

MGIMO University
School of Government and International Affairs

Foreign Policy Analysis

Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Instructor
Dr. Alexander K. Bobrov

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This syllabus is designed in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor Program «Government and International Relations»

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**PART 1:
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION, COURSE DESCRIPTION
AND TEACHING METHODS**

1.1 General information

Template

- Full course title: Foreign Policy Analysis
- Type of course: Elective
- Level of course B.A.
- Year of study: 3rd
- Number of ECTS credits allocated: 2
- Name of lecturer(s) and contact details:
Dr. Alexander K. Bobrov
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1.2 Course aims and learning outcomes

Aims

This course provides an introduction to the field of foreign policy analysis. Its focus is to bring together the best features of comparative politics, contemporary international relations and regional studies. The intention is to challenge students to explore a wide range of sources in order to be able to analyze the foreign policies of different countries - great powers, middle nations and small countries - of 6 regions of the world: Post-Soviet space, Euro-Atlantic region, Asia-Pacific region, Middle East, Latin America, Africa. This course is designed to provide you with the most relevant theory pertaining to the foreign policy analysis as well as the state-of-the art knowledge that would be helpful to create a comprehensive view of the modern world on different levels of analysis: individual, national, regional and global, which is of utmost importance for future experts in government and international affairs that will have to operate in a multipolar world and navigate in an increasingly complex relations between different nations.

Outcomes

- To identify and assess the main factors affecting the official foreign-policy decision-making process, the most important features of the grand strategy and foreign policy of a particular country and to be able to place it both in regional and global context.
- To build oral presentation skills through leading and participating in seminar discussions and debates
- To sharpen concise writing skills, to practice concise written exposition.
- To improve research and analysis skills.

1.3 Course requirements and grading plan

Course requirements

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are graded. Anyone with less than 70% attendance will automatically fail the course.

Reading: Conscientious reading of the assigned materials is compulsory; as well as coming prepared for discussion. Student participation in class discussions will have a major impact on your overall performance. In addition to the readings listed, students are expected to have a basic knowledge of current events for classroom discussions. Readings are labeled as “Essential”, or mandatory; and “Supplementary”. The latter are not required to be read; however, lectures and seminars are likely to be drawn from this material; and, any information covered in lecture and seminars may appear on quizzes, exams, and be expected to be taken into account within written work.

Fair Warnings on assignments: If you miss an assignment deadline, without a well-certified and verifiable excuse (medical 'spravka'), it will count as a zero. In this case, there will be no chance for make-up. A written, verifiable, and valid excuse is required in order to request make up work. If you have a conflicting work schedule, adjust it ahead of time. Any assignment *accepted* late will be penalized one-third letter grade (from an A- to a B+, or a B to a B-, for example) after the 'spravka' deadline, then every subsequent day there after. Problems with technology are not an acceptable reason for late work.

Note: All readings should be available online via my Google Disk link.

**It is therefore your responsibility to ensure you can access readings in time to complete them before class.* Do let me know if you encounter any difficulties within the first week.*

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1j5vGG3p15Y0kzSUCQDXOET6395vM9JMY>

Grading plan

Note: There are NO extra credit opportunities in this class. To maintain fairness, all students will have to go through the same set of assignments. No one will be awarded an extra assignment in order to boost the final grade. *However, if a student is failing, on a case-by-case basis (circumstances depending), an additional assignment may be allowed.* Therefore, students should make sure they are fulfilling the grading requirements in order to obtain a desired final grade. Below is the detailed explanation of grading components:

- *Attendance and Participation (10%):* Everyone who comes to class, pays attention, and participates reasonably well receives 100% for that day's attendance and participation. Deductions are made due to lack of attention and/or lack of contribution to the class.
- *Debates in the form of the Diplomatic Briefing Model (30%)*
- *Tests (2 x 30% each)*

The Diplomatic Briefing Model aims to emulate a diplomatic briefing held by Spokesperson of a Ministry of foreign affairs. This type of debate provides for two main roles:

- spokesperson who represents a country and defends its foreign policy by embracing responsibility for the actions made and the words uttered;
- journalists (the rest of the group) who ask questions on different matters and, thus, express criticism.

