are the same as for undergraduates, with the following exceptions:

- The final paper for Assignment ½ must be 7-8 double spaced pages
- The paper submitted for Assignment 3 must be 7-8 double spaced pages.
- Alongside Assignment 3, students must submit a 2 page reflection piece that explicitly discusses how they applied IR theory – either those covered in the course, other classes, or on the basis of external research – to the development of their proposed grand strategy.

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%-100%</td>
<td>Extraordinary, excellent work and mastery of concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>80%-89%</td>
<td>Good work and solid command of concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%-79%</td>
<td>Adequate work and sufficient understanding of concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%-69%</td>
<td>Poor work, little understanding of concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%-59%</td>
<td>Lack of work, no understanding of concepts</td>
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**Books and Other Course Materials**
The following books are available for purchase. They can be obtained at the BU Barnes and Noble, or via an array of online book sellers. Copies have also been placed on reserve at Mungar Library.


**Courseware**
All class materials are posted on Blackboard.

**Office Hours and Meetings**
As noted above, I will have office hours on Mondays (2:30-4:30), Wednesdays (1-3), and by appointment. Students are encouraged to reach out with questions, comments, or concerns with the course or class materials. As noted, students will also be required to schedule several meetings with the
instructor at points during the semester to review written work and discuss class participating. Sign up sheets will be made available to facilitate this process.

**Email Policy**

Students should also feel free to email the instructor with questions or comments. Although I try to be diligent with email, travel, research, and other teaching obligations may preclude a speedy response. Accordingly, please allow **24-48 hours** for a response to any particular email. Students should plan accordingly: if one seeks advice on a paper, it is therefore not practical to email the night before!

**Academic Integrity**

All members of the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, and the BU Academic Conduct Code will be strictly enforced. We must and shall hold one another to this standard. The Conduct Code can be found at: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/).

In addition, graduate students are expected to uphold the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code. It is the responsibility of every graduate student to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code’s contents and to abide by its provisions. The GRS Conduct Code can be found at: [http://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/phd-mfa-students/academic-policies-and-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/phd-mfa-students/academic-policies-and-conduct-code/).

**Statement on Equal Access**

Boston University is committed to providing equal access to our coursework and programs to all students, including those with disabilities. In order to be sure that accommodations can be made in time for all exams and assignments, please plan to turn in your accommodations letter as soon as possible after the first class to the instructor. After you turn in your letter, please meet with me to discuss the plan for accommodations so that we can be sure that they are adequate and you are supported in your learning. If you have further questions or need additional support, please contact the Office of Disability Services (access@bu.edu).

**Attendance & Absences**

*Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory, save in cases of a documented medical, family/personal, or religious exception (for additional details on BU’s Absence Policy and Policy on Religious Observance, see: [https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/attendance/](https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/attendance/) and [https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/absence-for-religious-reasons/](https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/absence-for-religious-reasons/)).*

If an absence is excused, the instructor will either provide the student an opportunity to make up work that contributes to the final grade by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor; however, the make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence.

Unexcused absences will result in significant deductions to your class participation grade. *Late arrivals* to class are also unacceptable and will be similarly penalized.

*Please notify your instructor via email well in advance (i.e., at least 24 hours) of any absences.*

**Assignment Completion and Late Work**

You are responsible for submitting your work on time (again, all assignments can be email to the instructor at iris@bu.edu). Whether this means crawling out of bed with the flu or having a friend deliver a paper, the onus is upon you. In the real world, as in this class, there are serious consequences for failing to meet your job requirements. Unless there is a documented medical or exigent personal circumstance, late assignments will be severely penalized: for each 24 hour period (starting immediately when the
assignment is due) an assignment is late, I will reduce your grade by 15 points. This means that if your paper was due at 5 PM and you deliver an assignment at 6 PM, the best you can do on the paper is an 85 (a mid-tier B). If you deliver a paper at 6 PM the NEXT day, that’s 30 points off (at best a C). Obviously it is better to receive a heavily penalized grade than to not hand in an assignment at all and receive a 0, but I STRONGLY recommend you plan to hand in your assignments on time to avoid the resulting penalties. I want you all to do well in this course!

**Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes/Reminders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Sept 3)</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview: Researching Grand Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 (Sept 10)</td>
<td>Reading and Assessing Grand Strategy: Interests, Threats, and Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 (Sept 17)</td>
<td>Theories of Grand Strategy I: Power and Its Variants</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (Sept 24)</td>
<td>Theories of Grand Strategy II: Values and Ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 (Oct 1)</td>
<td>Theories of Grand Strategy III: Cold, Hard Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (Oct 22)</td>
<td>Isolationism or Bust: The Interwar Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 (Nov 5)</td>
<td>The Cold War: Containment and Its Critics</td>
<td>Assignment 1 Peer Review due Nov 7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 (Nov 12)</td>
<td>America as #1: Grand Strategy after the Cold War</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 (Dec 3)</td>
<td>Calm Down, America: The Logic of Restraint</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (Dec 10)</td>
<td>Staying the Course? The Case for Deep Engagement</td>
<td>Assignment 2 due Dec 17.</td>
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**Reading List** *(Caveat emptor: the instructor reserves the right to add or remove readings)*

**Week 1 (September 3, 2019) - Introduction and Overview: Researching Grand Strategy**


**Week 2 (September 10, 2019) - Reading and Assessing Grand Strategy: Interests, Threats, and Tools**


**Week 3 (September 17, 2019) – Theories of Grand Strategy, I: Power and Its Variants**


**Week 4 (September 24, 2019) – Theories of Grand Strategy, II: Values and Ideology**


**Week 5 (October 1, 2019) - Theories of Grand Strategy, III: Cold, Hard Cash**


**Week 6 (October 8, 2019) - Joining the World? U.S. Grand Strategy and World War One**


*Note: students may also wish to review chapter 3 of Dueck, Reluctant Crusaders.*

President’s Wilson’s Peace Note, December 18, 1916,  
https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Peace_Note,_December_18,_1916

Wilson’s 14 Points, January 8, 1918,  
https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points.

**Week 7 (October 22, 2019) - Isolationism or Bust: The Interwar Period**


Thompson, *A Sense of Power*, pp. 110-150

Melvyn P. Leffler, *Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism* pp. 76-116


**Week 8 (October 29, 2019) - Strategy for Global Conflict: World War Two**


Text of the Atlantic Charter, August 14, 1941 - [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp)

United States-British Staff Conversations Report, ABC-1, March 27, 1941 - [http://ibiblio.org/pha/congress/Join%20%20Committee%20%20Exhibits/Exhibit%20049.pdf](http://ibiblio.org/pha/congress/Join%20%20Committee%20%20Exhibits/Exhibit%20049.pdf) –pp. 1485-1495  
ONLY.

**Week 9 (November 5, 2019) – The Cold War: Containment and Its Critics**
Thompson, *A Sense of Power*, pp. 229-274


**Additional Readings on strategy later in the Cold War:**


**Week 10 (November 12, 2019) - America as #1: Grand Strategy after the Cold War**

Review Posen & Ross from Week 2

Lawrence Eagleburger, “Parting Thoughts: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Years Ahead,” January 5, 1993, Department of State FOIA Release, supplied via author.


Week 11 (November 19, 2019) - Where Are We Now: Factors Shaping the Grand Strategy Debate Today


Week 12 (November 26, 2019) - Shaping the World: Primacy and Its Variants


**Skim - Aaron L. Friedberg.** “Competing with China,” Survival 60, no. 3 (June-July 2018), pp. 7-64.

Week 13 (December 3, 2019) – Calm Down, America: The Logic of Restraint

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Case for Offshore Balancing,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (July/August 2016), pp. 70-83

Week 14 (December 10, 2019) – Staying the Course? The Case for Deep Engagement


**Appendix 1 – Details on Assignment 1-2: Peer Review/Argument Evaluation & Historical Analysis**

(35 percent total course grade: 20 percent final paper, 15 percent peer review)

**Overview**

Much of this course covers the history of U.S. grand strategy since the early 20th century. Building on this material, pick a moment in which U.S. grand strategy was up for debate (e.g., at the end of World War One or Two; the early Cold War). Be specific – if you are interested in, say, the Cold War, decide whether you are interested in the early, middle, or late stages of that contest.

Now, pretend you are an advisor to the President serving at that time tasked with analyzing the grand strategic debate at that moment. Using primary and secondary resources (see the Appendix to the syllabus as a starting point) from history and/or political science relevant to this time period, describe two of the grand strategies up for discussion.

