

Syllabus (assignment highlighted on schedule)  
**POL 350: AMERICAN POLITICAL THEORY**

**Required text:**

*American political thought.* (Available through textbook rental)

**Course description**

In this course we will examine the history and development of American political thought, with attention to the thinkers and themes influential to institutions, ideologies, and controversies in American politics. The course will analyze the ideals and principles upon which the United States was founded, and critically assess their application and realization.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify important thinkers and themes in American political philosophy.
2. Explain the ideals and principles upon which the United States was founded.
3. Analyze the implications, applications, and consequences of controversies around American founding ideals and principles.
4. Assess the controversies in American political philosophy in terms of their influence on the development of American politics and government.

**Course requirements**

Each week of the course contains assignments that must be completed by midnight on Saturday at the end of that week. Failing to complete any assignment or test by the end of the week will result in receiving no points for that assignment. Readings from the text are also assigned each week, as well as lectures related to each reading. These recorded lectures are recommended as supplementary to the reading. You may view the lectures at any time during the course.

**Checkpoint paper assignments (30%)**

There will be 4 checkpoint assignments that will require students to respond to a question about the readings and lectures from the previous weeks. Students should respond to the question in a short essay (300-500 words) in a MS Word document, and submit the answer to the dropbox for the assigned week. Checkpoints will be graded based on the accuracy, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of the answer. Late checkpoint assignments will be deducted one letter grade per day late.

**Online class discussion (35%)**

Students will be responsible for posting responses to 4 discussion topics that will be open at different times throughout the course. Each discussion topic will be open for two weeks, with the first two posts due in the first week, and the third and fourth posts due in the second week. These discussions will ask students to consider course content more deeply and reflect on current political events and popular culture in light of course content.

**Essay tests (35%)** – Students will complete two timed essay exams. There will be 4 questions on each exam related to the lectures and readings from the prior weeks.

## Course schedule

<u>Week</u> (starts Monday)	<u>Lectures</u>	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Readings</u> (available in course textbook)
<b>1 – Jan 24</b>	Introduction part 1 Introduction part 2	Discussion 1 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thomas Paine: Common Sense   The American Crisis, p. 131</li> <li>The Declaration of Independence: The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, p. 151</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Jan 31</b>	Locke, Hume and Montesquieu	Discussion 1 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Locke: Second Treatise (<i>available online in week 2</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Feb 7</b>	The American Founding	Checkpoint 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Articles of Confederation: The Articles of Confederation, p. 155</li> <li>John Adams: “A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States”, p. 181</li> <li>The Constitution: The Constitution of the United States of America, p. 170</li> </ul>
<b>4 – Feb 14</b>	Forming a government	Discussion 2 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Madison and Alexander Hamilton: Federalist 10, 23, 51, p. 199, 205, 219</li> <li>Richard Henry Lee: Letters from the Federal Farmer, p. 248</li> <li>Robert Yates: Essays of Brutus, p. 256</li> </ul>
<b>5 – Feb 21</b>	Early controversies	Discussion 2 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>William Lloyd Garrison: Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society, p. 559</li> <li>Henry David Thoreau: Resistance to Civil Government, p. 484</li> </ul>
<b>6 – Feb 28</b>	Civil rights and civil liberties	Checkpoint 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elizabeth Cady Stanton: “The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”   Address to the New York State Legislature, p. 529</li> <li>Frederick Douglass: Lectures on Slavery   What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?, p. 594</li> </ul>
<b>7 – Mar 7</b>	(No lecture: Review and summarize for your notes)	<b>Exam 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John C. Calhoun: A Disquisition on Government, p. 607</li> <li>Abraham Lincoln: Speech on the Dred Scott Decision   Cooper Union Address   First Inaugural Address   Second Annual Message to Congress   The Gettysburg Address   Second Inaugural Address, p. 654-686</li> </ul>
<b>****</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>March 13-19</b>	<b>****</b>

