OBJECTIVES

This course explores the theory and practice of U.S. foreign policymaking, focusing on the process by which international economic and security decisions are actually made. The Obama administration has pursued a consistently active foreign policy and an increasingly engaged trade policy, both in the context of a sluggish US economy dragged down by both domestic and international forces. Near-term prospects are murky. But in security and economic matters alike, officials and institutions in the Obama administration and Congress are being driven, like their predecessors, to compete for influence at home even as they seek it abroad, and their decision making processes are being shaped at least as much by personalities and political/societal trends as by institutional and constitutional prerogatives.

To encourage specific understanding about the actual practice of US foreign policymaking, the course presents a mix of historical cases and analyses of the policy process in general (models, the executive branch, Congress). After three introductory weeks centered mainly on general models and institutions, we will move to examination of economic and national security policymaking in specific administrations, beginning with those of John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. Students will examine the roles and inter-relationships of key officials, and how they addressed major international security and economic issues. In so doing, we will explore repeatedly the relevance of theory to understanding of what actually happens. Readings will include contemporary documents, retrospective accounts by participants, and academic analyses.

To encourage focus on the people and processes involved, students will assume the vantage points of particular officials (e.g. President’s national security adviser, secretary of the treasury) and be prepared to discuss successive issues and administrations from their perspectives.

Revisions in this syllabus, course notices, and other relevant materials will be posted on Blackboard (elms.umd.edu), a web interface open to all students taking the course.
REQUIREMENTS

(1) Writing Assignments:

Students will write two memos and one short paper on a single policy episode of their choice. This must be an actual issue addressed by a post-1945 President and his senior advisors—it is recommended that it be one in an administration treated in the course. Pertinent examples include decisions to impose sanctions against Japan on automobile trade in 1995, abandon support of the dollar in 1971, intervene in Libya’s civil war in 2011, negotiate on nuclear weapons with North Korea in 1994 or 2005, begin or end the Gulf War in 1991, withdraw troops from Lebanon in 1984, drive down the dollar in 1985, go to war in Iraq in 2003, agree to permanent normal trade relations with China in 2000, etc.

** In writing the memos, a student should assume the role of a staff aide to a senior official (your boss), such as the secretary of state or defense. You should write as if working for that official at the time the issue was being considered. You should not, therefore, include information that was not available until after the decision was reached.

** The first memo is an information memo: it should provide the necessary background concerning the issue, including all the relevant factors needed to arrive at a decision. It may be addressed to your “boss” or to a decision group (eg, National Security Council).

** The second will be a briefing and advocacy memo, addressed to your boss, a Cabinet member or agency head. This should be written to prepare her/him for a meeting (whether historically real or assumed) at which the issue will be decided. This memo should take the information provided in the first memo as given and focus on preparing the agency head for the decision-making meeting by:

(a) describing the state of play on the issue within the Administration;
(b) suggesting the position the agency head should take;
(c) presenting a strategy to enhance the prospect that the issue will be decided as your memo recommends.

** Alternatively, this second memo can be written for someone outside the Executive Branch, e.g., a congressman concerned with the issue or the head of an NGO or private business with interests at stake. In that case, the memo should describe the state of play on the issue within the Administration and Congress, recommend a specific policy choice, and present a strategy for getting that choice adopted.

All memos should be no more than three pages in length (Courier 12 point, single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs), within 1" margins. The first memo is to be revised in response to feedback from the instructor and resubmitted as an attachment to the second memo.

There is no one right way to draft a memo, but a few words about style and format are appropriate. First and most important, the writing should be direct and terse (in contrast to the discursive style of an essay). The central message should be conveyed at the outset, with details to follow. Both sentences and paragraphs should be short. Key points should be highlighted.
Major sections should have headings. Pages should be numbered. Throughout, think of yourself as writing for a busy senior official—you must engage her interest, and keep it

** The third writing assignment will a short analytic paper (about 5 pages, double-spaced, NTE 1700 words) that relates the chosen issue and the decision process thereon to at least one theoretical proposition drawn from course readings. Further instructions will be provided.

The due dates for the written assignments will be October 7, November 11, and December 2. Students are welcome to discuss these and other matters during my office hours or at other times when my door is open—I post my schedule on that door.

