

Course Outline

Government 387 Foreign Policy at the Movies

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Note: This outline should not be used by students currently enrolled in this course. The current schedule, assigned readings, and requirements are available to enrolled students on the course Moodle.

For information on my grading policies, expectations, and the drop/add wait list process, see <http://dfoyle.faculty.wesleyan.edu/>.

Course Description

Recent research on public opinion has suggested that public attitudes about foreign affairs are informed by many "nonnews" sources (such as largely entertainment-oriented television programs). This course considers the role of movies in formulating attitudes toward foreign policy events and concepts. The course addresses four topic areas: nuclear weapons, the domestic politics of foreign policy, history on film, and international politics in "popular" film. For each topic, we'll first discuss core findings in the relevant scholarly literature. Then, we'll watch a movie engaging this topic and examine the messages and information provided by movies.

Through both course discussion and papers, this course addresses four questions. First, what are the messages about international politics sent by the movies? Second, to what extent do these messages reflect the particular social context in which the movie was created? In other words, do they reflect the particular cultural milieu of the moment in terms of the prevailing political sentiments? Third, are these messages consistent with the understanding of the events and processes within the political science literature? Finally, what are the implications of movies and the information they provide for democratic governance?

Requirements and Course Grading

Grades will be based on two papers (20% each), an essay final (25%), and participation (35%).

Class periods will be devoted to discussion of the assigned material. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned reading. Students must also

watch the movies during this semester in the context of the course – having seen the movie before does not meet your obligation. Movies are watched by students outside of class as part of the assigned preparation for class discussion.

Papers

You must write one essay from the first part of the course and one essay from the second part of the course (see schedule for due dates). You may turn in your essay paper at any point up until the deadline.

Each paper should be between 2000-3000 words in length. (That is approximately 5-8 pages in length using Times New Roman 11 point font). Turn it in on the Moodle.

The paper topic can address any one of the daily discussion questions listed in the class schedule below or questions 1 or 2 listed under "General Movie Questions." Please use the question you are answering as your paper title.

Final

Take-Home Essay Final: A take-home essay final will be due as indicated in the Moodle schedule.. The essay should be submitted on the Moodle. The essay has a page limit of 2500-3000 words (about 10 pages).

The question is:

Given what you have learned in this course, does what the public “learns” about foreign policy from watching movies facilitate an accurate understanding of the foreign policy issues associated with them? Why or Why not?

Participation

Participation will be evaluated based upon the student's contribution to discussion, responsiveness to other students, and quality of insight. Class attendance is a basic requirement of the participation grade.

Example Schedule

Day 1: Course Introduction: Why Movies and Foreign Policy?

Robert Gregg, International Relations on Film, pp. 1-24.

Foreign Policy Decision Making

Day 2: What is Good Judgment?

Preface, Larson, Renshon, in Good Judgment, pp. vii-57.

Herek, Janis, and Huth, "Decision-Making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?" Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 31 (June 1987).

Day 3: Movie: The Fog of War (2004)

Movie: "The Fog of War" (2004)

Movie Review

Bruce Kuklick, Blind Oracles, 2006, pp. 206-220.

Selections from McNamara, In Retrospect.

Day 4: Nuclear Weapons and Decision Making

Max Fisher, "Hawaii False Alarm Hints at Think Line Between Mishap and Nuclear War," Washington Post, January 14, 2018.

Thomas C. Schelling, "The Diplomacy of Violence," Arms and Influence, pp. 1-34.

Bruce Kuklick, Blind Oracles, 2006 pp. 55-64, 107-109, 136-142.

David Hoffman, The Dead Hand, 2009, pp. 151-154, 421-423.

Operation Able Archer 1983 ([link](#)).

Accidental Nuclear War ([link](#)).

Day 5: Movie: Dr. Strangelove (1964)

Movie "Dr. Strangelove"

Movie Review

Fred Kaplan, "Truth Stranger than Strangelove," *New York Times* October 10, 2004.

Day 6: Nuclear Weapons, Morality, and the Day After (1983)

Allison Wallis, "Being a Mother in Hawaii During 38 Minutes of Nuclear Fear," *Washington Post*, January 13, 2018.

"Effect of Nuclear War," Office of Technology Assessment, 1979 (Read the Executive Summary. The rest of it is there if it interests you.)

U.S. Bishops Pastoral Letter, 1983. (pp. 1-4. The rest of it is there if it interests you.)

David Hoffman, *The Dead Hand*, 2009, pp. 90-91.

