Syllabus for Political Science 359
Current Issues in American Foreign Policy
MTWRF, 9:50-11:50, 22 Ross Hall
10 July- 4 Aug, 2006, Iowa State University

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Precis
This course examines the changes in US foreign policy arising from the end of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, the al Qaeda and other terrorist attacks on the United States, and the on-going wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The central theme underpinning the course is whether the United States’ status as the preponderant or “unipolar” power in the world gives it an unprecedented chance to re-shape the global order in ways more conducive to its interests or has tempted the US into allowing its ambitions to exceed its abilities. In addition, the course will explore current and potential crises with China, Iran, and North Korea and transnational economic and social issues, such as US immigration and trade policy.

Requirements
All students must do the assigned reading. I reserve the right to distribute unannounced in-class quizzes on the assigned readings for the week. In addition to course readings, students should follow current events. The New York Times, The Washington Post or National Public Radio (NPR) news broadcasts (on WOI 640 AM and KTPR 91.1 FM) are excellent daily news sources. I will also post items on the course website.

The main course website is at this URL: <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~pol_s.359>. I will post slides displayed in class, relevant links, and information about the course.

ISU advises: “If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Disability Resources (DR) office for information on appropriate policies and procedures. DR is located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076; their phone is 515-294-6624.”

Class Participation: All students should be prepared to participate in class discussions. Each student has a D as his or her default grade. If students participate well, their grades will be increased. Students who fail to participate or who do so poorly will get a D. I will call on students in class by name on a rotating basis. Responses to these questions count toward class participation.

Students are not expected to perform Periclean orations, but everyone should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, current events, and question that I pose. Criticisms of points made in readings, by fellow students, and by yours truly are welcome, and debates may emerge among students. Students should respect their classmates’ contributions, and refrain from partisan or
parochial philippics. The purpose of these discussions is not to win imaginary debating points, but to learn beyond solitary reading and unexamined listening.

Extra-Class Essays: There will be three essays based on topics and rules that I present. The first two essays should be 1400-1500 words (equal to 5 double-spaced pages). The last essay will be 1700-1800 words (equal to 6 double-spaced pages). The first essay will count for 10%, the second for 25%, and the final for 40% of the course grade. The first essay is due 21 July, the second on 28 July, and the final on 4 Aug.

Penalties: Students must submit take-home assignments on time. Students may not ‘make-up’ papers at will. There are two exceptions. First, for personal emergencies (e.g., a death in the family, medical problems), students should obtain a note from the dean of students or their physician. Second, for students with extra-curricular activities that conflict with deadlines, arrangements for an alternate date and time must be made at least a week in advance. The student must provide verification of the activity in order to be eligible for an alternate deadline. I do not accept notification after the fact (e.g., “I didn’t turn in my paper last week because I had a match/concert”).

A computer mishap will not excuse a late paper. You should make frequent and multiple back-ups of your work (to at least 2 separate floppy disks or other removable media), so that you never lose more than one hour’s worth of work. If you own your own computer, be sure you familiarize yourself with the ISU’s computer labs in case your system breaks down.

Grade Components

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 25%
- Take-Home Essays: 75%

Each component will be assigned a letter grade, converted to a grade point, and multiplied by its percentage weighting. I do not accept make-up assignments, re-writing of papers, or extra-credit work.

Academic Honesty

Iowa State University regulations regarding academic honesty will be enforced. See Iowa State University Catalog, “Academic Dishonesty,” p.38-39. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating on exams is failure for the course.
Readings

There are three books, in order of assignment, available for purchase for this course at University Bookstore (294.5684) in the Memorial Union and the Campus Bookstore (292.1616), 2300 Lincoln Way):


The books are also available on reserve at Parks Library. Readings from other sources will be available via a URL listed on the course website.

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10-14 July
Toward the Present
Cohen, p.1-122

17-21 July
9/11 and the ‘Bush Revolution’
Daalder & Lindsay, p.1-126

24-28 July (No Class 27 July)
The Perils or Promise of Primacy
Walt, p.13-194

31 July-4 Aug.
“Don’t Underestimate Baghdad!”*: America and Mess-o-potamia
Daalder & Lindsay, p.127-202
Cohen, p.143-163