

U.S. Foreign Policy: The Institutional Basis
International Relations
Brown University
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Course Description

This course will examine the institutions that influence American foreign and development policy. Institutions provide the organizational framework, rules and social structures that in turn impact on the policy positions of those who are part of them. The agencies and bureaus that make up the national security cluster have both professional expertise and bureaucratic qualities. We will delve deeply into these entities to understand better their jurisdictional authorities and professional perspectives. We will use case studies and roll playing exercises to enhance understanding of these orientations and their impact on the policy process.

Bureaucratic structures are motivated to sustain themselves and are often encumbered with rules that inhibit creative behavior. In the US Government, this creates tension with political appointees whose tenure is limited and whose need to achieve an externally generated set of goals (the agenda of a particular administration) is sometimes in conflict with the professional judgment of career personnel.

Most institutions have primary and secondary missions. For example, the US State Department's principle mission is to conduct diplomacy. However, over the years the Department has taken on missions--often imposed by Congress-- that may only be tangentially related to diplomacy. For example, the functions carried out by bureaus responsible for treating HIV/AIDS, providing refugee assistance, combating international crime or publishing details about human rights abuses sometimes bring into play issues that

could complicate the diplomatic mission. Many of these functions mimic the primary missions of other agencies or departments of government where arguably there is more expertise.

The National Security Council staff coordinates the inter-agency system. The missions of the principle departments will bring diverse views to the table and these must be reconciled if recommendations are then to be taken to the president. Even when issues do not rise to the presidential level, disputes over policy occur within and among departments, agencies and bureaus. We will look at case studies to show the ways governmental institutions and external institutions try to influence the policy process.

The course will not limit itself to executive branch organizations. We will also look at the roles of the Congress, the media and international organizations. We will explore the practical challenges of implementing US policy in international organizations that are consensus oriented and often less responsive to the more urgent needs of policymakers.

Class Format and Evaluation

We will use a variety of pedagogical devices to illuminate the orientations of the institutions and missions in play. For example, students may be called upon to represent bureaus within the State Department in preparing a decision memo to the Secretary of State, clearing the memo with other bureaus and agencies before it can be sent forward, or to create a media issue that must be responded to on an urgent basis for a press briefing, and participate in a meeting with a member of Congress on an issue that has not yet been decided within government. Our classroom goal is to help students develop the knowledge base and skills to operate in a fast-paced environment and to gain an understanding of the institutional cultures that participate in the policy process.

Students will be graded on an A, B, C, NC basis. Grading will be as follows:

30% Mid-Term Exam—A written bluebook exam will be held on April 27, with three essay questions related to the course materials and lessons learned through Session 5.

20% Class Participation— The individual Participation Grade, will account for 20% of the final grade. The individual Participation Grade

reflects the level of individual engagement in the class as well as the contribution to the collaborative work that defines the spirit of this course. Also considered will be the student's attendance and punctuality record. Students will be evaluated on to the following:

- Completion and critical understanding of the assigned Readings: 25% of the participation grade.

- Participation in Class Discussions, Panels, and Class Exercises: 37.5% of the participation grade. Students will be expected to participate fully in class discussions, offering their own informed opinions, role-playing, and making formal presentations as required.

*Also considered will be the student's attendance and punctuality record: 37.5% of the participation grade.

20% Contribution to Secretary's briefing memo. The exercise on drone policy will require students to work collaboratively in a group representing an assigned State Department bureau. Each student will contribute a memo to the group suggesting how to approach the exercise and offering research relevant to the particular perspective of the bureau's jurisdiction. These working memos will be turned in and graded.

30% Final Paper--A final paper will be due on the final class day. It will be no more than 10 pages double-spaced. Students will select an institution and research a specific policy position or operational action taken, reflecting the influence of the institutional culture and mission of the agency, bureau, department, or international organization.

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. This syllabus includes deadlines for submission of required papers. Late submissions will lose a half grade for each day the paper is late. Accommodation will be made in accordance with University rules and guidelines.

Course Schedule

Session 1, 4/4: Course Introduction/Overview—The Nature of Institutions, Theory and Practice

Introductions will include personal experiences in institutional environments. Course requirements will be reviewed. Discussion will relate to the readings on institutional theory. Using political science theories we will discuss the relationship of institutions to bureaucratic behavior, and the process whereby institutions originate and change.

Readings:

Hall, Peter A., and Taylor, Rosemary C., *Political Studies* (1996), XLIV, 936-957, "Political Science and the Three Institutionalisms."

March, James G., and Olsen, Johan P., *Governance: An Institutional journal of Policy and Administration*, Vol. 9, No. 3, July 1996 (pp. 247-264), "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions."