<b>8 – Mar 21</b>	Capitalism and Economic Inequalities	Discussion 3 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Carnegie: The Gospel of Wealth, p. 730</li> <li>• Henry George: Progress and Poverty, p. 740</li> <li>• Emma Goldman: “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For, p. 818</li> </ul>
<b>9 – Mar 28</b>	Liberation movements	Discussion 3 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eugene V. Debs: Speech to the Jury, Unionism and Socialism, p. 834, 840</li> <li>• Booker T. Washington: Atlantic Exposition Address, p. 946</li> <li>• W.E.B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk, p. 950</li> </ul>
<b>10 – Apr 4</b>	Woodrow Wilson	Checkpoint 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodrow Wilson: The New Freedom, p. 1102</li> <li>• <a href="#">World 101 readings</a></li> </ul>
<b>11 – Apr 11</b>	Roosevelt and Dewey	Discussion 4 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Dewey: The Public and Its Problems, p. 1036</li> <li>• Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Commonwealth Club Speech   The Four Freedoms   A Second Bill of Rights, p.1170, 1187, 1190</li> </ul>
<b>12 – Apr 18</b>	Contemporary Liberalism and Conservatism	Discussion 4 (At least two posts each week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louis Hartz: The Concept of a Liberal Society, p. 1247</li> <li>• Barry Goldwater: The Conscience of a Conservative, p. 1256</li> <li>• Students for a Democratic Society: The Port Huron Statement, p. 1290</li> <li>• Martin Luther King Jr.: Letter from the Birmingham City Jail, p. 1308</li> <li>• Malcom X: The Ballot or the Bullet, p. 1322</li> </ul>
<b>13 – Apr 24</b>	Current issues and controversies	Checkpoint 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bell hooks: Feminist Theory from Margin to Center, p. 1426</li> <li>• Alan Bloom: The Closing of the American Mind, p. 1438</li> <li>• Peter Singer: All Animals are Equal, <b>online</b></li> <li>• Harry Hay: What Gay Consciousness Brings, Has Brought, to the Hetero Left, <b>online</b></li> <li>• Barack Obama: Speech on Race, <b>online</b></li> <li>• Donald Trump: Inaugural address, <b>online</b></li> <li>• Joe Bide: Inaugural address, <b>online</b></li> </ul>
<b>14 – May 2</b>	(No lecture: Review and summarize for your notes)	<b>Exam 2</b>	

**Assignment 2: Discussing Pop-Up Cases in American Foreign Policy**  
(Assigned in an upper-level Political Science course: *America and the World*)

Throughout the semester we will learn about and discuss a variety of course materials, readings, and pop-up cases from the Council on Foreign Relations. Along the way, you will submit ten replies in Canvas to a discussion prompt that will form the basis for our in-class discussions on most Wednesdays. The *preparation for and participation in* these discussions counts towards *30 percent of your final course grade*. Your final discussion preparation grade will be an average of your scores on these ten items.

The *preparation* component involves posting a reply to a prompt on Canvas due the night BEFORE the in-class discussion. The *participation* component involves coming to class ready to actively participate in our discussions of the topic for that week. This includes sharing your own assessment of the topics as well as working through how we might apply what we have learned in different or new ways. The prompt for the preparation component will include pointers on what else to think about as you prepare for the in-class discussion and links to relevant World101 resources for that discussion.

**Assignment 3: Creating a “Pop-Up” Case**  
(Assigned in an upper-level Political Science course: *America and the World*)

Over the course of the semester, you will develop your own “pop-up” case that explores the challenges and opportunities that face the United States today. The *overall pop-up case project* is worth *30 percent of your final grade*, and it includes a series of informal discussions, a case write-up and presentation, and responses to peers’ cases. Your final pop-up case will resemble the cases we have looked throughout the semester and should provide links to additional materials included in the World101 resources.

The *five informal discussions*, each worth 2 percent of your final grade, are all intended to help you think through picking a case topic and then researching the topic such that you will be able to provide sufficient background on the situation itself. *You have the choice of participating in these discussions either in class or online.*

The *draft case discussions*, worth 5 percent of your final grade, include presenting the basic outline of the situation as you see it and the choices that you realistically believe face the United States in this case. During your assigned week, you will post a reply to the appropriate discussion BEFORE coming to class. Like the general discussions, you can make up for missed in-class participation by contributing to the online discussions.

The final case write-up, case presentation, and replies to other cases, worth 15 percent of your final grade, will serve as our “final” this semester insofar as you will both present your own case and then draft short policy memos response to two of your peers’ cases in a manner that also reflects on the broader arc of the course as we considered America and the world. Details regarding these elements will be provided in class as we wrap up the draft case discussions. All of these elements will be completed via Canvas.

