

IS 401W: International Studies Capstone

Department of International Studies and Political Science

Section 01: MWF 0900-0950; Section 02: MWF 1000-1050; Section 03 MW 1300-1350 & F
1315-1405.

JM Hall 215

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REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *America Abroad: Why the Sole Superpower Should Not Pull Back from the World* - Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth
- *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* – Jack Snyder
- *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989* - Mark L. Haas

OFFICE HOURS:

MWF 12-1 and by appointment. Please use calendly.com/rhameyjp for appointment scheduling and try to book 24 hours in advance.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course considers prominent contemporary debates on American grand strategy and foreign policy, as well as the general behavior of major powers. All of the participants in these debates agree that the United States should pursue a grand strategy that enhances American security and prosperity. Apart from these broad objectives, the contributors disagree about many fundamental issues, including: the nature of power; the extent of American interests in the world; the appropriate balance between values and interests in statecraft; the relationship between military, diplomatic, economic, and institutional instruments of statecraft; the optimal force posture in the 21st century; inter alia. Cadets will consider several prominent texts on U.S. grand strategy that cross disciplinary boundaries and theoretical perspectives.

Because IS 401W is a writing intensive course, we will devote three class meetings (identified below) to the craft of writing an independent research paper. Additionally, three preparatory exercises are assigned to facilitate the completion of the capstone project.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Gain a better understanding of America's role in the world in the context of strategic interests and global hierarchy.
- Develop analytical tools to understand, evaluate, and respond to international problems through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- Critically evaluate arguments surrounding the sources of states' conflictual and cooperative behaviors.
- Develop arguments on issues of international politics and communicate those arguments effectively.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner:

Participation-----	10%
Capstone Description-----	3%
Project Outline-----	7%
Rough Draft-----	10%
Research Capstone-----	40%
Reading Briefs-----	20%
IS Assessment Test-----	10%

Participation. Cadets are expected to participate in class discussions throughout the semester. In order to participate effectively, students will need to complete the readings before their assigned class sessions. There may be occasional reading quizzes.

Capstone Description. A one-page (double-spaced) project description of your final capstone project.

Project Outline. A four-page (double-spaced) outline of your capstone.

Rough Draft. An at minimum 10-page (double-spaced) rough draft of the capstone paper.

Research Capstone. A completed capstone due on the last day of classes of at least 18 double-spaced pages.

Rubric details for capstone to be distributed. The four learning outcomes of the capstone are

- Identify main ideas and/or themes.
- Make comparative judgments and draw conclusions from evidence gathered
- Determine the validity/credibility and implications of an assumption/hypothesis
- Demonstrate create problem-solving skills

Reading Briefs: A 700-800 word summary of the major argument in the first two required texts worth 10% of the final grade each.

IS Assessment Test: A test designed to evaluate retention of material from across the International Studies major from beginning to end.

News Sources:

To be successful in the classroom, on exams, and in their papers, students are expected to maintain an awareness of ongoing developments in international politics and should regularly review some portion of the following news sources.

BBC Online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

New York Times: <http://www.nyt.com>

Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

28 August – Course Introduction

What is Grand Strategy?

30 August

- Gaddis, “What Is Grand Strategy?” *Foreign Policy* 2002.

2 September

- Bakich, “Review of Melvyn P. Leffler, Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism” on *The Strategy Bridge* (July 2018): <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/7/16/reviewing-safeguarding-democratic-capitalism>

4 September

- Ashford and Shiffrinson, “Trump’s National Security Strategy: A Critic’s Dream”
- Hill, “Nostalgia and Strategy: There Never Was a Golden Age”
- Both part of “Policy Roundtable: What Makes Trump’s National Security Strategy” in *Texas National Security Review*, December 2017: <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-make-trumps-national-security-strategy/>

Hegemonic Engagement

6 September

- Brooks and Wohlforth Chapters 1 & 2

9 September

- Brooks and Wohlforth Chapters 3 & 4

11 September – Research Design Lecture

- Rhamey, Slobodchikoff, and Volgy. “Order and Disorder across Geopolitical Space: the Effect of Declining Dominance on Interstate Conflict” in *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18, p 383-406.