Every spokesperson has app. 5 minutes of pure time to formulate his/her ideas.

Conversion to letter grade: Points accumulated across various assignments will be converted to a letter grade in accordance with the following scale: 90% and above – A range; 82-89% – B range; 75-81 % – C range; 67-74% – D range; 60-66% – E range; 59% and below – F

Academic Honor Code

Plagiarism and academic integrity: As a student, you are committed to honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty of any kind is cheating: misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them, and the fabrication of information. All work you submit must be your own. Cheating will result in a zero for the assignment. Suspected cases may be referred to the university authorities. If you have questions about what constitutes proper use of published or unpublished sources, please ask.

**PART 2:
WEEKLY SCHEDULE & READINGS**

2.1 Types of work

Types of work	Academic hours
Total	72
Total for lectures, seminars and written exam	32
Lectures	16
Seminars	16
Homework	40
Oral Presentations and Essays	20
Preparation for lectures, and seminars	20
Course Assessment	Discussion, Debates, Tests.

2.2. Course content and readings by topic

The course will progress with a series of lectures to establish a foundation of understanding of foreign policy analysis, followed by a series of seminars (quizzes and debates).

Theory

Week 1 Introduction to FPA and its Evolution

<p>Aims and Content</p> <p>Introduce FPA, its history, tools and objectives of foreign policy analysis; as well as course expectations. To question: What distinguishes Foreign Policy Analysis from International Relations? Is Foreign Policy Analysis a better guide to understanding international politics than International Relations?</p> <p>The main theories to analyze the matter in question</p>
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ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "Introduction: The Situation and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Ch.1, 3-35.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Alden, Chris and Amnon Aran. "Foreign Policy Analysis – An Overview." in *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches*. Ch.1, 1-19.
- Breuning, Marijke. "Why Study Foreign Policy Comparatively?" in *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction*. Ch. 1, 1-26.

Week 2 Role of Personality and Leadership

<p>Aims and Content</p> <p>Discuss how foreign policy decisions get materialized, and how powerful individuals influence foreign policy decisions and their implementation. To question: Whether 'all foreign policy decisions are ultimately products of the leader's personal preferences'?</p>

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "The Individual Decisionmaker." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and*

Contemporary Theory. Ch.2, 39-72.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Jervis, Robert. "Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?" *Security Studies* 22, 2 (2013): 153-79.
- Breuning, Marijke. "Do Leaders Shape Foreign Policy?" in *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction*. Ch. 2, 27-52.

Week 3 Groupthink, Organizational and Bureaucratic Politics

Aims and Content

To learn about how foreign policy decisions are made within different contextual settings: group decision-making, bureaucratic politics and organization driven circumstances. To question: Are bureaucrats or leaders more influential in shaping a state's foreign policy?
The main theories to analyze the matter in question

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "Group Decision-Making: Small Group Dynamics, Organizational Process, and Bureaucratic Politics." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Ch.3, 73-115.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Glen, Whyte. "Groupthink Reconsidered." *The Academy of Management Review* 14, no.1 (1989): 40-52.
- Breuning, Marijke. "Leaders Are Not Alone: The Role of Advisors and Bureaucracies." in *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction*. Ch. 4, 85-113.

Week 4 Role of Culture and Ideas

Aims and Content

To see how different cultural and ideological aspects mingle with foreign policy decisions. National identity, perception of others, and other relevant cultural elements. To question: Does knowledge of history improve foreign policy decision making?
The main theories to analyze the matter in question

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "Culture and National Identity." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Ch.4, 117-141.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Vlahos, Michael. "Culture and Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy* 82 (Spring, 1991): 59-78.
- Pye, Lucian W. "Political Culture Revisited." *Political Psychology*, 12/3 (September 1991), 487-508.

