

History 381/Public Affairs 388K
Emerging Global Challenges: History, Theory, and Policy

Wednesdays, 9:00am-12:pm
Spring 2018
University of Texas at Austin
SRH

Professor Jeremi Suri
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Office hours:
Tuesdays, 1:15pm-2:30pm, GAR 2.122
Wednesdays, 1:15-2:30pm, SRH 3.378

Course Aims

This advanced graduate course will examine the global dynamics in our contemporary world (especially since 11 September 2001), and their effects on a series of pressing issues related to security, democracy, and political economy. The goal of the course is to provide students with a firmer foundation for integrating diverse challenges, understanding their common roots, and defining policy responses that are holistic and strategic. Achieving this goal requires a mix of history, theory, and close policy analysis. It also calls for broad reading and intensive discussion. This course will push students to synthesize various analytical skills, broaden their issue expertise, and develop a coherent individual worldview that offers useful prescriptions for future policy. The course will not encourage agreement among students, but it will demand a consideration of multiple points of view before students settle on their own, original explanatory frameworks for contemporary global challenges.

Academic Accommodations and Academic Integrity

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-6441.

Academic integrity is central to the mission of the university. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes

and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the Internet, or created by another student. For more information about the university's expectations for academic integrity, see:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

Assigned Readings

Books for Purchase at the University Co-op

Books are also on reserve at UT's Perry-Castañeda Library

Cha, Victor. *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012).

Christensen, Thomas J. *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: Norton, 2015).

Filkins, Dexter. *The Forever War* (New York: Random House, 2008).

Gessen, Masha. *The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* (New York: Penguin, 2017).

Grenier, Robert L. *88 Days to Kandahar: A C.I.A. Diary* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015).

Mazzetti, Mark. *The Way of the Knife: The C.I.A., a Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth* (New York: Penguin, 2013).

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Rice, Condoleezza. *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown, 2011).

Pollack, Kenneth M. *Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

Suri, Jeremi and Benjamin Valentino, eds., *Sustainable Security: Rethinking American National Security Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Taubman, William. *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* (New York: Norton, 2017).

Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Random House, 2006).

Reading Assignments

This course includes a heavy load of weekly reading – generally a full book per week. Students are expected to read all of the assigned materials carefully and critically *before each seminar meeting*. Focus on each author’s key arguments and how they relate to larger historical concerns and debates – how is the author trying to change the way we think about strategy and policy? Interrogate narrative strategies – how does the author assemble his or her argument for the purpose of convincing the reader? Pay close attention to sources – how does the author “prove” his or her point? Most important, as the semester progresses think about how the assigned readings relate to one another – how is each author responding to other scholars?

Weekly Response Essays

Each week by **5:PM** on the **Tuesday before class**, all students should post a short response essay on the course website (available through UT’s Canvas Course Management Website): <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>.

This response essay should include 3 basic paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the key arguments in the readings and their significance. The second paragraph should analyze how the week’s readings relate to other course and outside texts. The third paragraph should offer the student’s critical assessment of the week’s readings: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention? What kind of new research do the readings inspire?

Students are expected to read each other’s weekly essays before class. They are also expected to comment substantively on each other’s essays. The weekly essays and comments will provide a starting point for each week’s class discussion.

Grading

Weekly Response Essays and Comments	30%
Weekly Class Discussion Participation	35%
Final Paper (including class presentation)	35%

Final National Security Paper

For the final project, each student will write a national security paper that interprets the key dynamics of global change in the current international environment and explains how the United States can take advantage of those dynamics to pursue a new foreign policy initiative in an area of sustained conflict. The paper should begin by mapping the current international system and then proceed to analyze a new policy initiative, advocated by the author. Students are expected to draw on the course readings and additional research around the chosen policy initiative. These papers should be written for a knowledgeable audience of policy-makers with broad experience. Papers should contain 15-20 pages of polished text and cogent analysis, including detailed source citations.

The instructor will meet with each student to discuss his/her paper during the semester. Students will prepare short presentations, based on their papers, for class on May 2. Papers are due in hardcopy in Professor Suri's LBJ School office (SRH 3.378) on **Monday, May 7 at 12pm.**

- 1/17 Introduction: What constitutes power in the contemporary international system?
Nye, *Paradox of American Power*.
- 1/24 Great Power Rivalries
Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.
- 1/31 The Shock of 9/11/01
Wright, *Looming Tower*.
- 2/7 America's Response
Rice, *No Higher Honor*, chapters 1-19.
- 2/14 Afghanistan and Central Asia
Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*.
- 2/21 Iraq and the Middle East
Filkins, *Forever War*.
- 2/28 Drones and the New War on Terror
Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*.
- 3/7 Individual Meetings with Students to Discuss Papers
- 3/14 SPRING BREAK
- 3/21 Iran and the Middle East
Pollack, *Unthinkable*.
- 3/28 North Korea
Cha, *Impossible State*.

- 4/4 Russia
Gessen, *Future is History*.
- 4/11 China
Christensen, *China Challenge*.
- 4/18 Alternative 1: Gorbachev's "Common European Home"
Taubman, *Gorbachev*.
- 4/25 Alternative 2: Sustainable Security
Suri and Valentino, eds., *Sustainable Security*.
- 5/2 Student Paper Presentations