Syllabus (World101-related assignments highlighted on schedule)

### Required Readings

Ikenberry, G. John. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan*. Princeton University Press. (a.k.a. *Leviathan*)

Kupchan, Charles A. 2020. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. Oxford University Press, USA. (a.k.a. *Isolationism*)

Kupchan, Charles A. 2012. *No One's World: The West, the rising rest, and the coming global turn*. Oxford University Press, USA. (a.k.a. *No One's World*)

Lederer, William J., & Eugene Burdick. 1999. *The Ugly American*. WW Norton & Company. (a.k.a. *The Ugly American*)

### Course Description

An examination of contemporary geopolitical and transnational challenges facing the United States. The course draws on both theoretical and historical debates regarding the nature of American foreign policy to evaluate its current and future potential in accomplishing its goals to address key bilateral and multilateral issues.

### Course Outcomes

This is a general education course and the student learning outcomes for this course have been designed with this in mind. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify the historical and theoretical factors significant for establishing and shaping American foreign policy in the 21st Century.
- Describe and evaluate arguments about the relationship between the United States and other international actors, including both states and non-state actors.
- Describe and evaluate arguments about how the United States should respond to various transnational challenges facing it in the 21st Century.
- Use basic research methods to investigate these modern challenges and formulate conclusions on the future directions of American foreign policy.

### Requirements Overview

**Discussions (30%)**      *Discussions based on our weekly topics and linked to pop-up cases in foreign policy and/or current events.*

**Reflections (30%)**      *Responses to questions that build on what we have learned about through the course materials and in our discussions.*

**Creating a "Pop-Up" Case (30%)**      *Catch-all for work related to creating your own "pop-up" case examining challenges and opportunities; this includes discussions, a case write-up and presentation, and responses to peers' cases.*

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**      *Catch-all for general attendance and participation this semester—e.g., completing assignments by the official due date, participating in class-based and/or online forums, and so on.*

### Course Assignments and Reading Schedule

**Week 1:                      Welcome to POL 341 America and the World**

Jan. 24 - Jan. 30

**Course Readings:**

International Relations in Five Minutes (Canvas)  
Chapter 1: Crisis of the Old Order (Leviathan)  
Chapter 1: American Isolationism - Past as Prelude? (Isolationism)  
Chapter 1: The Turn (No One's World)  
**Pop-Up: Multilateralism or Unilateralism? (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

Icebreaker: Should the United States emphasize multilateralism or unilateralism?  
• *Icebreaker contribution DUE Jan. 27; in-class discussion on Jan. 28*

**Week 2:**

**Order and Power in International Relations**

Jan. 31 - Feb. 6

**Course Readings:**

Chapter 2: Power and the Varieties of Order (Leviathan)  
Chapter 3: Power and Strategies of Rule (Leviathan)  
**Pop-Up: A Threat to Taiwan (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: A Threat to Taiwan**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Feb. 1, in-class discussion Feb. 2*

**Case Ideas: Creating Our Own "Pop-Up" Cases**

- *We will brainstorm ideas for our cases in class on Feb. 4 - preferences DUE Feb. 6*

**Week 3:**

**Unipolarity and its Consequences**

Feb. 7 - Feb. 13

**Course Readings:**

Chapter 4: Unipolarity and Its Consequences (Leviathan)  
Chapter 2: An Anatomy of Isolationism (Isolationism)  
**Pop-Up: Global Vaccine Inequality (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Global Vaccine Inequality**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Feb. 8, in-class discussion Feb. 9*

Reflections: Order and Disorder in International Relations

- *Reflection responses are DUE Feb. 13 - NOTE: we will not have class Feb. 11*

**Week 4:**

**The Era of Isolationism**

Feb. 14 - Feb. 20

**Course Readings:**

Chapter 3: The Revolutionary Era (Isolationism)  
Chapter 4: From the French Revolution to War of 1812 (Isolationism)  
Chapter 5: Westward Expansion and the Monroe Doctrine (Isolationism)  
**Pop-Up: Sovereignty and Neutrality in 1807 (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Sovereignty and Neutrality in 1807**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Feb. 15, in-class discussion Feb. 16*

**Case Research: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *We will work on our cases in class on Feb. 18 - case research update DUE Feb. 20*

**Week 5: The Defeat of Realist Internationalism**

Feb. 21 - Feb. 27 **Course Readings:**

Chapter 6: The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Rise of American Power (Isolationism)

Chapter 7: The Spanish American War and the Onset of Imperial Ambition (Isolationism)

Chapter 8: Republican Imperialism and the Isolationist Backlash (Isolationism)

**Pop-Up: Explosion of the USS Maine in 1898 (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Explosion of the USS Maine in 1898**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Feb. 22, in-class discussion Feb. 23*

**Case Research: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *We will work on our cases in class on Feb. 25 - case research update DUE Feb. 27*