This paper must touch on several elements. First, summarize each strategy’s core claims: identify what U.S. interests entail, what threats to these interests exist, how the U.S. should address these threats/secure these interests, and what means are needed to do so. Next, analyze the merits and drawbacks of each approach. Here, students should use historical examples and theoretical arguments to evaluate each strategy’s causal claims – its theory of how a given action will protect US interests given the threats at hand – and the “prospective” consequences of each approach. This section should make use of at least 10 primary and secondary sources beyond those covered in class; again, please see the syllabus for a partial list of primary sources that might be of use. Finally, drawing upon the merits and drawbacks identified in the report, the paper should recommend and justify a specific strategy to the President.

After papers are returned, the instructor will lead a class discussion of the results of the writing assignment and schedule 15-minute individual meetings with students to discuss feedback, incorporating this input in future projects, and any outstanding questions or concerns.

Besides the paper itself, there is an ungraded proposal due on October 10. Students are also required to submit ungraded rough drafts/outlines by October 28, and to write a peer review – worth 15 percent of the course grade – to be given to the instructor and your colleague by November 7. Please read on….

**Deadlines and Checkpoints**

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3 Note: some of the grand strategic debates obviously occurred before some of the history discussed in this class transpired. That’s okay – feel free to frame the actual course of events as “prospective” consequences. So, if one were advocating for “symmetric containment” in the early Cold War, one could write, e.g., that the proposed strategy “might deter the Soviet Union, but risks embroiling the United States in conflicts in far-flung regions such as Korea and Vietnam.”
Since the President is pressed for time, the final report should be between five and six double-spaced pages (Times New Roman size 12 font, 1 inch margins. The paper should be emailed to the instructor (jris@bu.edu) by November 19, 2019. The final paper is worth 20 percent of the course grade.

Analytic writing and research are skills that take practice, however. To guide your engagement, this assignment therefore has two check-in dates:

First, students are required to submit a 1 paragraph UNGRADED proposal identifying the strategies that you are engaging and listing 5 primary or secondary sources to be utilized. The instructor will review this proposal and provide feedback/suggestions. Please also feel free to use this opportunity to flag any questions or concerns you have with the assignment so that the instructor can help resolve outstanding ambiguities. The proposal is due Oct 10. Note that students will need to skim/read ahead to complete this assignment.

Second, students are required to submit a draft or extensive outline of their paper to the instructor by Oct 28; these drafts/outline need not contain all the research for the final product, but should contain enough to allow an overview of the argument and conclusion. Students will then be paired to review one another’s drafts/outline and produce a 3-page memo offering feedback to their peers. This memo is due to both the partner and instructor by Nov 7 and worth 15 percent of the total course grade.

The peer review memo should focus on offering feedback that crystallizes description of different strategies; strengthens the paper’s core arguments by considering whether and what additional evidence/research is needed to generate a compelling assessment; and suggests ways to strengthen the writing. Students should then incorporate this feedback in their final papers. This review exercise will deepen students’ critical reading faculties, familiarize students with the research and peer review process, develop writing skills, and facilitate writing-oriented research.

Objectives of Assignment

This assignment will help us (1) synthesize the history and theory discussed in class; (2) facilitate research skills and utilization of primary and secondary sources; (3) develop analytic writing faculties; (4) embrace critical reading and reflection skills; and (5) mobilize classroom instruction and individual research to assess public policy issues. By the end of the exercise, you will have demonstrated familiarity with the interactive process between research, writing, review, and policy making in a real-world example.

Grading Guidelines – Peer Review Memo

There is no one way to write an effective peer review. As different partner papers will be at different stages of completion, different peer review memos will need to address different issues. In general, however, the best peer review memos will highlight areas in which (1) arguments or descriptions need clarification; (2) additional evidence to substantiate a claim(s) is needed or desirable; (3) writing can be streamlined or simplified; and (4) the analysis or conclusion needs further elaboration. Needless to say, the peer review memos should themselves also be written in simple, clear prose and be clear of typos or grammatical errors.

Grading Guidelines – Final paper

What makes an effective paper? The best papers will show evidence that the authors have grappled with the substance of the grand strategy debate at a particular moment in time, thought deeply about strategies’
relationships to U.S. interests and threats, mobilized historical and theoretical research to assess strategic options, and articulated a particular course of action; they will also be well-written.