Movie: *The Day After* (1983)

Movie Review

Day 7: The Joy of "Discover," The Fate of the Earth, and the Movie "Terminator 2" (1991)

Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*, 1982, pp. 179-231.

Dwight MacDonal, "The Bomb: The Decline to Barbarism" in *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, 1957 pp. 169-79.

Matthew Rosenberg and John Markoff, "The Pentagon's 'Terminator Conundrum,'" *New York Times*, October 25, 2016.

Steve Connor, "Alarm as Dutch Lab Creates Highly Contagious Killer Flu," *The Independent*, December 20, 2011.

Olga Khazan, "Scientists Are Creating Incurable Diseases in Labs," *The Atlantic*, May 20, 2014.

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-Nell Greenfieldboyce, "Scientists Publish Recipe for Making Bird Flu More Contagious," NPR, April 10, 2014.

Movie: Terminator 2 (1991)

Movie Review

Day 8: Gender and Foreign Policy

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," Signs Summer 1987.

J. Ann Tickner, 2001. "Gendered Dimensions of War, Peace, and Security." In *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era*, 36-64. New York: Columbia University Press.

Joshua S. Goldstein, War and Gender (selections).

Valerie Hudson, Mary Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanville, Rose McDermott, & Chad Emmett, "The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States," International Security Winter 2008/2009.

Ofer Zur & Andrea Morrison, "Gender and War: Reexamining Attitudes," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry October 1989.

Richard Eichenberg, "Gender in American Public Opinion on the Use of Military force, 1982-2013," International Studies Quarterly March 2016.

Day 9: Movie: "Wonder Woman" (2017)

Frank Bruni, "The Triumph of Wonder Woman," New York Times, June 4, 2017.

Movie: Wonder Woman (2017)

Bechdel Test (link)

Movie Review

Day 10: Zombies and the Movie "28 Weeks Later" (2007)

Max Brooks, World War Z, 2006 (selections)

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Daniel Drezner, "Night of the Living Wonks," Foreign Policy.

Munz, et. al., "When Zombies Attack!: Mathematical Modeling of an Outbreak of Zombie Infection" In: Infectious Disease Modeling Research Progress, 2009.

Movie: 28 Weeks Later (2007)

Foreign Policy History and Politics

Day 11: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Movie "Thirteen Days" (2001)

National Security Archive Material ([link](#)).

Kennedy Presidential Library Material ([link](#)).

Movie: Thirteen Days (2001)

Movie Review

Day 12: History on Film and the Movie "Argo" (2012)

Movie: Argo (2012)

Movie Review

Joshua Bearman, "How the CIA Used a Fake Sci-Fi Flick to Rescue Americans From Tehran" 2007.

Jim Coyle, "Argo: Former Ambassador Sets the Record Straight," *The Star*, October 7, 2012.

Paper #1 Due

Day 13: Vietnam and the Movie "Path to War" (2002)

Bruce Kuklick, Blind Oracles, 2006, pp. 206-220.

Gordon Goldstein, Lessons in Disaster, pp. 144-185.

Selections from McNamara, In Retrospect.

Movie: Path to War (2002)

Day 14: War and the Movie “Dunkirk” (2017)

Stephanie Merry, "There's A Divide Between Civilians and Soldiers, Partly Because of Hollywood," Washington Post, May 18, 2015.

John Broich, "What's Fact and What's Fiction in Dunkirk," Slate July 20, 2017.

Movie: Dunkirk (2017).

Day 15: The Iraq War and the Movie “Fahrenheit 9/11” (2004)

Juan -Jose Igartua & Isabel Barrios, "Changing Real-World Beliefs with Controversial Movies: Processes and Mechanisms of Narrative Persuasion," Journal of Communication, 2012.

Cheryl Koopman, et.al, "The Effects of Watching Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11 on Voting Intentions, Mood, and Beliefs About Why President Bush and His Administration Initiate War in Iraq," Peace and Conflict

Movie: “Fahrenheit 9/11”

If you need it to understand Iraq 2003 decision making dynamics, Douglas C. Foyle, "Leading the Public to War?" International Journal of Public Opinion Research (2004).

Day 16: Torture, Terrorism, and the Movie “Zero Dark Thirty” (2012)

Movie: Zero Dark Thirty (2012)

Movie Review

National Security Archive File (link).

Scott Shane, "U.S. Practiced Torture After 9/11 Review Concludes," New York Times, April 16, 2013 (link). Be sure to look at the Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment report (on the New York Times page -- especially the "Findings and Recommendations" and Chapter 7 on the efficacy of torture.