**Week 6: The Defeat of Idealist Internationalism**

Feb. 28 - Mar. 6 **Course Readings:**

Chapter 9: Wilsonian Idealism and the Isolationist Backlash (Isolationism)

Chapter 10: The 1920s - Influence without Responsibility (Isolationism)

Chapter 11: From the Great Depression to Pearl Harbor (Isolationism)

**Pop-Up: Influenza and War in 1918 (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Influenza and War in 1918**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Mar. 1, in-class discussion Mar. 2*

**Reflections: From Isolationism to Internationalism**

- *Reflection responses are DUE Mar. 6 - NOTE: we will not have class Mar. 4*

**Week 7: The Rise of Liberal Internationalism**

Mar. 7 - Mar. 13 **Course Readings:**

Chapter 5: The Rise of the American System (Leviathan)

Chapter 12: World War II and the Cold War (Isolationism)

Chapter 2: The Rise of the West (No One’s World)

Chapter 3: The Last Turn - The West Bests the Rest (No One’s World)

**Pop-Up: Opposing Communism in 1947 (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Opposing Communism in 1947**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Mar. 8, in-class discussion Mar. 9*

**Case Research: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *We will work on our cases in class on Mar. 11 - case research update DUE Mar. 13*

— **Spring Break** —

**Week 8: The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism**

Mar. 21 - Mar.  
27

**Course Readings:**

Chapter 6: The Great Transformation and the Failure of Illiberal Hegemony (Leviathan)  
Chapter 4: The Next Turn - The Rise of the Rest (No One’s World)

**Pop-Up: Response to 9/11 (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: Response to 9/11**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Mar. 22, in-class discussion Mar. 23*

**Case Research: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *We will work on our cases in class on Mar. 25 - case research update DUE Mar. 27*

**Week 9: The Ugly American**

Mar. 28 - Apr. 3

**Course Readings:**

The Ugly American

**Course Requirements:**

Discussion: The Ugly American

*NOTE: The discussion this week will be online for everybody.*

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Mar. 29, replies to peers DUE Apr. 1*

Reflections: The American System

- *Reflection responses are DUE Apr. 3 - NOTE: We will not have class Apr. 1*

**Week 10: America and Global Conflict and Security**

Apr. 4 - Apr. 10

**Course Readings:**

*TBD - See Canvas for PDF copies of the Foreign Affairs article(s) for this week.*

**Course Requirements:**

**Case Drafts: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**



- *“Pop-up” cases in this area should post their draft outlines by Apr. 5*

**Week 11: America and Global Political Economy**

Apr. 11 - Apr. 17 **Course Readings:**

- *TBD - See Canvas for PDF copies of the Foreign Affairs article(s) for this week.*

**Course Requirements:**

**Case Drafts: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *“Pop-up” cases in this area should post their draft outlines by Apr. 12*

**Week 12: America and Transnational Politics**

Apr. 18 - Apr. 24 **Course Readings:**

- *TBD - See Canvas for PDF copies of the Foreign Affairs article(s) for this week.*

**Course Requirements:**

**Case Drafts: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- *“Pop-up” cases in this area should post their draft outlines by Apr. 19*

**Reflections: America and the World Today**

- *Reflection responses are DUE Apr. 24 - NOTE: We will not have class Apr. 22*

**Week 13: Alternative Pathways Forward**

Apr. 25 - May 1 **Course Readings:**

Chapter 7: Dilemmas and Pathways of Liberal International Order (Leviathan)

Chapter 5: Alternatives to the Western Way (No One’s World)

Chapter 6: Reviving the West (No One’s World)

**Pop-Up: TBD based on current events and/or your cases (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: TBD based on current events and/or your cases**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE Apr. 26, in-class discussion Apr. 27*

**Week 14: America and/or the World**

May 2 - May 8 **Course Readings:**

Chapter 8: The Durability of Liberal International Order (Leviathan)

Chapter 14: Where Isolationism and Liberal Internationalism Meet (Isolationism)

Chapter 10: Managing No One’s World (No One’s World)

**Pop-Up: TBD based on current events and/or your cases (PDF Canvas)**

**Course Requirements:**

**Discussion: TBD based on current events and/or your cases**

- *Reply to discussion prompt DUE May 3, in-class discussion May 4*

**Final Cases: Creating Our Own “Pop-Up” Cases**

- ***Your final “pop-up” case presentation is DUE May 6***

***Finals:***      **Wrapping up POL 341 America and the World**

May 9 - May 13      ***Course Requirements:***

***Case Responses: Policy responses to two peers DUE May 12***