The purpose of this course is to examine the development and current features of American foreign policy focusing on the international challenges and opportunities faced by the United States after the end of the Cold War, and particularly since September 11, 2001, under the G. W. Bush and Obama administrations. The course analyzes some of the major historical and current patterns of U.S. foreign policy, reviews some important interpretations and methodological approaches to the study of U.S. international relations, discusses the ideological components of some of these policies, examines the features and evolution of U.S. foreign policy actors and decision making processes, and evaluates the changing political economic objectives and international circumstances shaping recent U.S. foreign policies. Special attention is devoted to the impact of the end of the Cold War, the rise of economic interdependence and globalization, the challenge of international terrorism, the reappearance of national, ethnic and religious confrontations, and the proliferation of nuclear and mass destruction weapons on U.S. diplomatic, strategic, economic, and environmental foreign policies as well as on the formulation of specific approaches to different world regions and countries.

Course requirements

* **Class attendance and informed participation are required.** Attendance is essential for those desiring to pass the course and will be taken by signing an attendance sheet. In order to be able to participate effectively in the discussions and other class activities you must read the assignments **before** the day they are scheduled for analysis in class. In addition, each student, either individually or as member of a small group—depending on the size of the class—will be responsible for making a presentation and leading the discussion in one of the class sessions scheduled in the last part of the course. The student (or students) making each presentation will meet with me in advance to discuss the presentation and research the topic, and will be responsible for delivering with sufficient anticipation a list of discussion questions (and other relevant materials, if necessary) to the rest of the class. You are expected to follow current developments in U.S. foreign policy by reading the appropriate sections of some of the national newspapers and magazines, specialized journals, and/or electronic sources of information mentioned below. It is expected that in class discussions each student will make reference to this information to update the discussion on different aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Attendance, preparation for class discussions and student-led activities, and analytical
quality of the interventions will be evaluated in order to calculate the course grade. *(30% of the final grade)*

* Four quizzes focused on the reading materials assigned throughout the course. These multiple choice examinations will be given in class and will be focused on the readings assigned for specific sections. These quizzes are designed to check your knowledge of the basic information on different aspects of contemporary U.S. policy that is presented and analyzed in the assigned readings. There is no make-up for these quizzes. *(20% of the final grade)*

* Midterm take-home examination  (25% of the total grade)

* Final take-home examination (25% of the total grade)

[The instructions for both take-home examinations will be delivered in class with sufficient anticipation. The assignments will be focused on some critical issues in U.S. foreign policy and will require writing individual essays from a critical and well informed perspective. These essays should be clear and concise, show adequate knowledge of the issues, demonstrate logical consistency and use of relevant evidence to advance specific arguments, and draw well-thought critical conclusions. Late assignments will lose half a grade point for each day they are late.]

In addition to the readings specified in the assignment section, other materials will be delivered in class to update the analysis of certain issues or to add different perspectives. Students are also expected to keep informed of current issues related to the topics analyzed in class. Good sources of information are major newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor) and national weekly magazines (Time, Newsweek). To analyze more in-depth certain topics, prepare your final papers, and update the information contained in the texts it is recommended to consult the specialized journals found in the Scribner Library, including among them: *Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, International Affairs, International Organization, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of International Affairs, Millennium, World Policy Journal,* and *World Politics* as well as a large number of journals specialized in regional (Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Russia, Western Europe, etc.) and functional issues (economic, strategic, environmental and other affairs). There are numerous World Wide Web sites focused on U.S. foreign policy issues that can be consulted. Among the most useful sites for this course are the following:

*The Carter Center: http://www.cartercenter.org/*
*Center for Defense Information: http://www.cdi.org/*
*Central Intelligence Agency: http://www.cia.gov/*
*Council on Foreign Relations: http://www.foreignrelations.org/*
*Department of Defense: http://www.defenselink.mil/*
*Department of State: http://www.state.gov/*
Annotated references to other internet sites related to U.S. foreign policy issues are found at the end of each chapter in Steven W. Hook’s book, *U.S. Foreign Policy: the paradox of world power*.