13 September – Writing Workshop (Topic)

16 September

- Brooks and Wohlforth Chapters 5 & 6

18 September

- Brooks and Wohlforth Chapters 7 & 8

20 September – Capstone Topic Description Due

- Brooks and Wohlforth Chapters 9 - 11

23 September – UNESCO meeting in Bucharest – Class Makeup TBD

25 September – UNESCO meeting in Bucharest – Class Makeup TBD

27 September – UNESCO meeting in Bucharest – Class Makeup TBD

Domestic Pressures on Strategic Behavior

30 September – Reading Brief 1 Due

- Snyder Chapter 1

2 October

- Snyder Chapter 2

4 October – ISA-South in Memphis – Class Makeup TBD

7 October – Hypothesis and Data Lecture

- Rhamey and Kugler. “Chapter 2: Concepts and Measurement” in *An Empirical Introduction to International Relations: Power, Space, and Time*.

9 October

- Snyder Chapter 3

11 October – Writing Workshop (Theory and Hypothesis)

14 October

- Snyder Chapter 4

16 October

- Snyder Chapter 5

18 October – Capstone Outline Due

- Snyder Chapter 6

21 October – Completed Research Design Lecture

- Rhamey and Early, “Going for the Gold: Status-Seeking Behavior and Olympic Performance” in *International Area Studies Review* 16(3): 244-261.

23 October

- Snyder Chapter 7-8

Normative Values and Strategic Perception

25 October – Reading Brief 2 Due

- Haas Chapter 1

28 October

- Haas Chapter 2

30 October

- Haas Chapter 3

1 November

- Haas Chapter 4

4 November

- Haas Chapter 5

6 November

- Haas Chapter 6

Debating the Future of American Strategy

8 November – Rough Draft Due

- Layne, “From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America’s Future Grand Strategy” in *International Security* 22(1), 86-124.

12 November

- Montgomery, “Contested Primary in the Western Pacific: China’s Rise and the Future of U.S. Power Projection” in *International Security* 38(4): 115-149.

13 November

- Beckley, “Emerging Military Balance in East Asia: How China’s Neighbors Can Check Chinese Naval Expansion” in *International Security* 42 (2): 78-119

15 November – Writing Workshop (Draft)

18 November

- Rhomey and Kugler, “Chapter 13: Lessons for the American Imperium in the Decline of the British Empire” in *An Empirical Introduction to International Relations: Power, Space, and Time*.

20 November

- Coyne, “Empire State of Mind: The Illiberal Foundations of Liberal Hegemony” in *Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy* 21(2): 237-250

22 November

- Hendrickson, David C. “The Curious Case of American Hegemony: Imperial Aspirations and National Decline” in *World Policy Journal* (Summer 2005) at https://personalwebs.coloradocollege.edu/~dhendrickson/Essays/WPJ_Curious_Case_of_Amer_Hegemony.pdf

4 December

- Bacevich, “Twilight of the Republic? Seeds of Decline, Path to Renewal” in *Commonweal* at <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/twilight-republic>

6 December

- Rhamey and Kugler. “Chapter 14: American Decline, Chinese Rise, and the Unexpected Future” in *An Empirical Introduction to International Relations: Power, Space, and Time*

9 December – IS Major Assessment Test

11 December – Final Capstone Due (CAD)

Disabilities and Accommodations:

VMI abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which mandate reasonable accommodations are provided for all Cadets with documented disabilities. If you have a registered disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disabilities Services, the designated office on Post to provide services for Cadets with disabilities. The office is located on the 2nd floor of the VMI Health Center. Please call or stop by the office of LTC Sarah Jones, Director of Disabilities Services, for more information, 464-7667 or email at: jonesl10@vmi.edu.

Classroom Rules:

No tobacco products, food, beverages beyond water in a closed container, or gum are allowed. Profanity and demeaning slurs of any type will not be tolerated. Use of personal electronic devices for non-course related purposes is prohibited.