Week 5 Domestic Influence & Constraints

Aims and Content

To learn about the role various intrastate interest groups, media outlets and other relevant formations (i.e. civil society, NGOs, etc.) play in the formation and effectiveness of foreign policy choices. To question the influence of these constraints; and whether regime type determines a state's foreign policy.
The main theories to analyze the matter in question

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "Domestic Politics and Opposition." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Ch.5, 141-160.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Shultz Kenneth. "Domestic Politics and International Relations." Handbook of International Relations. Ch. 19, 478-523.

Week 6. Foreign Policy in International Context

Aims and Content

To mix foreign policy in its projection on international stage; and to recall tools and external constraints. To question: Whether 'diplomacy is merely foreign policy practised by weak states.' Is the influence of the external environment upon foreign policy decision making exaggerated? The main theories to analyze the matter in question

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Hudson, M. Valerie. "The Levels of National Attributes and International System: Effects on Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Ch.6, 161-183.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Breuning, Marijke. "Leaders in the Context II: International Constraints on Foreign Policy Decision-Making." *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction*. Ch.6, 141-163.
- Henrikson, Alan K. "Distance and Foreign Policy: A Political Geography Approach." *International Political Science Review* 23, 4 (2002): 437-466.

Week 7. Quiz 1 of 2

Aims and Content

To test the retention of lectures. This is cumulative: multiple choice, definitions, and short answer essay questions.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- All Essential Readings above and notes from lectures, which may have included additional information.

Practice

Week 8. The Post-Soviet Space.

Aims and Content

To learn about Russian domestic politics and Kremlin's grand strategy, political systems of other post-soviet countries and their foreign policy posture, main regional international organizations and economic integrations – CIS, EAEU, CSTO, the Union State of Russia and Belarus, GUAM; regional conflicts – Ukraine – Donbass, Moldova – Transnistria, Georgia – Abkhazia/South Ossetia, Azerbaijan – the Nagorno-Karabakh republic, territorial disputes in Central Asia, the influence of extraregional powers: the USA, the EU, Turkey, China, Iran, Afghanistan etc

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. Edited by Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Michael T. Snarr. SAGE, 2012. P.94-118
- Russia and the States of Former Soviet Union/Donaldson R., Nadkarni V. *The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*. Routledge, 2018. Pp.170-246
- Helena Rytövuori-Apunen. Power and Conflict in Russia's Borderlands: The Post-Soviet Geopolitics of Dispute Resolution. I.B.Tauris, 2019

- The Geography of Central Asia: Human Adaptations, Natural Processes and Post-Soviet Transition. Springer, 2020. P.279-340

Week 9. Euro-Atlantic Region

Aims and Content

To learn about US domestic policy and Washington's grand strategy, political systems of European countries (UK, France, Germany etc) and their foreign policy posture, main regional organizations and economic integrations – NATO, the EU, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, regional dynamics in the Balkans (especially Serbia-Kosovo disagreements, the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the influence of the West-Russia relations.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Richard N. Haas. The World: A Brief Introduction. Penguin Books, 2020. P.106-126
- Reuben Steff. US Foreign Policy in the Age of Trump: Drivers, Strategy and Tactics. Routledge, 2020
- Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. Edited by Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Michael T. Snarr. SAGE, 2012. P.27-94
- William H. Hill. No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989. Wilson Center, 2019

Week 10. Asia-Pacific region

Aims and Content

To learn about Chinese domestic policy and Beijing's grand strategy, SCO, internal situation in Afghanistan, political system of India and international relations in southern Asia, the political systems of Japan, North Korea and South Korea, political disagreements in the region (North-Korean nuclear and missile program, political and territorial disputes etc), economic integration (APEC, ASEAN, etc), the concept of Indo-Pacific region, AUKUS.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Richard N. Haas. The World: A Brief Introduction. Penguin Books, 2020. P.126 -163
- Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. Edited by Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Michael T. Snarr. SAGE, 2012. P.118-183
- Michael R. Auslin. Asia's New Geopolitics: Essays on Reshaping the Indo-Pacific. Hoover Institution Press, 2020
- International Relations and Asia's Southern Tier: ASEAN, Australia, and India, edited by Gilbert Rozman, Joseph Chinyong Liow, 2018

