Path to the Future: The US in the 21st Century World
LSHV-378-01
Georgetown University
Liberal Studies Degree Program
Spring 2015
Reiss 281
Thursday, 6:30-9:30 pm

DRAFT SYLLABUS – Subject to revision
(Required books will not change; other readings and weekly topics may change)

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“This century must be an American Century. In an American Century, America has
the strongest economy and the strongest military in the world. In an American Century,
America leads the free world and the free world leads the entire world. God did not
create this country to be a nation of followers. America is not destined to be one of
several equally balanced global powers. America must lead the world, or someone else
will. Without American leadership, without clarity of American purpose and resolve, the
world becomes a far more dangerous place, and liberty and prosperity would surely be
among the first casualties.”

Mitt Romney, October 7, 2011

At times in our history U.S. foreign policy has been wise and decent beyond hope - but
America is hardly the City on a Hill dreamt of by its Puritan founders. At times American
behavior has been foolish or brutal – but America is hardly a great Satan...Much of the
time we have simply been human, pursuing our short-term self-interest more or less
skillfully, and the rest of the world be damned.”
Walter McDougall. Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the
World Since 1776 (p. 2)

Course Description
In 1941, the publisher Henry Luce predicted the coming of what he called the “American
Century.” According to Luce, the time had arrived for Americans “to accept wholeheartedly our
duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation of the world and in consequence
to assert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such means as we see fit.” In the
decades that followed, many Americans enthusiastically accepted this challenge and the
remaining decades of the 20th century bore witness to their efforts. But what have been the
consequences for the United States, and the world, in the “present”? Although much of the attention directed toward US foreign policy in the last several years has been focused the “War on Terrorism,” a vast number of other significant issues also present the United States with challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. While not ignoring “terrorism,” this course also will examine some of the other areas of policy as a means of assessing the current global status of the United States and providing insight regarding its “path to the future.”

Course Requirements

I. Discussion Sessions
The class will feature weekly student-led discussions based on the assigned reading(s). The purpose of the discussion sessions is to provide opportunities for students to exchange opinions, interpretations, and ideas about the readings and the topics they address. A good discussion is one where the participants feel that they have learned something new, something that they would not have learned by simply reading the materials on their own. Note - the value of each discussion section ultimately rests on a willingness to come prepared to talk. Thus, all students are expected to do all of the assigned readings. Failure to do so will impair your ability to follow, benefit from, and actively participate in discussion, as well as diminish the value of the session for those students who are prepared.

Active, informed, thoughtful and constructive class participation is a critical part of the assessment criteria for the course. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to engage in a critical analysis of the assigned readings. Strong and effective class participation is characterized by:
• demonstrated mastery of the assigned material;
• critical examination of the assumptions and implications of the assigned readings;
• ability to identify key issues, synthesize information (including making connections or exploring contrasts with previously assigned readings); and
• respectful but probing examination of the contributions of your peers and effective facilitation in clarifying different points of view, thereby contributing to the learning of the whole group.

Guide for Leading Discussions
As discussion leader it is your responsibility to create the environment described above. You will begin with a brief presentation (approximately 7 to 10 minutes) to introduce the reading(s). The briefing should consist of the following:
• It should begin with an introduction that provides a very brief overview of the contents of the reading and your evaluation of the reading.
• Next, you should provide a concise summary of the main points of the reading.
• Who are (or were) the authors? What, if any, training or experience qualified them to write about these issues? You also might note how the book has been received and if there are similar or competing books.
• Next, you should evaluate the quality and consistency of the author’s argument. Your evaluation should include discussion of the sources the author used. Examine the references in the footnotes or endnotes and the bibliography. Upon what types of sources is the book based? How extensive is each author’s research? What is the range of sources consulted by each author?
The briefing should end with a conclusion that ties together the issues raised in the reading and relates them to the general themes of the course.

The briefing will be followed by an open discussion led by you. As part of this, you will prepare a list of questions designed to provoke discussion on the readings (while they primarily should focus on the assigned reading, they also may consider links to previous readings as well as any broader implications of the work to global history, international relations, or other inter-societal relations). To assist your classmates in preparing for discussion, when possible your questions should include brief quotes and/or page numbers for their reference. The questions must be posted in the “Discussion Board” of the class Blackboard site at least 48 hours before class. Students not leading discussion are encouraged strongly to post their own questions and thoughts based on the reading(s) on Blackboard prior to class meetings.

