Answer 5 of the following 6 questions. Each question counts equally.

Remember the examination is only 3 hours: use your time wisely.

Dictionaries (but not specialized political science lexicons) are permitted.

Good luck with the examination

1. This course has been organized around the concept of the “levels” of analysis. What does this mean with respect to foreign policy? What are the levels? Give examples of theories that operate at each level. Draw upon the lectures and/or readings in your answer.


Bailey organized the course around the concept of levels of analysis, or as Kenneth Waltz has termed them, the three “images”. To classify a theory as operating at a particular level of analysis is to identify a theory’s most important factors and determine what kind of factor it is. The Bailey/Waltz version of the three levels/images are 1) the individual level; 2) the state; and 3) the international system. The Schmidt article uses a similar approach but without using this terminology – he writes about systemic and “internal, domestic” explanations, and mentions “personalities of individuals”. At the “internal, domestic” level, Schmidt put theories about “Societal Environment”, “Government Structure”, and “Bureaucratic roles”. Hook has a similar approach. On page 85 he discusses “levels of analysis” which he calls “the interstate system, civil society, government institutions, and political society”. What each scheme has in common is a systemic and an individual level: they differ in that between these two are one or several levels. Exactly what those in-between levels are differ. The best answer here will identify one or more of these schemes, explain it (them) clearly and relate it (or them) to the relevant author.

Explanations that depend on “human nature” and characteristics of individual leaders belong at the first level. This would include theories about individual beliefs and cognitive shortcuts such as
operational codes). Explanations that have to do with national characteristics, structure, institutions and ideologies/mindsets belong at the second level. Theories such as the governmental politics model (or bureaucratic politics model, the name varies) or organizational behavior model belong here. Group dynamics models (such as “groupthink”) are hard to place: some (such as Hook) place them at the individual level, while Bailey tends to place them at an intermediate level. Either is acceptable. Systemic explanations belong at the third level. Remember, the third level is not just “international”, the idea that it is a system is critical. In lectures, Bailey talked about the international system of states and the international economic level.

In the paragraph above, some examples of theories at the different levels are mentioned. Specific categories of International relations theories are also frequently attached to different levels. Structural realism (sometimes called neo-realism) are very much connected to the international system level (since Waltz is famous for developing both structural realism and the levels of analysis approach. (Schmidt covers offensive and defensive realism – both forms of neo-realism-- ; the lecture covered realism more generally). Liberal internationalist theories (this is a category of theories rather than a specific theory) tends to produce theories that operate at the intermediate level. The “democratic peace” theory, for example, belongs here. The international economic system could be connected to Marxist theories, but this was not much discussed in the course and Schmidt says that the Marxists approach tends to yield theories that focus on forces internal to the country, and so places them on the intermediate level. Thinking in terms of the role of the US in the international economic system was covered in lectures (this would be a systemic approach). Constructivism really works at the intermediate level because it deals with language, ideals and identity, which operate at a group or societal level. Approaches that focus on the US national culture or style belong here – because these are not about specific individuals but are general features of society.

2. The place (or role) of the United States in the inter-state system has changed over the years -- and so has the inter-state system itself. Describe briefly the changes in both from 1945 until, roughly, the present day.

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The important issue here is for the student to be able to describe in a broad way changes in the configuration of the international system since the end of the Cold War, and to characterize in a general way the role the US has had in that system over that time.

The end of the Cold War left the US standing alone as the most powerful country in the world. The European great powers were devastated, even those on the winning side. China was devastated – and soon transitioned into a civil war. The multi-polar European balance of power system was gone. The Soviet Union had suffered tremendous damage despite being on the winning side. As the post-war period developed, and the Soviet Union grew stronger, a bi-polar system developed with the US and the Soviet Union as the two “poles”. Even so, the US was by the more powerful of the two until
into the Cold War period. By about 1968, the two were reckoned to be about equal. At the beginning of post-war period, the US (working with Great Britain and supported by others) became the major architect of the institutions of the post-World War II world, including the core international trade, economic and security structures. The US was a leader in creation of international law, and the major force behind the creation of the United Nations. This role of the US is well captured by the fact that the UN was located in New York. The US became the leader of efforts to contain the Soviet Union. Students might argue that the international institutions had the effect of strengthening the “free” world against the “communist world”.