Session 2, 4/6: Creating New Institutions, the "Decaying" of Old, and Manifestations Of Institutional Behavior

The origin of new institutions usually relate to a political need reflecting either global changes or the need to reflect an Administration's orientation or values. We will discuss the creation of the Homeland Security Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, USAID and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the State Department, and the challenges these entities faced in the early days of their existence.

A principal purpose of bureaucratic behavior, as observed by Max Weber, is to sustain the institution by creating processes and rules that are uniquely related to the expertise of the professionals within the organization. These can sometimes stultify creativity and action. This bureaucratization process can even contradict the democratic participation of citizens, or thwart the expressed will of their representatives. In rare cases it can even transform the behavior of professionals within the organization. Intelligence community

institutions by their nature receive less public scrutiny unless and until something goes terribly wrong.

Assignment

Students will conduct preliminary research on an assigned bureaucratic entity and in the next class will present findings on its origins, mission, bureaucratic culture, its evolution over time and its current role.

Readings:

Zegart, Amy B., Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS and NSC, Stanford University Press, Stanford California, pp.12-53.*

Boin, Arjen and Goodin, Robert E., 2007, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd 0001-6810/07, (pp.40-57) “Institutionalizing Upstarts: The Demons of Domestication and the Benefits of Recalcitrance.”

Zimbardo, Philip G., Miller A. G. (Ed), The Social Psychology Of Good and Evil (pp. 21-50), New York, Guilford Press. “A Situationist Perspective on the Psychology of Evil: Understanding How Good People are Transformed into Perpetrators.”

Session 3, 4/11: Foreign Policy Institutions—Why They Were Created and How They Operate

Students will come to class having done preliminary research on an assigned foreign policy institution prepared to discuss the origin of the institution, the history and reason for its founding, its culture and its current role, including its presence overseas, and debates over its foreign policy role. We will also examine the reasons key institutions were created and how they have evolved over time. There is considerable discussion in the academic and foreign policy community suggesting that key institutions are in decline. A recent report from the American Academy of Diplomacy is highly critical of the Department of State for marginalizing the Foreign Service. There is also

a concern that US foreign policy has become militarized due to the relative strength of the Department of Defense. We will look at these critiques and discuss possible remedies.

Readings:

American Academy of Diplomacy, “American Diplomacy at Risk,” April 2015 (abridged version on AAD website)*

Cassidy, Joseph, “Ten Ways to Fix America’s Ailing State Department,” Foreign Policy, July 20, 2015.*

Fukuyama, Francis, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2014, “America in Decay: The Sources of political Dysfunction,” (pp. 5-26).

Session 5, 4/13: The First and Second State/USAID Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development reports (QDDR)

When Secretary of State Clinton requested her bureaus and offices to write the first Quadrennial report, a forward projection of the strategic needs of the State Department and USAID, she may not have anticipated the bureaucratic wrangling that would ensue. The QDDR was negotiated every step of the way and became a treaty-like blueprint for how bureaus and agencies would work together and the resources they would need to pursue their missions. This raised the stakes for offices that had previously been able to finesse overlapping jurisdictions and similar missions. At the same time, the White House was preparing a Presidential Directive that would describe these relationships beyond the State Department and define the White House coordinating role. We will examine the QDDR process with participants to better understand the underlying tensions and the resulting structure and processes produced by the document and its White House counterpart. How does this internal study help implement the “3-D” concept now embraced by administrations of both political parties?

Assignment

To prepare for the next class students will research an assigned State Department or USAID bureau.

Readings:

Department of State Organizational Chart (go to state.gov)

State Department Web Page, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Reports--summaries (go to state.gov).

Atwood, J. Brian, McPherson, M. Peter and Natsios, Andrew, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 6 (November/December 2008), pp.123-132, "Arrested Development: Making Foreign Aid a More Effective Tool."

Patrick, Stewart and Brown, Kaysie, Center for Global Development, Working Paper Number 131, November 2007, "The Pentagon and Global Development: Making Sense of the DOD's Expanding Role."

Session 6, 7 and 8, 4/18, 4/20, and 4/25: State Department Bureaus and Case Study/ Role Play on Institutional Positioning --The Use of Drones

Students will present brief reports to the class on their assigned State bureau. We will then begin an exercise to negotiate on behalf of a State bureau to prepare a memo for the Secretary of State who will attend a principles' meeting at the White House. The topic is the use of weaponized drones in the Middle East to attack terrorists. Students will be assigned to a small group representing a State bureau and will seek to understand the authorities and professional expertise that influences that bureau's perspective on the issue.

