



Political Science UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ideas and Identity in US Foreign Policy

University of Toronto

Thursdays, 1-3:00 PM

January 8-April 2, 2026

Dr. Madison Schramm

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Office Hours: Thursday, 4-5:00

Sign up: [Course Requests Winter 2026 – Fill out form](#) (locked 24 hours before office hours)

Course Description

What are the ideas that animate US Foreign Policy? How has American identity informed international security? In this course, we investigate these questions by exploring how US security policy from the 18th century on has been affected by elite conceptualizations of liberalism, hierarchy, destiny, and mission. We will investigate how these frameworks have been mobilized in decisions regarding war and peace, and how the ideas themselves have been conditioned by US relative power and geostrategic events.

Learning Objectives

- *Introduce students to critical frameworks animating US foreign policy decision-making
- *Understand critical events in US history and foreign policy
- *Develop students' ability to assess how ideologies have changes and evolved over time and articulate the implications for US foreign policy
- *Discern and explain patterns and tensions in individual actors and groups' beliefs

STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND

This course takes place on land that has been in relation with Indigenous people and societies since time immemorial. The Elders Circle of the University of Toronto has provided the following statement on acknowledgement of traditional land: We would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many

Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

Revised by the Elders Circle (Council of Aboriginal Initiatives) on November 6, 2014. Available at: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/fnh>

Requirements

Attendance and Participation (20 %)

Attendance and active participation in all classes is required.

Reading

Students must complete all *required* readings before the lecture. All required readings will be available to students on Quercus.

Oral Presentation 1 on Reading (10%)

Students will do an oral presentation (5-7 minutes) on one of the book chapters/articles assigned in the course. The presentation should include a summary of the articles/ book chapter, including the author's overall case study/ theory, method, and (if applicable) findings, and provide three discussion questions of their own to the class. Students will also be required to turn in a 1-2 page written response to the reading via Quercus the night before their presentation. A sign-up sheet will be circulated. Slides are recommended, but optional.

Oral Presentation 2 on Case/Event (10%)

Students will do a second oral presentation (2-3 minutes) to help further contextualize one of the important events, treatise, doctrines, etc. covered in class. Students will also turn in a 2 page annotated bibliography of sources via Quercus the night before their presentation (this presentation will require a bit of outside research). A sign-up sheet will be circulated. Given the time limit, slides are discouraged, but handouts are optional.

Reading Midterm, Thursday February 12, 5 PM-Friday February 13, 5 PM (25%)

Students must complete a reading midterm (posted Thursday February 12) via Quercus by Friday, February 13 at 5 PM. The reading midterm is open book and should take no more than one hour. Students must take the reading midterm independently and are not allowed to work together.

Final Exam, TBD (35%)

Students will have a final exam, comprised of 3 essay questions, in the final exam period. (Plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See full statement below)

Late Assignments

Students are responsible for tracking deadlines and requirements. Late work (without a granted extension) will be reduced by 5 percentage points for every day late. Students must fill out the form below to request extension. Request extensions must be made at least 24-hours before assignments are due and will only be granted with documentation and under extenuating

circumstances. Other coursework and other foreseen circumstances are not grounds for an extension.

[Course Requests Winter 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Appeals and Re-Grading Policy

The first thing to do is to wait. I will discuss your assignment for at least 48 hours after the assignment has been returned to you. After this, if you still wish for a regrade, please fill out the form below to request a re-grade your paper. Be aware, however, that this does not guarantee your mark will be raised. It could go up, down, or remain the same.

[Course Requests Winter 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Grading

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	Submitted through
Attendance and participation	20%	Throughout semester	n/a
Presentations	20%	Throughout semester	Via Quercus
Reading Midterm	25%	Thursday, February 12, 5 PM-Friday February 13, 5 PM	Via Quercus
Final Exam	35%	TBD, Final Exam Period	In-person

Course Policies and Procedures: This course will use Quercus to disseminate all course-related information and assignments. It is your responsibility to log on to Quercus regularly and obtain relevant information. All written assignments must be submitted through Quercus

Communication Information

You are responsible for checking Quercus and your UofT e-mail regularly. If your request is related to office hours, attendance and absences, accommodation, extension requests, or late enrollment use the form below. When corresponding by e-mail, please put course title at the beginning of the subject line, followed by the subject of your e-mail. I will not respond to emails over the weekend or after 5PM during weekdays. Unless an emergency, responses will take 48-72 hours.

