Examination questions
Students may use standard foreign language dictionaries.
Answer 5 of the following 6 questions. All questions count equally.

Vanlige ordbøker kan brukes under eksamenen.
Svar på 5 av 6 spørsmål. Alle spørsmål teller likt.

Vanlege ordbøker kan brukast under eksamenen.
Svar på 5 av 6 spørsmål. Alle spørsmål tel likt.

1. What is the unipolar moment? How do you think this has impacted US foreign policy and why? (Be sure to support your argument with concrete examples for US foreign policy history).

1. Hva er det unipolare øyeblikket? Hvordan tror du dette har påvirket amerikansk utenrikspolitikk og hvorfor? (Husk å støtte argumentet ditt med konkrete eksempler fra amerikansk utenrikspolitis historie).

1. Kva er den unipolare augnebliken? Korleis trur d u han har påverka amerikansk utanrikspolitikk og kvifor? (Hugs å støtta argumentet ditt med konkrete døme frå amerikansk utanrikspolitis historie).

This phrase comes from Krauthammer. It refers to a moment in time in which the US would stand alone as the dominant power of the world system.

The student might discuss the K. article, and if so, here follows a description of his argument. Krauthammer argues that the many commentators, who have argued in recent years that the world is now multipolar, are mistaken. The world is unipolar, with the US at the top. Economic power does not automatically translate into geopolitical power: this is a materialist illusion. Europe does not qualify as an actor on the world stage (reference to European dithering at time of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait). Only the US has the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a player in any game into which it enters.

But the US ability to play this role can be undermined by domestic issues. Here he refers primarily to the economic problems within the US – which he blames on a mixture of things, but especially on lower taxes but an enhanced since of entitlement (welfare spending and ecological luxuries, among other things). There is an isolationist movement too. This grows not just out of the traditional places (churches, for example) but also from realists who want the US to protect a narrower range of national interests. But he argues that the US needs an open international environment – and that US interests are widespread. In addition, world order does not come of itself. The world does not sort itself out. And only the USA can do it.

However, the question really asks the student to consider how the unipolar moment has affected US foreign policy. Here the student should focus on foreign policy events since the end of the Cold War and make an argument about how US behavior has been shaped by the balance of power in the world, specifically, one in which the US dominated the system. Events during the Bush administration (especially in the first term), such as the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the turn against international cooperation and agreements) are good points to mention. Students can use the
Bush National Security Strategy from 2002 to point out that the NSS of the US was to stay the world’s leading power. The second Bush administration and the Obama administrations have been different, and once draw upon the more cooperative aspects of both to make an argument that US foreign policy soon took a more multilateral and less unilateral approach.

The question calls for an application of knowledge of the foreign policy of the two administrations, knowledge of what the Unipolar moment is (an extended discussion of Krauthammer is not necessary but can add points), and a little thought to think out how being the most powerful country in the world might impact US policy. Should the student take Krauthammer’s warnings (as well as his primary idea) and measure US policy against these, this would be excellent.

2. The United States is said to have a particular “national style” or political culture, particularly with respect to its place in the world and in the conduct of foreign policy. Describe this. Be sure you use ideas and concepts from the required readings and/or the lectures.


2. USA vert sagt å ha ein saeigen "nasjonal stil" eller politisk kultur, spesielt med omsyn til plassen sin i verda, og i utøvinga av utanrikspolitikken. Skildre denne. Pass på at du brukar idear og konsept frå pensumlitteraturen og / eller førerelesningar.

In class, I talked about “anti-statism”; Hook and Spanier talk about the “American Sense of Destiny” which includes an American sense of mission and a sense of exceptionalism; Hook writes of manifest destiny. However, liberalism (especially classical liberalism) or even “American exceptionalism” or “manifest destiny” might be acceptable here, as these are pulled out by some writers and were identified as important aspects of the US mindset in class. By “anti-statism” I am getting at the dislike that Americans seem to have for a strong central government (and government solutions to various social ills). This is supported by: 1) the political philosophy of classical liberalism with its notion of the limited need for the state and stress on the significance of the individual (this is the tradition of John Locke); 2) the enshrinement (and freezing) of this political philosophy in the Constitution; 3) the Protestant tradition in the US (strong individualist overtones for example); and 4) the multiplicity of churches in the US that meant resistance to a strong state that might impose uniformity. Students might also talk about Capitalism as a major support of the liberal ideology (of the Adam Smith variety – note that Wealth of Nations was written 1776). If “American exceptionalism” is chosen, then the student would have to define this as something more than that “Americans think they are better than others”, for example as the idea that the US is not bound by the same laws as other nations. “Laws” has a dual sense here, as 1) the regularities, or patterns or arc of development that other countries seem to follow and 2) since the US acts in the interests of all or some higher good (i.e., like democracy), it is not bound by the same international legal restrictions that other countries are). A sense of (divine) mission should be identified as supporting either American exceptionalism or Manifest Destiny. Note that the US sense of mission transcends the
specifically religious, and is also about the spread of liberty!! Manifest Destiny means that the US has a larger mission in the world – the expansion of liberty! (In a more limited sense, it also means the expansion of the US across the North American continent).

