

Draft Course Outline

A final course syllabus will be available on the first day of class.

Power and Purpose: Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy

University of California Washington Center

Instructor: Christopher A. Preble

Overview:

This course explores the ideas and assumptions that guide U.S. foreign policy. We will consider how U.S. leaders choose to engage with the rest of the world -- and consider how they might in the future -- by focusing on a number of recurring themes including: relations with China and Russia; nuclear proliferation; the problems of weak and failing states; democracy promotion; terrorism and counterterrorism; resource competition; the importance of culture and national identity; transnational threats such as infectious disease and climate change; and the economics of national security.

About the Instructor:

I am the co-director of the New American Engagement Initiative at the Atlantic Council. I have written four books (on U.S. foreign policy/grand strategy) and edited four others (on U.S. foreign policy choices, Iraq, counterterrorism, and threat perception). I've also written many shorter papers and book chapters. In addition to my work at the Atlantic Council, I am also the co-host of the Net Assessment podcast in the War on the Rocks podcast network. I earned my PhD at Temple University and my BA at George Washington University. I was an officer in the U.S. Navy, and served a little more than three years on the cruiser USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47).

Books (The A List):

- Ian Bremmer, *Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the World* (Portfolio/Penguin, 2015)
- Christopher Preble, *Peace, War, and Liberty: Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cato, 2019) (*Optional*)

Assignments and Grading:

The class will have three written assignments, plus a grade for class participation:

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| First Exam | 25% |
| Book Report | 25% |
| Final Exam | 35% |
| Class Participation | 15% |

Because I want the course to be focused on contemporary issues, I will rely heavily on short articles or think tank papers published within the last year. Nearly all of these will be easily accessible on the Internet, and I'll always distribute such readings via Canvas. In addition to the required readings, you are encouraged to explore areas of particular interest to you and be prepared to discuss them in class. Before each class, I will ask you to find one article pertaining to U.S. foreign policy from a major news outlet and summarize these *in your own words*.

I also want this class to be as participative as possible. Several guest speakers will visit virtually during the quarter. In addition, each student will be expected to participate virtually in **at least two foreign policy-related events** during the quarter and to report briefly to the class on what he or she learned.