The use of drones to attack terrorists has raised serious constitutional, moral, tactical and strategic questions. The President has ordered a review of the policy and has requested a short and long-term perspective, anticipating questions that other nations may raise and current inquiries from the press and the US Congress. The case for and against the use of drones was recently laid out by Foreign Affairs magazine (see readings). However, agencies and bureaus will want to look into this issue in more depth from their institutional perspective. In

preparation for the exercise, an expert who had to deal with this issue in government will visit the class.

The task is to write a memorandum laying out the issues. The lead for this draft is the State Department Policy Bureau (P). Additional policy positions are requested from the Office of Congressional Relations (H), the Legal Advisor's Office (L), the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau (DRL), the International Organizations Bureau (IO), the Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR) and the Political Military Affairs Bureau. Clearances from each of these bureaus will be required before the memo can be sent forward to the Secretary (S). The S/Executive Secretary will insist upon a standard format and will set deadlines for the completion of the task. Given the complexity of this task, the memo can be up to ten pages (an unusually long briefing memo). The process will commence with group breakouts by bureau and a class discussion of the issues to be covered in the memo. Drafts of positions taken by each bureau (reflecting their institutional orientation) will be circulated and discussed at the next class. The third class in this series will involve a briefing for the Secretary on the options taken for each previously identified issue.

Required Readings:

Byman, Daniel, Foreign Affairs July/August 2013 (pp. 32-43), "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice."

Cronin, Audrey Kurth, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2013 (pp. 44-54), "Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy."

Suggested Readings:

Covert War on Terror- The Data, Chapter 1: Background and Context.

Khan, Akbar Nasir, *IPRI Journal* XI, no. 1 (Winter 2011): (pp. 21-40), "The US Policy of Targeted Killings by Drones in Pakistan."

Mayer, Jane, The New Yorker October 26, 2009. "The Predator War: What are the Risks of the CIA's Covert Drone Program?"

Ofek, Hillel, The New Atlantis, Spring 2010 (pp.35-44), "The Tortured Logic of Obama's Drone War."

Covert War on Terror- The Data, Chapter 4: Legal Analysis

Covert War on Terror- The Data, Chapter 2: Numbers

Covert War on Terror- The Data, Chapter 3: Living Under Drones

Mulrine, Anna, Christian Science Monitor, October 22, 2011, “Unmanned Drone Attacks and Shape-Shifting Robots: War’s Remote-Control Future
Dunn, David Hastings and Wolff, Stefan, “Hitting *the Target?*” (pp. 97-104)
“Drone Use in Counter-Insurgency and Counter-terrorism: Policy or Policy Component?”

Hudson, Leila, Owens, Colin S., Flannes, Matt, *Middle East Policy Review*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Fall 2011, “Drone Warfare: Blowback from the New American Way of War.”

Session 9, 4/27: Introduction to the National Security Council and MIDTERM Exam

In the first half of this session we will discuss the role of the NSC. As defined in the National Security Act of 1947, the NSC “advises the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security...” The NSC coordinates among the principles of government –the President and Vice President—and the national security departments and agencies including the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of the military services, the State Department, the United Nations Ambassador and other agencies and departments as required by the subject matter to be discussed (this could include USAID, the Commerce Department, the Trade Representative, the Environmental Protection Agency, etc.) The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) or Director or Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency is normally present to provide objective intelligence information

We will discuss the operations of the NSC and the role that institutions and individuals have played in the decision process under various recent presidents. Rothkopf has identified 5 main factors that shape how the foreign policy apparatus functions: personality and the “sociology” of an administration; the domestic political context; the international context; ideology and/or governing philosophy; and structure and process. We will explore these factors in the next class by examining the issues and structures created in the most recent administrations.

MIDTERM EXAM: In the second half of this class students will take a three- question bluebook essay exam related to the first 5 class sessions. The drone exercise will not be covered.

Readings:

Presidential Policy Directive 1, February 13, 2009, Organization of the National Security System (available on google).*

Daalder, Ivo H. and Destler, I. M., In the Shadow of the Oval Office; Profiles of the National Security Advisors and the Presidents They Served, from JFK to George W. Bush, pp. 1-11.

Rothkopf, David J., Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power, pp. 3-22, “The Committee in Charge of Running the World.” Pp. 457-470.

Session 10, 5/2, The National Security Council (continued).

In preparation for this class students will be assigned readings from the Daalder/Destler book describing the NSC’s of Presidents Kennedy/Johnson. Nixon/Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush I, Clinton and Bush II. Groups will present for discussion the strengths and weaknesses of each of the organizational structures conceived and how they relate to the personalities and issues in play during the period. The Obama Administration NSC will also be considered. We will then discuss the characteristics of the ideal NSC.

Readings:

Daalder, Ivo H. and Destler, I. M., In the Shadow of the Oval Office; Profiles of the National Security Advisors and the Presidents They Served, from JFK to George W. Bush.

