

Study Abroad Programme

The module description below is from the 2019/20 academic year and is subject to change, and for the use of study abroad students only.

Module name	American Foreign Policy
Module code	IP3020
School	School of Arts and Social Sciences
Department or equivalent	International Politics
UK credits	15
ECTS	7.5
Level	6
Delivery location (partnership programmes only)	N/A

MODULE SUMMARY

Module outline and aims

This module will introduce you to American power in the world and its foreign policy through a combination of theory, institutions, and case studies. The course is designed to give you the ability to understand, explain and critically evaluate past and contemporary US foreign policy against the backdrop of the elite structures, ideologies and forces of domestic power. The course challenges conventional ideas about the benign nature of American power by considering and exploring how elite power works in practice, frequently overriding democratic claims and values.

This module begins by introducing and interrogating key concepts frequently noted in discussions of US foreign policy, and then moves to place the concepts in a range of significant and critical theoretical frameworks, including liberalism, realism, Marxism, Gramscian frameworks, as well as a range of theories of the distribution of domestic power. The course then moves to apply the theoretical frameworks to the history of American power and foreign policy, including the struggle between internationalists and isolationists, the rise of the US foreign policy establishment in WWII and the projection of US power after 1945, the Cold War – including Korea and Vietnam and the national security state, finishing with discussions of the implications of the end of the Cold War and of 9-11 and subsequent shifts in American foreign policy, especially the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but also the broader ‘war on terror’. Throughout the course, attention is paid to the linkages of US foreign policy to its global context as well as the changing domestic context and the roles of elites.

Content outline

1. Broad knowledge of the history of US foreign policy from the early 20th century to the present era.
2. Knowledge of a wide range of conventional and critical theoretical and conceptual frameworks for interpreting and explaining US foreign policy.
3. Knowledge of the elite institutional and social and economic structures of US power and foreign policy making.
4. Good understanding of the relationship and dynamics between US foreign policy and the development of the global order.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this module, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Understand key theoretical debates relating to US foreign policy and American power
- Understand the key institutions and elite structures associated with US foreign policy

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- Apply your theoretical understanding to the analysis of contemporary US power as well as its development over time, and its future prospects

Skills:

- Define abstract concepts and theories and utilise them with rigour and consistency.
- Construct strong arguments both theoretical and empirical
- Improved writing skills as well as presentation skills

Values and attitudes:

- Develop healthy scepticism about claims made in US foreign policy rhetoric
- Tolerance of others' values and opinions
- Develop evidence- based arguments, based on thorough scholarship

HOW WILL I LEARN?

Acquisition of knowledge and understanding is promoted through a combination of lectures and interactive classes with a strong emphasis on students' presentations. You are encouraged to undertake extensive reading and independent study in order to understand the topics covered in lectures and classes and to broaden and deepen your knowledge of the subject. You also receive feedback on your coursework to encourage you to reflect on what you have produced

In addition, there will be regular (optional) unassessed writing assignments to develop argumentation and essay writing skills.

Teaching pattern:

Teaching component	Teaching type	Contact hours (scheduled)	Self-directed study hours (independent)	Placement hours	Total student learning hours
Lectures	Lecture	10	40	0	50
Seminar sessions	Seminars	10	90	0	100
Totals		20	130	0	150

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessments

Essay – 3000 words

Exam – 1 hour

Class presentation – 15-20 minutes

Assessment pattern:

Assessment component	Assessment type	Weighting	Minimum qualifying mark	Pass/Fail?
Essay	Coursework	60%	30	N/A
Exam	Exam (unseen)	25%	30	N/A
Class presentation	Presentation	15%	30	N/A

Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria are descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully and Grade-Related Criteria are

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descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes you need to demonstrate to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria for module assessments will be made available to you prior to an assessment taking place. More information will be available from the module leader.

Feedback on assessment

Following an assessment, you will be given your mark and feedback in line with the Assessment Regulations and Policy. More information on the timing and type of feedback that will be provided for each assessment will be available from the module leader.

Assessment Regulations

The Pass mark for the module is 40%. Any minimum qualifying marks for specific assessments are listed in the table above. The weighting of the different components can also be found above. The Programme Specification contains information on what happens if you fail an assessment component or the module.

INDICATIVE READING LIST

- Michael Cox and Douglas Stokes, *US Foreign Policy*, OUP, second edition, 2012
- Fraser Cameron, *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?* Routledge, 2002.
- William Blum, *Rogue State*, Zed Books, 2002.
- Bruce Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century*, Norton & Co, 2004.
- Michael Cox (ed), *America at War: US Foreign Policy After September 11th*, Blackwell, 2004
- Inderjeet Parmar, Linda Miller, and Mark Ledwidge, eds. *New Directions in US Foreign Policy*, 2009
- Inderjeet Parmar and Michael Cox, eds., *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy*, 2010
- McCormick, T. J. (1995) *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Ryan, D. (2000) *US Foreign Policy in World History*. London: Routledge, 2000
- Todd, E (2004) *After the Empire*. London: Constable
- Westad, O, A (2005) *The Global Cold War*. Cambridge: CUP, 2005

It also recommended that you familiarise yourself with the September 2002, 2006, and 2010 versions of *US National Security Strategy* which is available online. See also the White House website (www.whitehouse.gov) and that of the US Department of State (www.state.gov).