While there is again not one format or pathway to an excellent paper, I will consider each of the following elements when grading:

1. Are all the elements of the assignment present?
2. Is the writing clear and free of grammatical mistakes or typos?
3. Has the report captured the core claims of the grand strategies?
4. To what extent has the report subjected core arguments to empirical or theoretical scrutiny? Does the paper deploy history and/or theory consistently? Is the evidence/theory integrated with the assessment?
5. Does the project explain why one course of action is preferable to another? Is this argument well-articulated and supported by the preceding analysis?
6. To what extent has the paper engaged with primary and secondary sources? Are these reputable sources?

Due Dates

October 10 – Proposals due

October 28 – Drafts/Outlines due

Nov 7 – Peer review memos due

Nov 19 – Final reports due
Appendix 2 – Details on Assignment 2: Policy Memo  
(35 percent total course grade)

Congratulations - you have been selected to produce a grand strategy for the United States today! This is no small task: as you know a vibrant debate is underway among several competing (and contradictory) grand strategy concepts for the U.S. Your job is to wade into the morass and make a clear argument drawn from either the topics covered in the course, or your own ideas/outside research.

The proposed strategy should address the following four questions:

- First, how should American national interests be defined – what are the key interests the U.S. faces today? How does this approach overlap or differ from what has historically occurred in U.S. grand strategy?

- Second, what are the most important threats to American national interests? In other words, what might harm those interests? To what degree? Moreover, what are the consequences for the U.S. if these threats manifest and interests are harmed – how bad will things get for the United States?

- Third – and most directly – what grand strategy should the United States pursue in response and why? Be specific: what tasks do you foresee the United States undertaking, how will these tasks address these threats and protect these interests? What tools – policy instruments – are needed to accomplish these tasks? Are there other periods in U.S. history from which your strategy draws inspiration – or, has this approach been tried before?

- Finally, why are potential alternative approaches problematic given U.S. interests & threats? Using the qualitative research process, what are the drawbacks (and perhaps some strengths) of other strategic options relative to the preferred solution?

The finished document should be 5-6 pages in length (Times New Roman, size 12 font, 1-inch margins), draw on course material and external research, flow logically from interests to threats to grand strategy, and reference historical experience, political science theory, and current geopolitical conditions when explaining the strategy/evaluating alternative approaches. While there is no required number of primary or secondary sources, students – in consultation with the instructor – are expected to conduct significant outside research into current policy debates, past historical experiences approximating the proposed strategy, theories and arguments that bear on the proposed arguments/threat assessments/solutions.

The final written assignment is due on Dec. 17 and should be emailed to the instructor (jris@bu.edu).

To ensure the work is on track, students are responsible for submitting a 2 paragraph UNGRADED proposal by Nov. 28 (email to jris@bu.edu) that (1) discusses their preliminary thinking surrounding their proposed grand strategy, and (2) identifies areas where additional research/efforts are necessary. The instructor will review these proposals and meet with students individually to go over the proposal. This
final assignment emphasizes locating and deploying scholarly research in support of policy analysis, crafting well-integrated arguments, and recognizing the complex set of factors that can influence policy research.

This final assignment will help us (1) apply the history and IR/poli sci theory discussed in class to address current policy debates; (2) deploy research skills and utilize primary and secondary sources to construct an integrated argument; (3) further develop analytic writing faculties; (4) deepen critical reading skills; and (5) mobilize classroom instruction and individual research to assess public policy issues. By the end of the exercise, you will have demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, research, and blend interdisciplinary work to address real-world policy concerns.
Annex:
Some Primary Source Document Collections

This is an *incomplete* list of primary source document collections that bear on the course and conduct of U.S. foreign relations. Students are encouraged to use this list as a launching-off point to identify other sources. Consult the instructor along the way.

**General**

U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series
- The official record of declassified documents relating to U.S. foreign policy
- Collections 1861-1960: [http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=browse&scope=FRUS.FRUS1](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=browse&scope=FRUS.FRUS1)
- More recent collections: [https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments)

U.S. State Department, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Electronic Reading Room
- Many – but not all – records declassified by the State Department outside of the FRUS-making process are posted online and are keyword searchable: [https://foia.state.gov/Search/Search.aspx](https://foia.state.gov/Search/Search.aspx)

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) FOIA Electronic Reading Room
- Counterintuitively, the CIA has done a terrific job declassifying and posting documents. This includes many wonderful analytic reports: [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/%22liberal%20international%20order%22](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/%22liberal%20international%20order%22)

Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) – SUBSCRIPTION VIA BU LIBRARY
- The National Security Archive (NSA) at GW University has done a terrific job collecting and posting declassified materials, focusing heavily on the Cold War period. Their cultivated database is available via the BU Library.