Week 11. Middle East

Aims and Content

To learn about the political systems and grand strategies of the key regional powers – Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Iran, the Shia-Sunni divide, the Kurd issue, the political system of Iraq, the main regional conflicts – Israel and Palestine, civil wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Richard N. Haas. The World: A Brief Introduction. Penguin Books, 2020. P.163-190

- Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. Edited by Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Michael T. Snarr. SAGE, 2012. P.183-223
- Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East, edited by Shahram Akbarzadeh. Routledge, 2019

Week 12. Latin America and Africa, the colonial legacy of European countries

Aims and Content

To learn about the political system and foreign-policy postures of key Latin American countries (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba) amid the so called “Left” and “Right” turns, multiple economic integrations of the region (SELAK, MERKOSUR, ALBA etc), civil war in Columbia, the influence of the USA (directly and indirectly via OAS and USMCA), the Organization of Ibero-American countries; the political systems of key African countries (South Africa, Nigeria), regional organizations (African Union) and subregional integrations, the influence of extraregional powers; the Commonwealth of Nations, the Francophonie.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Richard N. Haas. The World: A Brief Introduction. Penguin Books, 2020. P.190-217
- Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. Edited by Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Michael T. Snarr. SAGE, 2012. P.223-313
- The Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World, edited by Jorge I Dominguez, Ana Covarrubias. Routledge, 2021
- Handbook of Africa’s International Relations, edited by Tim Murithi. Routledge, 2015.

Week 13. Global and Multilateral Diplomacy

Aims and Content

To learn about US-Russia in the post-bipolar world, transnational multilateral institutes – G7, BRICS, G20 and the most universal Organization – the UN with a view to understanding the most important items on the international agenda (the UN reform, peacekeeping activities etc).

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- Richard N. Haas. The World: A Brief Introduction. Penguin Books, 2020.
- The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, ed/by Thomass G.Weiss and S.Daws, Oxford University Press. 2018
- Hajnal P. The G20: Evolution, Interrelationships, Documentation. Routledge, 2019
- Stuenkel O. BRICS and the Future of Global Order. Lexington Books, 2020.

Week 14. Quiz 2 of 2

Aims and Content

To test the retention of lectures. This is cumulative: multiple choice, definitions, and short answer essay questions.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- All Essential Readings above and notes from lectures, which may have included additional information.

Week 15. The Diplomatic Briefing Model

Aims and Content

The Diplomatic Briefing Model aims to emulate a diplomatic briefing held by Spokesperson of a Ministry of foreign affairs. This type of debate provides for two main roles:

- spokesperson who represents a country and defends its foreign policy by embracing responsibility for the actions made and the words uttered;
- journalists (the rest of the group) who ask questions on different matters and, thus, express criticism.

Every spokesperson has app. 5 minutes of pure time to formulate his/her ideas.

ESSENTIAL READINGS

- All Essential Readings above and notes from lectures and seminars, which may have included additional information.

Week 16, TBA. Review of Quiz and ‘Zachot’

Aims and Content

To review final grades; and ‘zachot’

Disclaimer: Instructor could modify schedule of the classes as necessary.

PART 3: APPENDICES

Appendix: Tips for Success

Remember that there is no shortcut to success and no easy fixes. To be successful, first of all you have to ask yourselves what is it that you want to obtain from the course. If you simply want to be over the course, for it to be calculated towards your degree requirements, no tips would help you to be successful. Only your genuine desire to learn and contribute would guide you in your journey towards successful outcome. That is the starting point.

On a more technical note, preparing for your classes and reading the assigned material should not be a source of stress for you. Again, treat them as a source of something new and insightful to help you learn and develop. Our classes will be based upon the discussions of the main arguments and points in the readings. However, you are welcome to contribute with your own critical opinion about the readings. It just will demonstrate that you have mastered them well enough.