[Course Requests Winter 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact Accessibility Services at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca and submit your documentation via the form below

[Course Requests Winter 2026 – Fill out form](#)

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/contact-us>

Academic Integrity

Please refer to the Seven **Grandfathers of Academic Integrity**:

https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wpcontent/uploads/Seven_Grandfathers_in_Academic_Integrity.pdf The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at the UofT. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your UofT degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT, GitHub Copilot, and open-source models that you have trained and/or deployed yourself.)

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools is strictly prohibited in all course assessments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor. This includes, but is not limited to, ChatGPT, GitHub Copilot, and open-source models that you have trained and/or deployed yourself. You may not interact with, nor copy, paraphrase, or adapt any content from any generative AI for the purpose of completing assignments in this course. Use of generative AI will be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of academic misconduct under the Code of Behavior on Academic Matters.

This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to ensure that our evaluations are a fair and accurate assessment of your learning. You should aim to understand course content at a level that far exceeds what an automated tool can achieve. Our course—and in particular, each assignment—is designed to help you attain true mastery of the course content.

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). You may opt out of this tool by contacting the instructor as early as possible in the semester to make alternative arrangements. Writing Centres: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/> Academic Success: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc> How not to Plagiarize: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/> RESOURCES Writing

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Recording/ Filming

Creating an environment where students can engage in open, thoughtful, and constructive discussions requires a foundation of trust and mutual respect. This is particularly crucial in a course on International Relations and foreign policy, areas often marked by complex and sensitive debates. Therefore, recording or filming class discussions or presentations is strictly prohibited unless explicitly authorized by the faculty. Unauthorized recording will be considered a violation of the code of behavior and will be referred to the Academic Integrity Committee.

Support

Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for information and advice on all aspects of academic writing. Students are encouraged to make use of the college writing centers for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments with the writing centers early, as they fill up fast. Information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-andscience>. Students can also take advantage of the Library's free "Writing Plus" academic skills workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and critical reading skills, at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. Registrar Support: Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

Health and Wellness:

Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/health-wellness/>
6 Crisis Support: Students in distress can access a range of free crisis lines available from the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto, as listed below: • University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/> • City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/crisis-lines-suicide-depression-telephonesupport-lines-non-crisis-mental-health-services.html> Most of these crisis lines are available 24 hours a day and some address specific problems that students may be experiencing. Immediate assistance is available as follows: • My SSP for University of Toronto Students: 1-844-451-9700. • Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454 • Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200 • Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357) • The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

You are not alone: please get help if you're experiencing difficulties or are in distress.

Reading and Schedule

1. January 8: Introduction

Bouie, Jamelle. *How the Enlightenment Created Modern Race Thinking and Why We Should Confront It*, Slate, 5 June 2018, slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/06/taking-the-enlightenment-seriously-requires-talking-about-race.html.

Bacevich, Andrew J. *Ideas and American Foreign Policy*. Harvard University Press, 2009, pgs 3-23 (skim).

Bell, Duncan. "What is liberalism?" *Political theory* 42.6 (2014): 682-715.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *This violent empire: the birth of an American national identity*. UNC Press Books, 2010, Ch 1

Recommended

Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual peace: a philosophical essay*. Classics Ebooks, 2021.

Ruggie, John Gerard. "The past as prologue?: Interests, identity, and American foreign policy." *International security* 21.4 (1997): 89-125.

Walt, Stephen M. "The myth of American exceptionalism." *Foreign Policy* 189 (2011): 72.

"Washington's Farewell Address 1796." Avalon Project, Yale Law School, 2008, avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp.

Lowenthal, David. "The Past is a Foreign Country. 1985." *New York, New York* (1985). 109-124

2. January 15: Religion and Capital in the Colonies

Slotkin, Richard. *A Great Disorder: National Myth and the Battle for America*. Harvard University Press, 2024, Chapter 1

Liu, Glory M. *Adam Smith's America: how a Scottish philosopher became an icon of American capitalism*. Princeton University Press, 2022, Chapters 1-2

Bonomi, Patricia U. *Under the cope of heaven: Religion, society, and politics in colonial America*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2003, Chapter 7

Recommended

Fitzsimons, David M. "Tom Paine's new world order: Idealistic internationalism in the ideology of early American foreign relations." *Diplomatic History* 19.4 (1995): 569-582.

3. January 22: Anglosphere *Politics Reading Presentations Start*

Mills, Charles W. "Racial liberalism." *Pmla* 123.5 (2008): 1380-1397.

Horton, Carol A. *Race and the making of American liberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
Introduction

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "The 1619 Project." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 14 Aug. 2019, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html, Episode 2

Nayak, Meghana V., and Christopher Malone. "American orientalism and American exceptionalism: A critical rethinking of US hegemony." *International Studies Review* 11.2 (2009): 253-276.