National Security Archive at GW University
- The National Security Archive also posts an incredible amount of material directly to its website (not all of which is on DNSA). Check out [https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/](https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/).

Records of the War Plans Board, Joint Chiefs of Staff, etc.
- Many military records – including the War Plans Board and the Joint Chiefs of Staff during and after WW2 – are available as microfilms.

• https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/Secretary-of-Defense-Annual-Reports/

World War One & Interwar Period

Papers of Woodrow Wilson, ed. Arthur Link
• In 69 volumes.

Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library
• Many materials from the Wilson Presidential Archive have been digitized and placed online: http://www.woodrowwilson.org/learn/for-researchers/

World War One Document Archive (hosted by BYU)
• Homegrown and still evolving - https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page

Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations* (1925)

Congressional Testimony and Hearings on the League of Nations –
• Assorted dates
• Consult the Congressional Record (available via Library)

Official speeches and other hearings related to the League Debate
• https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/versailles.html

John Maynard Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919) [NOTE: although Keynes was a British economist, his analysis of the post-1919 international economic situation is illuminating for all.]

• online via https://books.google.com/books?id=WrhJAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Students should also use the BU library and search online for additional primary materials. Key words to search for include those related to key grand strategic debates, e.g., “Dawes Plan,” “Washington Naval Conference,” “Locarno,” “Herbert Hoover.”

World War Two and Early Cold War

Evidence presented to the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack (incomplete citation) - http://ibiblio.org/pha/congress/Joint%20Committee%20Exhibits/Exhibits.html
• A trove of primary source material touching on US policy in East Asia immediately before the US entry into World War Two
• Good to pair with Trachtenberg’s chapter on U.S. entry into World War Two in *The Craft of International History*
Papers posted online by the Harry S. Truman Library: https://www.trumanlibrary.org/online-collections.htm

Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower
  • In 21 volumes


*America’s Plans for War against the Soviet Union, 1945–1950*, David Alan Rosenberg and Steven T. Ross (New York: Garland, various years)

University Press of America, *Truman National Security Files*

University Press of America, *Eisenhower National Security Files*

University Press of America, *Kennedy National Security Files*

NATO Archives Reading Room: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/68238.htm

**Mid-Late Cold War**

NATO Archives Reading Room: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/68238.htm

University Press of America, *Johnson National Security Files*

University Press of America, *Nixon National Security Files*


Cold War International History Project: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project

The Digital National Security Archive’s files are especially good on this timeframe, with individual document collections on:

- The Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962
- The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962
- Guatemala and the United States, 1954-1999
Kissinger Transcripts
The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986
Presidential Directives on National Security (Part I) from Truman to Clinton
Presidential Directives on National Security (Part II) from Truman to G.W. Bush
Terrorism and U.S. Policy, 1968-2000
U.S. Espionage and Intelligence, 1947-1996
The U.S. Intelligence Community: Organization, Operations and Management, 1947-1989
U.S. Nuclear History, 1955-1968
U.S. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy, 1945-1991

Jason Saltoun-Ebin, _The Reagan Files_ (self-published)
See also [http://www.thereaganfiles.com/](http://www.thereaganfiles.com/).


End of the Cold War Forum - [http://endofcoldwarforum.org/](http://endofcoldwarforum.org/)

Bush Library, memoranda and telephone records of conversations (memcons and telecons): [https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/memcons-telcons](https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/memcons-telcons)

**Post-Cold War**

*Note: given declassification timelines, primary sources for the post-Cold War era are comparatively scantier. Still, and in addition to consulting the general sources noted at the start of this document, potential sources include:*

The Clinton Library has declassified and posted a number of items – many dealing heavily with U.S. policy towards Russia, as well as humanitarian interventions – to its website: https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/collections/show/36

The National Security Archive has assembled a number of important documentary collections dealing with NATO expansion, U.S.-Russian relations, nuclear arms control in the 1990s, the Global War on Terror. See https://nsarchive.gwu.edu for details.