In class it was also mentioned that students might draw upon the article by Kagan in connection with this. In his article, “Power and Weakness”; Kagan observes that Americans and Europeans think differently (Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus) and makes three main points: 1) The power difference between the two, about which he says: Today, Americans make the dinner, Europeans do the dishes; Europe would not pay to develop military forces, cashed in their peace dividend; Appeasement is for Europeans a sophisticated strategy, not a fearful mentality; Weaker powers have always wanted to inhibit stronger powers from using force. This is the psychology of weakness, perfectly understandable human psychology; Europe characterized by the failure to respond to threats and also denial of threats; US feels threatened because as the leading power, it is more of a target than Europe is; 2) the emergence of different strategic cultures. European institutions produce internal Kantian peace; US outside the system as guarantor. It is stuck in history (in the sense of Fukuyama); 3) Materiel and ideological differences reinforce each other. The US has no choice but to act unilaterally. Europe will not do what it takes to assume its role. This will lead to increased transatlantic tensions.

3. The RAM (Rational Actor Model) is the idea that a country makes its foreign policy in a rational way, by assessing the problem, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of different solutions, and choosing the most effective move. What insights does the Government Politics Model /Bureaucratic Politics model give us about that? (Be sure to explain what this is.)

3. RAM (Rational Actor Model) er ideen om at et land utformer sin utenrikspolitikk på en rasjonell måte, ved å vurdere problemet, veie fordelar og ulemper ved ulike løsninger, og velge det mest effektive trekket. Hvilke innsikter gir «government» Politikk Modell / Byråkratisk politikk modellen oss om det? (Pass på å forklare hva dette er.)

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The core idea here is that the Government Politics Model the (latter also known as the Bureaucratic Politics) see foreign policy as the result of bargaining (or even power struggles) among the various members of the government (such as the President and his staff and his cabinet). A key point here is the idea that actor’s perspectives (goals, view of world, interests) are shaped by where they are located in the machinery of US foreign policy they sit. The BPM usually focuses mostly on the “principals” in foreign policy making, that is to say, the “Chiefs” rather than support staff or people lower in the bureaucracy. A famous phrase is associated with this: “where you stand depends on where you sit”. Although this is discussed most extensively in Holland, where it is applied to the first war with Iraq, it is also covered by Hook. Students can support their answer by giving examples
discussed by Hook (Obama’s decision regarding the surge in Afghanistan) or Holland and the first Iraq war.

However, the question also invites one to consider the insights the BPM/GPM has to offer—and that has to do with the idea that decision-makers should not consider a foreign policy action on the part of another state to be necessarily the result of rational action and some master plan.

The student may also bring up aspects as how Small Group decision-making can affect the “rationality” of decisions (such as the impact of Group Think), but this goes beyond the question and should not be considered as Organizational behavior has been mentioned in class and it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between the GPM/BPM and the Organizational Behavior model, but the Standard Operating procedure really belongs to the latter.

4. The US constitution divides the power of government among the three branches of the US federal government. How was authority with respect to foreign policy distributed between the President and Congress? Which branch leads decision-making on US foreign policy today, and why?

The US constitution gives the authority to the President to do the following things (the focus here is on actions most relevant to foreign policy matters): To appoint ambassadors, to receive ambassadors, to negotiate treaties, and to be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Congress has the power to: approve (confirm) the appointments of ambassadors (the Senate); to ratify treaties (the Senate); to provide for the common defense, to regulate commerce with other countries, to raise and support an army and navy and to declare war. In the constitution but less noted are the authority (of mixed relevance): 1) to repel invasions, 2) to appoint the officers of the military, 3) to issue letters of marque and reprisal and some other odds and ends. More generally, but very importantly, there is the power to tax and to incur debt (which is needed in times of war to carry on the war).

Hook points out that division of power amounts to the principle of “codetermination”, or the idea that the president and Congress must be in agreement on such an important matter such as war:

Note: the student might bring up other “powers” of the Congress and the President, but to be relevant here, the case must be made for why they relate to foreign policy.

