

POS 304/404: Great Power Politics
Spring 2010
Professor Erickson

Professor: Christian Erickson (cerickso@roosevelt.edu)

Meeting Times: Tuesday Thursday 12:30-1:45.

Location: AUD 420.

Office Hours and Locations:

Downtown Campus: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 - 3:30; other times by appointment. AUD 757

Schaumburg Campus: By appointment only.

Phone Number: (312) 341 3707(voice mail).

Course objectives: This course places contemporary political relations between the world's leading powers in the context of a deeper historical comparison between not only major nation-states but also empires in order to understand not only the factors that govern the relationships between great powers, but the relationship between great powers, empires, and their subjects, including those in occupied areas. The course examines the dynamics of great power and imperial competition by focusing on the interplay between ideologies, economic and security issues, and the possibilities of both cooperation and conflict between great powers and empires up to and including major interstate wars. The course also will discuss the internal consequences of nations either achieving and/or striving for either great power or imperial status. The course concludes by examining American "unipolarity" and hegemony, and how this governs the conduct of the "war on terror" and the potential for both continued great power conflict, and elements of cooperation as all great powers try to confront the complex security and economic environment of the early 21st century.

Prerequisites: POS 201, and course assumes students have taken several international relations, political science, history or sociology courses, and have an interest in the subject matter.

Course texts and other materials: All books are available at the Roosevelt University bookstore.

Required Texts:

- 1) Haas, Mark L. 2005. *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989*.
- 2) Howe, Stephen. 2003. *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 3) Johnson, Chalmers. 2004. *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*. New York: Metropolitan Books – Henry Holt and Co.
- 4) Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: WW Norton Co.

Additionally I will be using the course website to distribute or provide links to recent articles that reflect themes covered in the course.

Course Assignments: This course places equal emphasis on readings, lecture, and discussion participation. Total class grade will be derived from your participation in several ways:

Class participation:	30% of the total class grade (Attendance and in-class participation 15% - in-class presentation 15%).
Midterm examination:	20%
Research/Term paper:	35%
Cumulative final exam:	25%

There will be no make-up examinations without medical excuse or prior arrangement with the professor.

Course website: <http://faculty.roosevelt.edu/Erickson/courses/pos304-404/>

The syllabus is posted on this site, and it will be used for announcements, research links and links to supplemental reading materials, archiving of lecture materials, and other purposes as we collectively decide over the course of the semester.

Course Participation Expectations: Both undergraduate and graduate students are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings, and prepared to discuss the reading and do other types of in-class assignments related to discussion questions for the week.

In-Class Presentations: Students are required to do a presentation and lead a discussion during class on a subject raised by the readings for *at least* 10 minutes during one class session. On the second week of class (February 3) a more detailed handout describing the presentation assignment and possible topics will be distributed in class. Presentations will begin on the 4th week of the semester.

Term/Research paper: Each of you will write a term paper of ten to twelve typed, double-spaced pages(3000words) on a topic of your choice that pertains to the themes of the course. The term paper should not be a report on a subject, but rather should 1) address a theoretical *question* that is introduced by one of the readings for class, which is 2) backed up by empirical evidence. You must then 3) state your own opinion, and 4) substantiate your opinion with facts. A more detailed summary of the term paper assignment will be distributed on the second week of class.

The paper assignment has four components: 1) paper description, 2) expanded description/bibliography, 3) description, outline, and annotated bibliography, 4) final research paper (due dates for each component of the paper assignment is indicated on the syllabus).

Late Policy/Plagiarism: Without a valid medical or other excuse or prior permission of instructor late papers will be penalized 3 points (on a 100 point scale) for each 24 hour period the paper is late, and will be penalized 5 points for each 24 hour period after 48 hours. Students are expected to review Roosevelt University policies on plagiarism and will be held to standards of scholarship outlined in these policies. Additionally all papers will be scanned by plagiarism detection software.

Topics and Readings

Week One (January 26th and 28th): Introduction to the Course and the issues.

Overview of the course. Definitions of Empires and Great Powers. No readings first class session.

Reading January 28th: Mearsheimer: Preface, Acknowledgements, Introduction.

Week Two (February 2nd and 4th): Empires or Great Powers, *Realpolitik* or Ideology.

Readings: Howe: Introduction; Haas: Introduction and Chapter 1; Johnson: Prologue.

Presentation and Term/Research Paper Topic Proposal assignment distributed.

Discussion Question: What are the authors' definitions of Great Powers and/or Empires? What are the similarities in the definitions? What are the differences?

Week Three (February 9th and 11th): Empires or Great Powers (continued).

Readings: Howe Chapters 1 and 2; and Mearsheimer Chapter 2.

Due: February 11th Presentation date/topic selection.

Week Four (February 16th and 18th): Empires, Great Powers and Revolutionary States.

Readings: Howe Chapter 3; Mearsheimer Chapter 3; Haas Chapter 2.

Note: No class February 18th Prof. Erickson at ISA Conference.

Week Five (February 23rd and 25th): Land Powers and the Concert of Europe.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 4 ; Haas Chapter 3.

February 25th

Due: Term Paper/Research Paper Proposal.

Due: Expanded Description/Bibliography Assignment Distributed.

Midterm Guide distributed.

Week Six (March 2nd and 4th): Strategies of Survival and the Origins of World War II.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 5; Haas Chapter 4.

Week Seven (March 9th).

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 5; Haas Chapter 4.

Week Seven (March 11th): Midterm Exam.

Spring Break: No class March 16th and 18th.

Week Eight (March 23rd and 25th): Great Powers in Action and Sino-Soviet Split.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 6; Haas Chapter 5.

Week Nine (March 30th and April 1st): Offshore Balancers and the End of the Cold War.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 7; Haas Chapter 6.

April 1st

Due: Expanded Description/Bibliography assignment.

Paper Description/Outline/Annotated Bibliography assignment distributed.

Week Ten (April 6th and April 8th): Balancing versus Buck Passing, and American Imperialism.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 8; Haas Conclusion; Johnson Chapter 1.

Week Eleven (April 13th and April 15th): Causes of Great Power War and the Roots of American Militarism.

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 9; Johnson Chapter 2.

Week Twelve (April 20th and April 22nd): Conflict in the 21st Century and America as the New Rome?

Readings: Mearsheimer Chapter 10; Johnson: Chapter 3.

April 22nd

Due: Paper Description/Outline/Annotated Bibliography.

Week Thirteen (April 27th and April 29th): Institutions of American Militarism and an Empire of Bases.

Readings: Johnson Chapters 4 and 6.

Final Exam Review Guide distributed.

Week Fourteen (May 4th and May 6th): Future of Empires and Great Powers, Iraq and the Sorrows of Empires.

Readings: Johnson Chapters 8 and 10.

May 6th

Due: Term Paper.

Final Exam: Tuesday May 11th, 12:30-3:00.

Grades Submitted and available on line – evening of May 20th.

Have a great Summer!