The exact format will be determined by the student(s) leading the week’s discussion – e.g., you simply may generate discussion using the questions you have prepared; you may call on classmates to ask questions they have prepared; you may choose to use part of the class meeting to hold a debate; you may wish to impose a role playing format on a portion of your discussion to help illuminate different perceptions of the issue(s) at hand. If you choose to have your classmates present questions or participate in an activity (briefing, debate) that requires preparation, you must give them advance notice and instruction.

II. Written Assignments
Students are required to submit three written assignments (details provided in a separate handout). Papers are due no later than the beginning of class on February 12, March 19, and April 9. Late papers will not be accepted.

Grading
Note - more than one absence may require that the student withdraw from the course
• Discussion Participation – 30%
• Leading discussion – 5%
• Written assignments – first two papers 20% each; final paper 25%
• Regular attendance is required
Whereby an (A) is Outstanding; (A-) is Excellent; (B+) is Very Good; (B) is Good; (B-) is Acceptable; and a (C) is Minimally Passing.

Critical reading, consistent attendance, and active engagement in class discussions are all vital to your learning and the success of this course. To earn an A level grade for discussion participation, you must come well-prepared for class, consistently interact with your colleagues and move the discussion forward with your own questions, interpretations, and ideas. If you attend every session and occasionally contribute to discussion, demonstrating good preparation on the whole, you will receive a B level grade for participation. If you attend but never participate, your grade will be no higher than a B-.

Liberal Studies Program, General Learning Goals and Outcomes
The Graduate Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown University offers a course of study that engages students in reading, research, reflection, discussion, and writing. In the pursuit of the degree, students are to discern and wrestle with the content generally associated with the “liberal” arts in the root meaning of that term, namely, what it means for human beings to be
endowed with freedom and what ennobles and enhances human freedom. The two general goals of the program, therefore, are to analyze and assess human values (who are we and what ought we to do?) and to undertake such study in an interdisciplinary fashion. The program thus draws from the social sciences as well as from those fields generally defined as the humanities (e.g., theology, philosophy, literature, and art), recognizing that the moral dimension of human life embraces social, political, and economic relationships as well as personal choices. The program is to culminate in a thesis that successfully analyzes a question of value related to a student’s chosen curricular field of study.

More explicitly, the program is to engage the student in examining one or more of the following topics or similar topics as they are treated in various disciplines:

- What it means to be human
- What gives ultimate meaning to human life
- What contributes to human flourishing
- Where human life is heading
- What constitutes the social dimension of humanity
- What enables genuine community
- How are human beings related to nature and creation as a whole
- Elements of personal ethics
- Principles of social justice and social ethics

**Academic Integrity**

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

**Required Books**

Discussion Schedule

Week 1 (January 8) – Course Introduction

Week 2 (January 15) – The Path to the Present
McDougall. Promised Land, Crusader State

Week 3 (January 22) – Democracy for All?

Week 4 (January 29) - Globalization: “It’s a small world after all”
Rodrik. The Globalization Paradox

Week 5 (February 5) – “America is addicted to oil”

Week 6 (February 12) – Climate Change?

FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 12

Week 7 (February 19) – China’s Century?

Week 8 (February 26) – “AfPak”
- Sadika Hamed. The Future of Cooperation between the United States and Pakistan, A Report of the CSIS Program on Crisis, Conflict, and Cooperation, Center for Strategic & International Studies, September 2013. Blackboard
Week 9 (March 5) – Nuclear Proliferation

March 12 – Spring Break

Week 10 (March 19) – Nontraditional Threats

SECONd WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE NO LATER THAN MARCH 19

Week 11 (March 26) – The US and the Developing World

Week 12 (April 2) – “War on Terror”

Week 13 (April 9) – The Path to the Future
Lieber. *Power and Willpower in the American Future*

THIRD WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE NO LATER THAN APRIL 9