Contemporary Issues

Day 17: The Public Right to Know and the Movie “Snowden” (2016)

"How to Balance the Public's Need to Know vs. Security," [Frontline](#), PBS (link). Interview excerpts.

John Oliver, "Last Week Tonight: Surveillance," April 5, 2015, (link).

Fred Kaplan, "The Leaky Myths of Snowden," [Slate](#), September 16, 2016.

Movie “Snowden” (2016)

Day 18: Terrorism and the Movie “The Siege” (1998)

Max Fisher, “Why Home-Grown Islamic Terrorism Isn’t A Threat,” [Atlantic Monthly](#), November 2009.

Max Fisher, “Little Change in Terrorist Threat Since 9/11” [Atlantic Monthly](#), September 2011.

Richard Clarke, “Ten Years Later,” [Atlantic Monthly](#), January/February 2005.

Lois Parshley & Max Fisher, “How Our Predictions for the 9/11 Decade Panned Out,” [Atlantic Monthly](#), September 2011.

John Arquilla, "Beware the Few" April 15, 2013,(link).

Movie: “The Siege”

Movie Review

Day 19: Civil-Military Relations, Society, and the Movie “Seven Days in May” (1964)

Cohen “Unequal Dialogue,” in Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, editors [Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security](#).

Fred Kaplan, "The Thin Skin of John Kelly," [Slate](#) October 26, 2017 (link).

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Alex Horton, "For Some Veterans, John Kelly's Remarks Add to A Worrying Civilian-Military Divide," Washington Post October 21, 2017.

Andy Kroll, "Trump at War," Huffington Post, (link).

Movie: Seven Days in May (1964)

Movie Review

Day 20: The Diversionary Use of Force and the Movie "Wag the Dog" (1997)

Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Clinton's Military Strikes in 1998: Diversionary Use of Force?" Armed Forces and Society, Winter 2002.

Dominic Tierney, "The Risks of Foreign Policy as Political Distraction," Atlantic June 15, 2017.

Movie: Wag the Dog (1998)

Movie Review

Day 21: Cyberterrorism and Cyberwar and the Movie "Live Free or Die Hard" (Die Hard 4) (2007)

John Carlin, "A Farewell to Arms," Wired (May 1997).

Marie Cusak, "After Alert On Russian Hacks, Bigger Push To Protect Power Grid" NPR "Morning Edition" April 20, 2018, (link).

Recommended: Richard Clark, *Cyberwar*, (2010) (selections).

Movie "Live Free or Die Hard" (Die Hard 4)

Movie Review

Day 22: Drones and the Movie "Eye in the Sky" (2015)

Pam Benson, "Obama Administration Defends Killing American Terrorists," CNN.com, February 23, 2012 (link).

Doug Bandow, "America as Constitutional Republic: When Can the President Kill?" Huffington Post, February 28, 2012 (link).

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The Drone Papers, [The Intercept](#) (link). Be sure to read Kill Chain, Find, Fix, Finish, and Firing Blind.

Movie: "Eye in the Sky" (2015).

Day 23: Pandemic Disease and the Movie "Contagion" (2011)

Michael T. Osterholm, "The Next Contagion: Closer than You think" [New York Times](#) May 10, 2013.

David Quammen, "The Next Pandemic: Not it, but When," [New York Times](#) May 10, 2013.

Josh N. Ruxin, "Pandemic pandemonium" [The National Interest](#) 96 (July-August 2008).

Centers for Disease Control Pandemic Flu website (poke around -- check out the national plan) (link).

Background on the science of Contagion (link).

Movie "Contagion" (2011)

Movie Review

Day 24: Contemporary Politics, Capitalism, Gender, and the Movie "Jurassic World (2015)

Movie: Jurassic World (2015).

Movie Review

David Brady & Douglas Rivers, "Explaining the Trump Phenomenon" [Real Clear Politics](#) March 12, 2016 (link).

Nicole Gelinas, "The Message for Politicians in 'Jurassic World's' shift against big business," [New York Post](#) June 28, 2015 (link).

Molly Fitzpatrick, "'Jurassic Park' is 100 Times More Feminist than Jurassic World" [Fusion](#) June 17, 2015 (link).

"A Guide to Jurassic World's Sexism Controversy," [Vox](#) June 16, 2015 (link).

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Day 25: Conclusion 1: “Learning” by Going to the Movies?

Terry Christensen and Peter J. Haas, Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films, 2005, selections.

Paper #2 Due

Day 26: Conclusion 2: Adding It All Up

Take-Home Final Due as Scheduled.