Readings (one to be selected by each group):

Daalder/Destler pp.12-56, “You Can’t Beat Brains.”—Kennedy/Johnson.

Ibid, pp. 57-93, “You Don’t Tell Anybody.”—Nixon/Ford.

Ibid, pp. 94-126, “I Would Never be Bored”—Carter.

Ibid, pp.127-167, “Serious Mistakes Were Made.”—Reagan.

Ibid, pp. 168-204, “Brent Doesn’t Want Anything.”—Bush I.

Ibid, pp. 205-249, “You Have to Drive the Process.”—Clinton.

Ibid, pp. 250-298, “I’m a Gut Player.”—Bush II.

Session 11, 5/4: North Korea; Nuclear Negotiations and Food Aid

The US foreign assistance program has well-defined objectives laid out in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended; one such provision is that the program is to be consistent with US foreign policy objectives. This clause creates an ambiguity that decision makers occasionally have to resolve. For most of the time since 1961, the US Agency for International Development Administrator has reported directly to the Secretary of State. The Agency has been defined under law as an independent agency of government, but it is a sub-cabinet agency run by an “Administrator” similar to the Environmental Protection Agency or the National Aeronautical and Space Agency. Occasionally the humanitarian and development objectives of USAID may seem to run counter to the diplomatic objectives of the State Department. Such was the case in the 1990s when a flood exacerbated an already dire food shortage in North Korea at a time when the US Government was negotiating with North Korea to stop that nation from violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty by testing and deploying nuclear weapons. We will review how the USG resolved the tension between the requirements of diplomacy and humanitarian action in the Clinton, Bush II and Obama Administrations.

Required Readings:

Natsios, Andrew, The Great North Korea Famine, pp. 5-22, “Roots of the Crisis.”

Frontline PBS, Interview with Robert Galucci (Google Robert Galucci, North Korea)

Noland, Marcus, and Haggard, Stephan, Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea. 2006

Magan, Michael, Foreign Policy, “Food for Thought: Will the Obama Administration’s Strategy on North Korea Backfire.”

Session 12, 5/9: The United States and the United Nations.

International organizations have proliferated in recent years and play a key role in implementing policies, monitoring state behavior and enforcing “rules for the world.” These organizations have distinctive characteristics and authority that is derived from their creation by sovereign states. We will examine these bureaucratic institutions to better appreciate the role they play on the international scene. The U.S. Government was instrumental in the creation of many of these organizations, most notably the United Nations itself. However, as a superpower it has not always been enthusiastic about providing resources or yielding power in given situations. This ambivalence has arguably undermined the authority of certain IOs and the principles of “liberal internationalism.” We will explore efforts to reform the UN and its peace operations in particular by examining the recommendations of the “Brahimi” report.

Readings:

The Brahimi Report, the year 2000 Report of the UN Secretary General’s Panel on Peace Operations (go to UN website).

Keohane, Robert O. and Martin, Lisa L., International Security, Volume 20, Number 1, Summer 1995, pp. 39-51, MIT Press, “The Promise of Institutional Theory.”

Barnett, Michael N. and Finnemore, Martha, International Organization/Volume 53/Issue 04/ September 1999, pp.699-732, published online 12 August 2003, “The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations.”

Session 13, 5/11: The Role Played by the US Congress and the Media

Much of the literature in this area reduces the media’s role to that of a “conveyor belt” that passively transports elite views to the public. However, the absence of empirical evidence does not demonstrate the true effect of elite opinion on those inside government. The increasingly polarized and socialized media of today is a vehicle for campaigns against a sitting government’s policies. In addition, informed opinion on editorial pages and in journals does influence officials who are often searching for ways to portray policies in the most politically attractive light. The recent cases

involving leaks to the media of sensitive internal information has also opened a debate as to the role of the media and whether the pursuit of “leakers” has had a chilling effect on media outlets. We will examine these issues as we explore the institutions that make up the media, inviting a journalist who has covered foreign events..

The role of Congress in providing appropriations, confirming ambassadors and cabinet/sub-cabinet officers, declaring war and holding hearings on major policy issues will be examined. Politics is at the forefront of members of Congress’ concerns. There are members with a great deal of knowledge of foreign policy and there are others who treat the subject like an extension of domestic policy or the interminable political campaign. We will look at some recent cases that reflect this most political of bodies and its impact on policy.

We will review the topics covered in the course and discuss lessons learned.
The final paper is due on this date.

Readings:

Chayes, Sarah, Washington Post, June 2, 2013, “When Journalists Seek Secrets, Do They Grasp the Risks?”

Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Page, Benjamin I., The American Political Science Review, Vol. 99, No. 1 (Feb. 2005), pp. 107-123, “Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?”