Recommended

Karp, Matthew. *This vast southern empire: slaveholders at the helm of American foreign policy*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

Hunt, Michael H. *Ideology and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2009, Chapter 3

4. January 29: Ownership and Indigenous

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An indigenous peoples' history of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2023.
Chapter 4

Szarejko, Andrew A. "Foreign or Domestic? The Desecuritisation of Indian Affairs and Normativity in Securitisation Theory." *Millennium* 50.3 (2022): 785-809.

Konkle, Maureen. "Indigenous ownership and the emergence of US liberal imperialism." *American Indian Quarterly* 32.3 (2008): 297-323.

Cha, Taesuh. "The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the "standard of civilization" in US foreign policy." *European Journal of International Relations* 21.4 (2015): 743-767.

Recommended

Cullinane, Michael Patrick, and David Ryan, eds. *US foreign policy and the Other*. Vol. 4. Berghahn Books, 2014. Chapter 2

5. February 5: Masculinity and Individualism

Ditz, Toby L., 'Manhood and the US Republican Empire', in Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, and Lisa G. Materson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of American Women's and Gender History*, Oxford Handbooks (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 10 Sept. 2018)

Hixson, Walter L. *The myth of American diplomacy: National identity and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2008. Ch 2. 43-73

Nye, Robert A. "Western masculinities in war and peace." *The American Historical Review* 112.2 (2007): 417-438.

Zabin, Serena, 'War, Culture, and Gender in Colonial and Revolutionary North America', in Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink, and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600* (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 10 Nov. 2020)

Recommended

Ward, Matthew C. *Making the Frontier Man: Violence, White Manhood, and Authority in the Early Western Backcountry*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023.

6. February 12: The War OF 1812

Fitz, Caitlin. "The Monroe Doctrine and the Indigenous Americas." *Diplomatic History* 47.5 (2023): 802-822.

Hickey, Donald. "Small War, Big Consequences." *Foreign Affairs*, 17 Sept. 2015, www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2012-10-31/small-war-big-consequences.

Mead, Walter Russell. "The Jacksonian Revolt." *Foreign Affairs*, 24 July 2024, www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/jacksonian-revolt-populism-donald-trump.

Bacevich, Andrew J. *Ideas and American Foreign Policy*. Harvard University Press, 2009, pgs 36-61

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An indigenous peoples' history of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2023. Chapter 6

Recommended

Taylor, Alan. *The civil war of 1812: American citizens, British subjects, Irish rebels, & Indian allies*. Vintage, 2010.

Ko, Jiyoung. *Popular Nationalism and War*. Oxford University Press, 2023, Chapter 6

Eustace, Nicole. *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Frymer, Paul. *Building an American empire: The era of territorial and political expansion*. Princeton University Press, 2017.

Murphy, Gretchen. *Hemispheric imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and narratives of US empire*. Duke University Press, 2005.

February 19 No Class READING WEEK

7. February 26: MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR and Expansion South and West

Bacevich, Andrew J. *American empire*. Harvard University Press, 2009, 61-85

Heiss, Mary Ann. "The evolution of the imperial idea and US national identity." *Diplomatic History* 26.4 (2002): 511-540.

Arista, Noelani, Emily Conroy-Krutz, and Michael A. Blaakman. "'A Slave State in Embryo': Indian Territory, Native Sovereignty, and the Expansion of Slavery's Empire." *The Early Imperial Republic: From the American Revolution to the US–Mexican War*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023. 118-136.

Karp, Matthew, 'Grand Strategy of the Master Class: Slavery and Foreign Policy from the Antebellum Era to the Civil War', in Elizabeth Borgwardt, Christopher McKnight Nichols, and Andrew Preston (eds), *Rethinking American Grand Strategy* (New York, 2021; online edn, Oxford Academic, 18 Mar. 2021)

Recommended

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An indigenous peoples' history of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2023. Chapter 7-8

Greenberg, Amy S., 'Gender and the Wars of Nation-Building and Nation-Keeping in the Americas, 1830s–1870s', in Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink, and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600* (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 10 Nov. 2020)

Blaakman, Michael A., Emily Conroy-Krutz, and Noelani Arista, eds. *The Early Imperial Republic: From the American Revolution to the US–Mexican War*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023. Chapter 13

8. March 5: The Spanish American War, World War 1, and Ascending Power

Offner, John L. "McKinley and the Spanish-American War." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34.1 (2004): 50-61.