As to the fulfillment of your class assignments, always remember that keeping the work until the very last moment will not help. Always start as early as you could. It gives you more time, space and freedom to think, question, analyze and prepare a quality work. If this is a written assignment, try to have some extra time at your disposal after having finished the first draft of your work. Finish the first draft, leave it out of your sight for as much time as you could, and then take a second, fresher look at what you have written. Repeat this for as many times as time allows you, but do not overdo it. Anyway, in most cases usually a third look suffices to eliminate major shortcomings. This introspective and critical look at your own writing will substantially improve its overall quality.

Appendix: Suggestions and Tips on Writing

(Adapted from material by Dr. Jo Spear & Dr. Austin M. Carson)

Sources: Preference should be given to academic journals and monographs, for your independent research. You should always approach sources as a critical reader. Make your own judgment about the credibility of what they say and critically evaluate the sources they use and whether the empirical evidence justifies the conclusions that they reach. Internet sources can be suspect (anyone can put materials up on the web) so please approach these cautiously. Use a standard citation format, like Chicago Style/Turabian, or MLA; and footnotes rather than endnotes. No bibliography.

Focus Your Paper: A common structural problem with student papers is that they lack sufficient focus. There are some easy ways to avoid this problem. The first and best is to give yourself a very specific question (this is surprisingly hard to do well) and then structure your paper to address it. The worst case is a paper where you do not have a question. Thus it may have a general title like “The Crimean Crisis” and it may contain a lot of facts. However, there will be no explanation of why the facts matter and no explanation for why events transpired as they did rather than some other way. In short, the paper will be an unstructured discursive wander around the issues. You may show some research skills in answering in this fashion, but you will not necessarily show any structuring or analytical skills; these are essential in both academic and policy writing.

Better approach: Where you have a question, but it allows you to just give a narrative answer. For example, “What role has Russia played in the Crimean crisis?” This at least suggests a structure for the paper and could be used to establish some categories (for example, political role, military role, peacemaking role, reconstruction role). In an answer to this you would certainly display some research skills, but not the analytical skills that bring you closer to a grade of ‘A’.

Best approach: The question is focused and forces you to make judgments about causality and event importance. For example, “Why has Russia become involved in the Crimean crisis?” The difficulty with this type of a question is that there are a number of contending answers, so you really have to think about what you include, how you approach it, what you argue and how persuasive that argument is. This type of question also encourages a more sophisticated structure than merely a narrative. Thus, in answering this, your paper could be structured to summarize the event, explain its significance, and make your own interpretation of what the key factors were that produced Russian, or European, or U.S. involvement in Ukraine. You would use course material, your own research, and your own judgment to justify your conclusions about what really mattered.

Showcase Your Skills: The best papers showcase skills like:

- Your understanding of the course materials (not just your original research)
- Your ability to conduct broad and deep original research
- Your ability to comprehend and use different kinds of documents (scholarly; policy-focused; primary government)
- Your ability to situate your knowledge in wider context (historical; academic discipline)
- Your ability to draw insights from interesting, creative places (from other disciplines or expertise areas; from other historical eras; from other domains in international security)
- Your ability to make judgments about what causes what
- Your ability to present work in a suitable academic format, for example, to write a paper with a strong introduction and conclusion, to effectively footnote to provide an accurate ‘paper trail’.
- Your ability to edit your work effectively

Twenty Basic Rules: These are derived from Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 123-128 and Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Selecting a Topic, Making an Argument and Organizing Your Work

- Pick an important topic
- Pick a manageable topic
- Say something new and important
- Concentrate on making a single set of arguments
- Do not over-state or under-state your claims
- Acknowledge other viewpoints and treat them with respect
- Anticipate and preempt counterarguments
- Outline everything before writing anything
- Start with a proper introduction and end with a proper conclusion
- Use headings and sub-headings to provide structure and to convey your main points

Writing

- Identify – and write to – your audience
- Get to the point
- Stick to the point
- Stay out of the weeds
- Be precise
- Be concise
- Avoid jargon
- Always write second and third drafts
- Never plagiarize
- Proofread every single words