**Required Texts** (available at the Skidmore shop)


**Other Sources** (Not for purchase but helpful for consultation):


Martha Honey and Tom Barry, eds., *Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000)


ASSIGNMENTS

I. UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE

January 25 - 27
1. The Setting of United States Foreign Policy

Hook: Chapter 1 (The United States in a Turbulent World), pp. 1-29.
Carter: Introduction, pp. 1-10

February 1 - 8
2. United States Foreign Policy in a Changing World

Various authors (packet to be delivered in class): Recent U.S. Foreign Policy and the Prospects for the Future

Some Issues to Consider as this Section Ends:
What is your assessment of U.S. post-Cold War foreign policy strategy? In your view, is the U.S. following a long-term grand strategy abroad of promoting democracy, economic development and global stability? Or, has the U.S. embraced a strategic vision of dominance that does not consider these goals attainable? Or, is the current U.S. foreign policy a perplexing mix of different approaches that fluctuates between these poles? Is the pursuit of global hegemony the best approach to guarantee the U.S. international security, political stability and economic prosperity? Or, as some critics argue, would this hegemonic approach threaten the U.S. hoped for global security, peace and prosperity? What kind of U.S. foreign policy approaches and grand strategy would you recommend? Why?

II. EXAMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY:
PROCESS, ACTORS, AND INSTRUMENTS

February 10 - 17

Hook: pp. 76-97; and Chapters 7 (Public Opinion at Home and Abroad), 8 (The Impact of Mass Communications), and 9 (Social Movements and Interest Groups), pp. 200-290.
Carter: Chapters 4 (Preston & Infranco, The Nuclear Standoff between the United States and Iran); and 11 (Hook and Barr Lebo: Sino-American Trade Relations: Privatizing Foreign Policy).
February 22 - 29

4. The Elected Foreign Policy Actors: The President and Congress.

Hook: Chapters 4 (Presidential Power); and 5 (Congress Beyond the “Water’s Edge”)

March 2 - 9

5. The Unelected Foreign Policy Actors: Diplomatic, Security, Intelligence and Economic Foreign Affairs Bureaucracies

Hook: Chapter 6 (The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy).
Carter: Chapters 5 (James & Ozdamar: The United States and North Korea); 10 (Lairson: The Global Financial Crisis); 12 (Payne & Payne: The Politics of Climate Change); and 13 (Fisher: National Security Surveillance: Unchecked or Limited Presidential Power?).

**** March 9: Mid Term Take-Home Due in Class ****

March 12 - 20: Spring Vacation

III. CURRENT ISSUES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

March 21 - 23

6. The Security Dilemmas

Hook: Chapter 10 (National Security and Defense Policy).
Carter: Chapters 1 (Gagnon & Hendrickson, The United States vs. Terrorism); 4 (Preston & Infranco, The Nuclear Standoff between the United States and Iran); 5 (James and Özdamar, The United States and North Korea); 6 (Warburg: Nonproliferation policy Crossroads) and 7 (Carter & Scott: Hitting the Russian Reset Button).

March 28 - 30

7. The Economic Challenges

Hook: Chapter 11 (Economic Statecraft).
Carter: Chapters 10 (Lairson: The Global Financial Crisis); and 11 (Hook and Barr
April 4 - 6


Hook: Chapter 12 (Transnational Policy Problems).
Carter: Chapters 8 (Zunes: Friendly Tyrants?: The Arab Spring and the Egyptian Revolution); 9 (Kaufman: Chen Guangchen: The Case of the Blind Dissident); 12 (Payne & Payne: The Politics of Climate Change); 14 (Cornett and Gibney: The Rights of Detainees: Determining the Limits of Law); and 15 (Jackson and Carter: The International Criminal Court).

Some Issues to Consider as this Section Ends:
What do you believe are the main foreign policy challenges confronted by the U.S. in the early years of the Twenty-First century? What do you think should be the U.S. priorities in terms of international policies? On what kind of strategic issues should the U.S. policymakers focus their attention and what should be done to address them effectively? What kind of economic strategy should the U.S. pursue in the next few years? Is it important for the U.S. to develop a stronger leadership role in international environmental matters? Why? Why not?

IV. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
Student-led Presentations and Debates

April 11 - 13

April 18
10. Presidents vs. Congress: The Controversy on War-Related Decisions and its Connections to Current U.S. Middle East Policies (see Carter: Chapters 3, 13 and 14)

April 20
11. Dilemmas of Internationalism and Hegemony: National Sovereignty, Globalization, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) (see Carter, Chapter 15)

April 25 - 27
12. The U.S. vis-à-vis the International Economic and Environmental Challenges: Hegemonic Decline or Global Restructuring? (see Carter: Chapter 10 and 12)

May 2
13. From Strategic Partnership to Strategic Competition?: The Recent Evolution of U.S. Relations with Russia and China. (see Carter, Chapters 7, 9, and 11)
The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the Student Handbook, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam – it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: “I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.” Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to “conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.”

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following:

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.

2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.

3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one’s mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.

5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the house-keeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following:
6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already possess it, you should acquire it.

7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day’s assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.

8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don’t let them get away with it.

9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.