

POLS 229 Comparative Foreign Affairs

Simmons University

Gregory P. Williams, Ph.D.

Course Information

Registration: POLS 229 Comparative Foreign Affairs (formerly, Comparative Foreign Policy. 4 credits)

Meetings: Tuesdays, 2:4:50, Building C, Room 202

Email: gregory.williams@simmons.edu

Office hours: Mondays, 2:00 to 3:30pm, in Main College Building A-340H, and by appointment

Books

Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 6th ed. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2022), 9781538161494

Jorge Heine, Carlos Fortin, and Carlos Ominami, *The Non-Aligned World: Striking Out in an Era of Great Power Competition* (Polity, 2025), 9781509564354.

Rajen Harshé, *Africa in World Affairs: Politics of Imperialism, the Cold War and Globalisation* (Routledge, 2019), 9780367148935.

Course Description

Why do nation-states behave the way they do? This course examines foreign policy of various countries in Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America. It focuses on the states, leaders and their worldviews, bureaucracies, national cultures, regime type, and the international system.

Outline

Week 1 (September 2nd): Course introduction and ways of thinking about foreign policy

Paul Sonne, "Putin Finds a Growing Embrace on the Global Stage," *The New York Times* (September 1, 2025): <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/01/world/europe/russia-ukraine-putin-diplomacy.html?smid=url-share>.

Week 2 (September 9th): Cold war non-alignment (aka the Third World)

Heine, et al, preface and chs. 1-3

Week 3 (September 16th): Developmentalism and the view from the Global South

Heine, et al, chs. 4-6

Immanuel Wallerstein, "After Developmentalism and Globalization, What?" *Social Forces* 83, no. 3 (2005): 1263-1278.

Week 4 (September 23rd): End of the old order

Heine, et al, ch. 7, conclusion, and afterward

Jean Lacouture, "Bandung's lost illusions," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 2005).

Celso Amorim, "The old world order is dead. So now what?" *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 2025).

Week 5 (September 30th): Russia as great power balancer

Tsygankov, ch. 1

Comparative essay due

Week 6 (October 7th): Yeltsin and early Putin

Tsygankov, chs. 2-3

Week 7 (October 14th): No class for Administrative Monday

Week 8: October 21st: Evolution of Putin's foreign policy approach

Tsygankov, chs. 4-5

Week 9: October 28th: Russia-Ukraine War

Tsygankov, chs. 6-7

Boris Kagarlitsky and Alexey Sakhnin, "Russia's elite at odds on future ties with West," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (August 2025).

Week 10: November 4th: Decolonization and Pan-Africanism

Harshé, introduction and chs. 1-2

Week 11: November 11th: Putting the S in BRICS

Harshé, ch. 3

Week 12: November 18th: US power in Africa

Harshé, ch. 5

Research paper due

Week 13: November 25th: Chinese power in Africa
Harshé, ch. 6

Week 14: December 2nd: Foreign affairs—a universal logic?
Reading to be announced

Week 15: December 9th:

Op-ed essay due

Grades

1) Comparative essay (20%)

Topic and instructions to be handed out. *Due 9/30.*

2) Research paper (30%)

Topic and instructions to be handed out. *Due 11/18.*

3) Op-ed essay (15%)

Topic and instructions to be handed out. *Due 12/9.*

4) Critical Questions (15%). On one occasion, you will present to the class your impressions of the reading for that week. More instructions will be forthcoming. Due on the day you are scheduled to present. *All presentations shall be done before 11/11.*

5) Cultural Event Write-Up (10%)

Once during the semester, you will need to attend a Boston cultural event of your choosing related to one of the states in the course, the foreign policies of other nations that affect those states, or about the theories of foreign policymaking. You may, for example, hear a paper presentation at the Northeastern Political Science Association, attend a Warburg talk at Simmons, or visit an exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts. You must get your event approved by the instructor first. Then, write up a reaction paper that describes the event and draws connections to our class.

After securing approval from Professor Williams, attend a relevant cultural event and write about its connections to the course material. Write-ups should be two pages, double spaced, given a brief overview of the event, and then discuss in greater detail the relevance of the event for the

course. Superior essays will discuss the implications (or even contradictions!) for the course. *All cultural event write-ups shall be submitted before 11/11.*

4) In-Class Participation (10%). Grades are holistic and non-formulaic, based on the quality of your comments in class. Students with excellent participation may, in addition, see a 1/3 letter grade benefit at the end of the semester. This participation requirement presumes that students will attend all class meetings of this in-person course. *According to a policy of the Department of Politics and Policy, a student who has missed one-third or more of class sessions (five classes) shall **withdraw** from the course.*

Plagiarism and AI

Plagiarism is using another's words or ideas without proper attribution. Plagiarized work may result in disciplinary action.

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT, even as a first draft, is considered plagiarism. Writing is hard, and it is only through practice that one becomes a strong writer. The writing process begins by staring at a blank page.

Editorial AI (e.g., Grammarly) is acceptable, and no AI statement or citation is needed. Data analysis and visualization AI (e.g., Tableau) are acceptable with proper attribution.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, students should be able to identify the theoretical traditions of foreign policy and the role domestic politics plays in the foreign policy of national states; compare the approach to foreign policy of advanced industrial states, such as the United Kingdom, to that of the rising BRICS nations; explore the role of neoliberalism in foreign policymaking; analyze the backlash to the Western-led liberal international order; and, critically examine foreign affairs in writing.

Simmons PLAN Integrative Learning (IL) Key Skills Area (KSA)

In an age of increasing disciplinary specialization, Simmons University asks students to develop a breadth of knowledge by integrating skills from multiple fields or subfields within a discipline. The topics explored in this course cannot be contained within one area. Thus, students can expect readings by political scientists, sociologists, and economic historians. Furthermore, we will examine topics from the fields related to political science: comparative politics, international relations, and public policy. Only through a perspective informed by diverse views can we come to an understanding of comparative foreign affairs.

Other Policies and Notes

(a) Follow this link for Simmons University's policies on student ethical responsibilities and conduct: <https://internal.simmons.edu/students/academics/syllabus-policies>.

(b) Letter grades will be assigned to averages as follows: >93= A; 90-92.9= A-; 86-89.9= B+; 83-85.9= B; 80-82.9= B-; 76-79.9= C+; 73-75.9= C; 70-72.9= C-; 66-69.9= D+; 63-65.9= D; 60-62.9= D-; <60= F.

(c) Simmons University and Professor Williams are committed to equal access to programs and learning opportunities. Students who believe they may be entitled to an academic accommodation should consult with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) at access@simmons.edu.

(d) This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter course requirements and/or assignments based on new materials, class discussions, or other legitimate pedagogical objectives.

(e) The course materials are the intellectual property of the instructor and Simmons University. Students may not share, in person or online, course material (such the syllabus, paper prompts, and tests). Unauthorized copying of courses materials violates the Simmons Honor Code and federal copyright laws. Students may not record lectures or class discussions without explicit permission of the instructor (unless recordings are permitted by a student's accommodation).