Work for Grade Policy:

The below work for grade policy is taken directly from “Part IV: Academic Regulations” of *Regulations for the Virginia Military Institute*, under “Cadets’ Responsibilities”:

“Work for grade” is defined as any work presented to an instructor for a formal grade or undertaken in satisfaction of a requirement for successful completion of a course or degree requirement. All work submitted for grade is considered the cadet’s own work. “Cadet’s own work” means that he or she has composed the work from his or her general accumulation of knowledge and skill except as clearly and fully documented and that it has been composed especially for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any course at VMI or elsewhere will be resubmitted or reformatted for submission in a current course without the specific approval of the instructor.

In all work for grade, failure to distinguish between the cadet's own work and ideas and the work and ideas of others is known as plagiarism. Proper documentation clearly and fully identifies the source of all borrowed ideas, quotations, or other assistance. The cadet is referred to the VMI-authorized handbook for rules concerning quotations, paraphrases and documentation.

In all written work for grade, the cadet must include the words "HELP RECEIVED" conspicuously on the document, and he or she must then do one of two things: (1) state "none," meaning that no help was received except as documented in the work; or (2) explain in detail the nature of the help received. In oral work for grade, the cadet must make the same declaration before beginning the presentation. Admission of help received may result in a lower grade but will not result in prosecution for an honor violation.

Cadets are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam until it is returned to them or final course grades are posted. This enjoinder does not imply that any inadvertent expression or behavior that might indicate one's feeling about the test should be considered a breach of honor. The real issue is whether cadets received information, not available to everyone else in the class, which would give them an unfair advantage. If a cadet inadvertently gives or receives information, the incident must be reported to the professor and the Honor Court. Each cadet bears the responsibility for familiarizing himself or herself thoroughly with the policies states in this section, with any supplementary statement regarding work for grade expressed by the academic department in which he or she is taking a course, and with any special conditions provided in writing by the professor for a given assignment. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the correct interpretation of a policy, the cadet should consult the instructor of the course. There should be no confusion, however, on the basic principle that it is never acceptable to submit someone else's work, written or otherwise, formally graded or not, as one's own.

The violation by a cadet of any of these policies will, if he or she is found guilty by the Honor Court, result in his or her being dismissed from VMI. Neither ignorance nor professed confusion about the correct interpretation of these policies is an excuse.

Department of International Studies Work for Grade Policy:

Work for Grade in this department is generally of the following types.

1. Written quizzes, tests, or examinations
2. Book reviews
3. Research papers, policy memoranda, briefing papers, and discourse analysis – identification and analysis of the critical difference is in the findings and opinions of scholars on issues of interest to the discipline.

Cadets are permitted and encouraged to study with their peers to prepare for quizzes, tests and exams. However, when a cadet takes either written or oral quizzes, tests, and examinations, answers must be his/her own work without help from any other source including notes or consultation with others.

In the case of book reviews, research and other papers, as described in “2” and “3” above, research and composing of such works must be done by the cadet alone. Cadets are permitted to use spell and grammar-checking facilities.

IS cadets are encouraged to make use of all VMI tutoring services to receive critical comments.¹ Cadets who do so and mark “Help Received” will not receive a lower grade on an assignment. Cadets are also permitted to seek critical comments on their written work from their peers. However, proof-reading and editing² of a cadet’s written work is not permitted.

Any exceptions to these rules, including the use of tutors, collaboration among cadets, and the use of computer style, spell and grammar checkers; must be explained in writing by the course instructor. Instructors are at liberty to stipulate exceptions only with the written approval of their department head.

If you have any questions about the application of these rules, consult your instructor. Do not leave anything to chance.

¹ As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, critical comments are “general advice given on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing.”

² As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, “proofreading means correcting errors (e.g., in spelling, grammar, punctuation). It is the last step taken by the writer in the editing process. In addition to the corrections made in proofreading, editing includes making such changes as the addition, deletion, or reordering of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words. A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor.”