The student might with profit make note of the separation of powers and checks and balances in the constitution that are supposed to keep power from concentrating itself in any one place in the government. The President (via his representative) negotiates international treaties, but the, the Senate must ratify them in order for these to be in effect (requiring a 2/3rds vote). The
president can send US troops to foreign countries, but it is the Congress that provides the funding for the military and could theoretically force the withdrawal of US troops.

The Supreme Court has recognized that the president should take the lead in US foreign policy.

As the Constitution was written, the president and the executive branch takes the lead on foreign policy questions, but he (and it) have to work with Congress, and to lesser degree, within the guidelines set by the Supreme Court. But the balance of power between the president and Congress has changed over the years. What the president and the congress can actually do has a great deal to do with the circumstances (how much external pressure, for example) and the political realities of internal US politics. The balance between the two is dynamic.

The constitution does not cover everything that a country has to deal with, and in addition, practice has changed over the life of the country. This is most obvious with respect to international agreements and with respect to the declaration (or at least, involvement in, war). With respect to treaties, the president still negotiates treaties and submits them to Congress for ratification. However, not all agreements with other countries are handled this way. In fact, fewer and fewer treaties are submitted to Congress. Instead, presidents have expanded the use of “Executive agreement” which are not ratified by Congress (and yet they also bind the United States). Usually these are not highly significant or controversial agreements, but sometimes they are — such as in the most recent agreement with Iran. The York Times article by Baker and Erlanger, and the articles by Kyl and by Kaye discuss issues with treaties.

The increased difficulty of getting agreement between the White House and the Congress makes the executive agreement more attractive to the president and, particularly in the case of the Iran deal, more annoying for Congress. With respect to the declaration of war: the last time the US declared war was in World War II, but the US has been involved in many military adventures since then. Modern presidents have interpreted the commander-in-chief clause to give them great latitude in deciding when to deploy the military abroad. During the Cold War, the Congress tended to trust the president and support this notion. The key example of this is the Vietnam War, when the Congress more or less delegated its power to the president via the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Since the end of the Cold War, Congress has tried to reassert itself, starting with the War Powers Act (WPA). The constitutionality of the WPA is routinely disputed by the serving president but on the other hand, presidents have tended to get a kind of approval from Congress before engaging in what might be extended military operations (as in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq). These resolutions are not declarations of war, but do indicate support for the president’s action. Obama has been particularly reluctant to take action without Congressional support.

However, Congress has often found it difficult to put effective limits on the president’s power, particularly with respect to foreign policy. The President, with power united in a single individual, has at his disposal many resources for collecting information and carrying out his policy – the State Department, the Defense Department and many, many more. The power of Congress is divided up among its many members, making it more difficult for it to act effectively. In addition, the Congress finds it politically difficult to force the President to withdraw troops once the troops are sent into action. There are therefore, institutional but also political aspects of the power balance among these two branches of government. Hook lists these presidential assets: he is the only elected official who has a national constituency, has use of the “bully pulpit”, is the leader of his party, is always “in session”, is the chief CEO of the large bureaucracy that is the executive branch and also has much more information at his disposal than do individual Congress members.
Note that while the Constitution attempts to divide up power among the branches of government, it is written vaguely enough that what each branch of government is able to do is subject to interpretation (zone of twilight – Hook), and thus changes from time to time and event to event. The Supreme Court, the official interpreter of the Constitution, has given the President the lead in foreign policy making, but not a free hand. Congress has tended to lose power over time to the President, in particular with respect to foreign policy, but periodically attempts to reassert itself (as in the passing of the War Powers Act). Again, it is frequently political factors that make it difficult for Congress to reassert itself, but there are issues rooted in the Constitution as well (as noted above).

The student might note as well that the demands of being a first a major power, and then a super power, has tended to shift the balance of power in favor of the president, so it is not just the constitution that impacts the US’s response to international events, but also international events that impact the functioning of the US constitution. Here international conditions interact with the structure of the US government to produce this effect. For example, during the Cold War, it was felt that the US would have to react quickly in case of attack by the USSR – something it is hard for Congress to do. In addition, the demands of being a superpower (need to use troops, intelligence operations) tend to involve the military a lot (which the executive branch essentially controls and has the greater expertise about) and the need for secrecy (Congress is “leaky” – it is hard to keep secrets). This sort of thing shifted power to the president.