(2) **Policy Exercises.** To enhance insight into the reality of policy making, students will take roles of senior US officials and maintain them for several weeks: one role, beginning October 3rd for the national security section of the course, and a different role, beginning November 7th, for the international economic section. Specific exercises built around these roles will be defined for specific classes. Overall, students should do their reading with their specific roles in mind—e.g., what was the perspective of the JCS chairman, or the Under Secretary of the Treasury, during a particular administration and the issues important to it? Consistent, informed participation in the exercises—and in the overall discussion—will be important to a student’s success in the course.

(3) **Final Exam?** Based on the overall quality of the discussions and exercises, the professor will decide—by the end of November—whether or not to give a final examination.

(4) **Grading.** If there is no final exam, the instructor will construct a base grade based on a weighted average for memos and papers submitted (assuming improvement, the second memo assignment will count double the weight of the first). This base grade will then be adjusted, upward or downward, based on a student’s seminar participation. If there is a final, its weight will be 25 percent of the final grade.

**READINGS**

The following two books are required reading for the course and should be purchased.


The bulk of the remaining readings are available via Blackboard. Those on electronic reserve are labeled Blackboard CR. Those with links on the “Course Documents” page are marked, simply, “Blackboard.” Two case studies (at guisd.org) must be ordered directly due to copyright restrictions.

PART ONE: POLICY MAKING FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

September 12: *Inside Story? Obama, the Generals, and Afghanistan*
Reading: Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*. Book for purchase
Since we start a week late this fall and are deprived of one seminar session, I am, for the first time, requiring a substantial reading prior to the first class. Specific instructions will follow.

September 19: *National Security: Models and Organization*

September 26: *President and Congress*

October 3:  
**Kennedy Administration**

**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, *In The Shadow of the Oval Office*, chap. 2.  
Blackboard Course Reserves

Blackboard CR

Blackboard

Blackboard CR

Selected Kennedy Documents Blackboard:

- Bundy to Kennedy, hand-written note, no date (probably May 1961)
- Bundy to Kennedy, June 22, 1961;
- Bundy to O'Donnell, January 5, 1962;
- Bundy to Kennedy re: “Chester Bowles’ speech,” September 17, 1962

October 10:  
**Nixon Administration**

**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chap. 3.  
George and Stern, pp. 212-14.  
(http://cissm.umd.edu/papers/files/nixon.pdf)  
Blackboard Course Reserves

Selected Nixon Documents (Blackboard)

- Tony Lake, “Memorandum for Henry A. Kissinger” on “Relations with the State Department,” November 14, 1969, with attachments.

October 17:  
**Reagan Administration**

**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chap. 5.  
Blackboard

Report of the President’s Special Review Board (The Tower Commission), February 26, 1987, Parts I through V.  
Blackboard

Blackboard

George and Stern, pp. 222-34.  
Blackboard Course Reserves
George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), pp. 863-78. Blackboard Course Reserves

**October 24:**  
*Clinton Administration: National Security*  
**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chap. 7.  
**Blackboard**  
James M. Goldgeier, “NATO Expansion,” in Wittkopf and McCormick, *Domestic Sources*. Blackboard CR  

**October 31:**  
*Bush (41) and Bush (43) Administrations: National Security*  
**Readings:** Daalder and Destler, chaps. 6 and 8.  
AND EITHER (to be negotiated with instructor):  
*George and Stern*, pp. 234-41 and Blackboard CR  
OR:  
Public Law 107-40, September 18, 2001. To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States. Blackboard  
Public Law 107-243, October 16, 2002. To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. Blackboard  

PART II: POLICY MAKING FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

November 7:  Foreign Economic Policymaking


November 14:  Nixon Administration

Optional: Daalder and Destler, In the Shadow of the Oval Office, chap. 4.

November 21:  Carter Administration
Volcker and Gyohten, Changing Fortunes, pp. 139-50, 163-74. Blackboard CR

November 28:  Reagan and Bush (41.) Administrations
Volcker and Gyohten, Changing Fortunes, pp. 174-84, 228-47. Blackboard CR
December 5:  **Clinton Administration**

**Readings:**  Presidential Executive Order 12835 and PDD/NEC-2  **Blackboard**


**PART III: CONCLUSION**

December 12:  **Obama and the Future**  [Readings will be likely be adjusted as events develop.]

**Readings:**  Daalder and Destler, chap. 9.


OR


One additional article of your choice.

Revisit Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*. 