The bipolar system collapsed in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, leaving the United States as the single most important country in the world. This was the so-called unipolar moment for the United States. With the end of the Cold War, came questions about how the international system would function and what the role of the US should be. Students here might want to refer to Krauthammer, whose article “The Unipolar Moment” is on the required reading list. The GHW Bush regime was very cautious about pressing the advantage of the US. In particular, he was cautious about taking advantage of the weakness of the Soviet Union, and Americans looked to cash in the “peace dividend.” Bush did manage to put together a coalition to roll back the invasion of Kuwait but did so in such a way as to not antagonize the Soviet Union or undermine international institutions. He supported the international institutions that had developed during the Cold War, and still saw the US has having a leading role in them. The Clinton administration attempted to focus more on domestic matters – and there was a window of time during which it looked as though the US would do just that and let Europe, for example, take a greater lead in its own affairs and the UN a greater role in the world in general. In other words, the Clinton administration was willing to be less activist in international matters and let the institutions that existed become more important. But this general policy ran aground on the rocks of the former Yugoslavia, when the Europeans and the UN failed to offer a coherent and effective alternative to US leadership. The US accordingly took on a more active international role. This was an era in which NATO expanded and the US economic model gained ground around the world. The Clinton administration embraced the World Trade Organization and responded to China’s growth in power by integrated that country into the rules and institutions of the rest of the world, especially with respect to the world economy (China joined the WTO later, in 2001).

The administration of George Bush took office with the intention of focusing on internal, economic matters but 9/11 made foreign policy the major focus of that administration. At that time, particularly during the first Bush administration, the US seemed to embrace the unipolar moment, acting in a highly unilateral way. This is typified in particular by the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which key US allies did not support and the UN did not sanction. The Bush national security strategy, which embraced preeminence and made it a goal to maintain it (and also embraced the use of preemptive/preventative war when necessary) also seems to reflect this unipolar moment. In general the Bush administration de-emphasized many International agreements and institutions, although it did support international trade arrangements and did not actively undermine major alliances. The Obama administration, having inherited a country beset with economic difficulties and two wars, has played a much less aggressive international role, showing for example, extreme reluctance to send troops to Syria. In general Obama supported international institutions.
Today, the US is still the single most powerful country in the world (if you believe Brooks and Wohlforth), but is increasingly challenged by China. China has witnessed a remarkable economic expansion and is reckoned by some to be the largest economy in the world (or soon will be), a major holder of US debt and with a large trade surplus vis a vis the US. It is investing its earnings in an expanding military (navy in particular). At this point the Trump administration does not seem that interested in the architecture of the international system or the US role in leading it, and the west seems to be wrestling with internal issues.

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 fordel 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 GPM/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 is: “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?

4. Den amerikanske grunnloven deler regjeringsmakta(styringsmakta/myndighet?) mellom de tre grenene av den amerikanske føderale regjeringen. Hvordan ble myndighet vedrørende utenrikspolitikken fordelt mellom presidenten og kongressen? Hvilken gren er førende for beslutninger om amerikansk utenrikspolitikk i dag, og hvorfor?


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). The US Constitution is on the required reading list, and the student should also be familiar with these sorts of things through the Hook US Foreign Policy book and through lectures.

Hook points out that the 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.

5. Lederstilen til den amerikanske presidenten kan påvirke hans evne til å ta gode beslutninger. Beskriv lederstilene til Obama og Bush i det hvite hus og hvorvidt disse gjorde en forskjell i viktige utenrikspolitiske veivalg.

5. Leiarstilen til den amerikanske presidenten kan påverka evna hans til å ta gode avgjerder. Skildre leiarstilane til Obama og Bush i det kvite huset og om desse gjorde ein skilnad i viktige utanrikspolitiske vegval.

Here the student may draw upon the two articles by Pfiffner and also material in the Hook book on foreign policy.

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 into 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. Compare Trump’s foreign policy to either Obama’s or George W. Bush’s national security strategy. In your answer use the relevant National security strategy document. Into which of Walter Russell Mead’s four American schools of thought about US foreign policy does Trump fall and why?