The rationale for Presidential power diminished in the post Cold War era, but was strengthened again in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001. The power of the president has increased at home due to passage of such acts as the Patriot Act which gives the president (and the federal government) more power at home. US involvement abroad is a more tricky case – the president has clearly acted decisively lately in foreign policy, but the political polarization at home has worked to undercut this somewhat too (consider the letter to Iran, or the visit by Benjamin Netanyahu to Congress against the wishes of the Obama administration.).

5. The management style of the US president may impact his ability to make good decisions. Describe the management styles of the Obama and Bush White Houses and whether these did make a difference in key foreign policy choices.
The Hook book states that the Bush administration’s decision-making in the aftermath of 9/11 showed signs of “Group think.” A small group of decision-makers were able to control the decision-making and rapidly came to the decision that Iraq should be invaded. They were able to keep those with contrary views out of the process. The groupthink factor – a group dynamic – prevented the tough questions from being asked and contrary opinion being seriously considered. Elsewhere (pp 122) Hook describes the management style of the president. He notes that Bush turned to a “small tightly controlled groups of loyalists”. He also favored a formalistic style in which in which advisors have sharply defined roles and in which information is channeled to the president through gatekeepers. Obama, like Bush, centralized his inner circle within the White House. His basic model was a “competitive model” in which advisors with different perspectives were encouraged to express their opinions, with the President serving as an “honest broker”. His deliberative model is known as “multiple advocacy”: this means that Obama encouraged all to participate. While Bush is described as not being “curious” about the background or details, Obama prodded people to explain more fully and to defend their position. He often retired from the discussion without making a decision, and then announced his decision later.

The articles by Pfiffner confirm these positions in large measure, although they make slightly different points. Pfiffner writes of the Bush White House (really the first term), that although key advisors such as Rumsfeld and Cheney had emphasized the importance of good procedure, the White House under George W. Bush did not practice this. Cheney limited access to the president who never heard dissenting views on key issues. In fact, Pfiffner writes that “the pattern that emerges . . . is one of secrecy, top-down control, tightly held information, disregard for the judgements of career professionals and the exclusion from deliberation of qualified executive branch experts who might have disagreed with those who initially framed the decisions.” Career professions were not consulted and when they did manage to express their views, these were ignored. Condoleezza Rice did not play the role of “Honest Broker”. However, there is some evidence that the process was more open during President Bush’s second term.

Pfiffner generally concurs in what Hook writes about Obama, but with a few differences. He does not say that Obama was his own “honest broker” but rather emphasizes that Obama liked to be in control and delved deeply in to the policy options himself. Pfiffner agrees that Obama encouraged multiple advocacy and debate and pushed to be presented more information and options. This was particularly true with respect to dealing with the military, which Obama saw as generally uncooperative. Obama used a good deal of time to make his decisions, and was determined not to be pushed into a decision or to let the momentum of past decisions determine future decisions. In sum, Pfiffner says that “President Obama conducted the type of decision-making processes often advocated by political scientists. Obama’s approach guaranteed that he fully examined all serious policy options. Whether or not he made wise decisions is a separate issue.”

While in general we did not focus much on “the individual level” in this course, Hook points out a number of factors that could be considered to be at this level of analysis: belief systems, “operational codes” and a series of “shortcuts” that allow individuals to form opinions and act even when (and possibly especially when) information is in short supply. These are: selective perception, use of analogies, cognitive closure and bolstering. Hook also considered personality traits and how these determine the role played by advisors. In discussing G.W. Bush, Hook cites studies that argue that Bush had a high need for power, a sense of control over events and a lack of trust for others. At the same time Bush lacked of confidence with respect to foreign policy relied upon a few key advisors that he did trust, such as Vice President Cheney. Hook does not have much on Obama in
this regard. Students might also consider the description by Robert Gates, the Secretary of Defense in both administrations, of decision making in both administrations.

6. George Kennan is famous for writing the «long telegram» which went on to become the basis for much of the US’ Cold War foreign policy. What did Kennan say in his telegram? What was the name of the foreign policy he is said to have set in motion? Name at least one “doctrine” that we associate with it.

6. George Kennan er kjent for å ha skrevet «det lange telegrammet» som så ble grunnlaget for mye av USAs utenrikspolitikk under den kalde krig. Hva sa Kennan i sitt telegram? Hva var navnet på den utenrikspolitikken han sies å ha satt i gang? Nevn minst en "doktrine" som vi knytter til den.