McCartney, Paul T. "Religion, the Spanish-American War, and the idea of American mission." *Journal of Church and State* 54.2 (2012): 257-278.

Bacevich, Andrew J. *Ideas and American Foreign Policy*. Harvard University Press, 159-181

Peceny, Mark. "A constructivist interpretation of the liberal peace: The ambiguous case of the Spanish-American war." *Journal of Peace Research* 34.4 (1997): 415-430.

Recommended

Capozzola, Christopher. *Uncle Sam wants you: World War I and the making of the modern American citizen*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Budreau, Lisa M. *Bodies of war: World War I and the politics of commemoration in America, 1919-1933*. NYU Press, 2010.

The American colonial state in the Philippines: Global perspectives Julian Go, Anne L Foster
Duke University Press, 2003

Maass, Richard W. *The Picky Eagle: How Democracy and Xenophobia Limited US Territorial Expansion*. Cornell University Press, 2020.

9. March 12: World War II and Early Cold War

Samet, Elizabeth D. *Looking for the good war: American amnesia and the violent pursuit of happiness*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021. 3-21, 25-75

Hunt, Michael H. *Ideology and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2009, 150-159

Lascurettes, Kyle M. *Orders of exclusion: Great powers and the strategic sources of foundational rules in international relations*. Oxford University Press, 2020, Chapter 7.

Jervis, Robert. *Identity and the Cold War*. Princeton University Press, 2017, Chapter 8.

Recommended

Khong, Yuen Foong. *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*. Princeton University Press, 2020, chapter 7

Bacevich, Andrew J. *American empire*. Harvard University Press, 2009. 226-242, 359-361

Hixson, Walter L. *The myth of American diplomacy: National identity and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2008, Chapter 6

10. March 19: Korea, Vietnam, and Covert Action in the Cold War

Westad, Odd Arne. "The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times." *Cambridge UP* (2005).

Shibusawa, Naoko. "Ideology, culture, and the Cold War." *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (2013): 39-40.

Hess, Gary R. "South Vietnam Under Siege, 1961–1965: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Question of Escalation or Disengagement." *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War*. Columbia University Press, 2010. 143-167.

Ngoei, Wen-Qing. "The Domino Logic of the Darkest Moment: The Fall of Singapore, the Atlantic Echo Chamber, and 'Chinese Penetration' in US Cold War Policy toward Southeast Asia." *journal of american-east asian relations* 21.3 (2014): 215-245.

Recommended

Bacevich, Andrew J. *American empire*. Harvard University Press, 2009. 248-260 (capitalism)-bacevich 294-298, 363-364, 391-394

Hong, Christine. *A Violent Peace: Race, US Militarism, and Cultures of Democratization in Cold War Asia and the Pacific*. Stanford University Press, 2020.

Hunt, Michael H. *Ideology and US foreign policy*. Yale University Press, 2009, 159-170

11. April 2: Unipolarity and the End of History

Schramm, Madison. "“As Inscrutable as the Sphinx, but Far More Dangerous”: Trends in Democratic–Personalist Conflict." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 8.1 (2023): ogac044.

Fukuyama, Francis. "The end of history?." *Conflict after the Cold War*. Routledge, 2015. 16-27.

Matlock, Jack F. *Superpower illusions: How myths and false ideologies led America astray—And how to return to reality*. Yale University Press, 201, Chapter 6

Löfflmann, Georg, Amy Skonieczny, and Rubrick Biegón. "The Trump shock: populism and changing narratives of US foreign policy." *Populist Foreign Policy: Regional Perspectives of Populism in the International Scene*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023. 117-145

Recommended

Bacevich, Andrew J. *American empire*. Harvard University Press, 2009. 397-422

Nau, Henry R. "Ideologies and US Foreign Policy." *The Routledge Handbook of Ideology and International Relations*. Routledge, 2022. 391-406.

C-Span. *George W. Bush Presidential Address to Joint Session of Congress*, C-SPAN, 21 Sept. 2001, www.c-span.org/program/joint-session-of-congress/presidential-address/167885.

Pepinsky, Thomas, and Jessica Chen Weiss. "The clash of systems? Washington should avoid ideological competition with Beijing." *Foreign Affairs* (2021).

Desch, Michael C. "America's liberal illiberalism: The ideological origins of overreaction in US foreign policy." *International Security* 32.3 (2007): 7-43.

Murray, Michelle. "CHAPTER 3. AMERICA FIRST? The Erosion of American Status Under Trump." *Chaos Reconsidered: The Liberal Order and the Future of International Politics*. Columbia University Press, 2023. 38-45.