This question requires that the student know something about, first, Donald Trump’s foreign policy, such as it is. Trump’s foreign policy can be derived from the two speeches that are on the required reading list. It was discussed in one of the seminars. Elements identified in the seminar (but taken from the speeches) and made available in powerpoint slides include that the core idea is MAGA (make America great again) with “America First” as an important element. In the seminar, Bailey argued that the idea that Trump could negotiate better deals was also an important foreign (symbolized by the «The Art of the Deal» book). Specific elements of his policy are: 1) Get strong and wealthy at home (Reinvest in its military, promote National unity, Renegotiate trade deals (NAFTA), Reduce bureaucracy, Resist globalization, build trade barriers, 2) Diplomacy – improve bargaining, 3) Use sanctions selectively but with determination; 4) Use military as a last resort -- Don’t’ waste resources; Work with allies, but let them go it alone if they don’t contribute; 5) Be unpredictable; 6) Maintain sovereignty (The Nation-state should be respected and strengthened; US should have maximum freedom of action); 6) Stop radical Islam; 7) restore US dignity; 8) find common ground with China and Russia); 9) Restore confidence in Western values; 10) but – don’t push so-called universal values on to others.

But the student should be able to compare Trump’s view with that of other presidents. Here I am giving the students the opportunity to choose something on the required reading list that they have read: Bush’s or Obama’s NSS or Mead’s American schools of thought. Bush’s National security Strategy document highlights the following. One of the themes that should go through any good answer is the turn away from the US as a global leader of institutions and allies. In the 2002 NSS, the Bush administration advances the view that the Cold War is over, and there was a decisive victory for freedom and the democratic & capitalism model. It pushed the idea of universal values and gave the US a role in advancing these. It included the recognition that Prosperity and Democracy elsewhere is in the interest of the US. The Bush administration existed at a different time, of course, and its specific foreign policy goals reflects this (fighting terrorism and tyrants and dealing with dangers of rogue states and weapons of mass destruction, especially in the hands of terrorist organizations), but the need to spread democracy around the world is strong throughout that document. Also strong, is the free market idea, including free trade over borders. This document of course is also famous for pushing right of the US to carry our “preemptive” strikes against threats in
other states (but it is frequently pointed out “preventative” is a better characterization of what is described in this document than is “preemption”). While this document does share with the Trump view the notions that the US should be free to act in its own interest and should maintain military predominance, it remains very globalist in orientation and gives the US a leading international role.

The Obama NSS presents a different view of the key dangers or risks facing the US. Some of these are shared with the Bush administration (weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and failed states) but it also recognizes climate change, the emergence and spread of global infectious diseases, the possibility of major energy market disruptions and the global economic slowdown. It also argues that there are long-term transitions going on that will make a major difference in years to come, such as a shift in the global balance of power, a shift of power to non-state actors, growing interdependence and technological change, shifts in the energy market and the struggle for power in the Middle East and Africa. Faced with this, the Obama administration argued for the US to pursue “enlightened self interest”, in which the US was best served by a strong economy, a rules-based international order and a respect for universal values around the globe. More direct security for the US and its citizens were important – but so were the security of its allies and partners. Obama and his administration stressed the importance of international institutions. They also gave the US a leading role in maintaining and strengthening international institutions. They do not advocate a highly interventionist policy; instead the US should work cooperatively with others.

Mead has identified four approaches in his article. They are the: Wilsonians, Hamiltonians, Jeffersonians and Jacksonians. He pairs the Wilsonians and the Hamiltonians together and he Jeffersonians and the Jacksonians together, mostly based on how internationalist their thinking is. Hamiltonians and Wilsonians are very internationalist in their thinking. Hamiltonians (named after founding father Alexander Hamilton) want the US to take an important role in creating/maintaining a stable international financial and security structure; Wilsonians (named after US president Woodrow Wilson) want the US to have an important role in creating (maintaining) a global international order (institutions and rules). The characterization of Wilsonians is close to that of liberal internationalism. According to Mead, Jeffersonians have a narrower view of US national interest than do Hamiltonians and Wilsonians, and they want the US to have a much more cost-effective foreign policy. Mead argues that American realists today are Jeffersonian in their outlook. Mead places Trump in the Jacksonian box. Jacksonians are the populists: they are not that interested in the ideals of the enlightenment and do not see the US as having a big mission in the world pushing US values or way of life. But it is intensely patriotic and nationalistic, with a strong belief in the virtues of the country. The US is a nation-state of the American people, their business lies at home. Mead is arguing that the election of Trump signifies a significant shift from the post WWII domination of Hamiltonians and Wilsonians.