The Kennan telegram was on the list of required readings and was the focus of one seminar in the course. Kennan sent a telegram to the State Department in order to provide an analysis of the Soviet Union and to advise the US government as to which policy it should adopt. Kennan analyzed the Soviet Union from a variety of perspectives: the nature of the Soviet leadership, Soviet ideology and the communist system, the Russian people and their history, and with a dash of geopolitics (the geography of Russia/the Soviet Union. He then prescribed the approach that the US should take, which has since been defined as containment.

**Elements of the Communist ideology and Soviet outlook:** capitalist encirclement, two centers of world significance (socialist and communist), internal conflicts on capitalist side (war between these can provide opportunities for the Soviets), inevitable war between socialism and capitalist powers; elements internal to the capitalist world can be useful to Soviets (communist parties in the west, and those that call themselves progressive, but are really communist); but some elements are more dangerous than might be supposed because they confuse people and work to defuse the communist agenda (moderate socialists and social democratic elements); their security requires the destruction of the rival.

**Reasons for this outlook:** 1) the Russian people do not share this ideology, this is something that the power-elite believe; 2) Soviet party line is not based on an objective analysis of reality but arises from basic inner-Russian necessities that existed before the war and exist today; 3) Russian sense of insecurity – fear that their rule is fragile and artificial --psychological, fear of comparison with western societies, historically do not seek compromise but the utter destruction of rival power; 3) geopolitics: Russia has never known a friendly neighbor -- Marxism is perfect vehicle for this sense of insecurity – and is also their fig leaf of morality; 4) in a similar vein: Russians are driven by the necessities of their own past and present position to see external world as evil and menacing; 5) Russian nationalism; 6) ignorance of both Russian leaders and Russian people: little knowledge and
self-hypnosis to believe what they prefer; 7) lack of belief in a factual argument (especially put forward by an outsider) or the idea of objective analysis; 8) lotsa intrigue at home.

**The Soviet policy is therefore:** 1) to do everything possible to advance Soviet power in international society; 2) to work to deepen and exploit differences among western, capitalist powers; 3) use democratic and progressive elements in the west/capitalist world to advance Soviet agenda; 4) battle socialist and social democratic leaders. **What the Soviets will do:** 1) take advantage of any opportunity to advance their power; 2) Soviets participate in all sorts of international organizations when they see potential for using them; 3) always seek to enhance the prestige of the Soviet state; 4) work to split the unity of other nations that oppose them; 5) work to weaken control of capitalist powers over colonial areas and exert their own power there; 6) establish relations with and seek to strengthen powers they believe can oppose the western, capitalist powers; 7) pursue economic autarchy (economic self-sufficiency); 8) seek cultural collaboration with other peoples but not at the expense of the strength of the Soviet peoples; 9) emphasize prestige of Soviet Union; 10) undermine the general political and strategic potential of major western powers; 11) weaken power and influence of western powers in colonial and underdeveloped areas; 12) remove obstructionist governments from power; 13) in foreign Communist countries, seek to destroy all independence from the Soviet Union.

Note that Kennan portrays the Soviets as: 1) not having a particular plan or timetable. They do not take unnecessary risks and are sensitive to push-back: they will withdraw when they meet resistance; 2) they are the weaker force by far; 3) they also have internal problems, such as poor system for transferring power from leader to leader; 4) Soviet propaganda is negative, destructive and relatively easy to combat; 5) Soviet leaders actually do not know what is going on – real information is not feed up the system to them.

**What the US/the West must do:** be firm and resist the Soviet probes; understand the threat for what it is; anticipate assault on all kinds of international organizations; educate our publics; base policy on realistic and matter-of-fact basis; cultivate the health and vigor of our own society (improve our self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit); communicate to other countries a positive and constructive picture of the world that we want; have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human security – enhance the internal harmony of our own society. These things he says explicitly in the last part, but other conclusions may be draw from what Kennan says with respect to the origins of Soviet conduct.

Kennan names a series of agencies that can be useful to them in this connection: 1) Communist parties in other countries, 2) national associations of bodies that can be dominated or influenced; 3) international organizations that can be dominated or influenced; 4) Russian Orthodox Church; 5) Pan-Slav movement; 6) governments that are willing to help.

Students should identify his foreign policy as “containment” and may choose from a series of doctrines: The Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Nixon Doctrine, the Reagan Doctrine etc. (but the doctrine should be from the Cold War era). The doctrines are identified in the Hook book on page 125; the Truman Doctrine was discussed in lectures and in the Hook book (pg. 53), and more extensively in the Hook and Spanier book (pp 40-43). Containment was the core concept of US foreign policy and is discussed in many places especially in Hook and Spanier (and in the lectures).