POLSC 121 / Introduction to American Government

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
UNITED STATES FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY

Terms and concepts to know:

Realism	Idealism
Monroe Doctrine	Isolationism
League of Nations	Cold War
Deterrence	Massive retaliation
Flexible response	MAD
Arms control (SALT / ABM / INF)	Containment
Truman Doctrine	Korea / Vietnam (Domino Theory)
Peaceful coexistence (détente)	LDC's / developing countries
Nuclear proliferation	Trade
Immigration	Foreign policy principles (natl. interest)
Foreign policymakers	5 aspects of foreign policy

Study and discussion questions:

1. Typical government texts suggest there are a number of components or "goals" of American foreign policy (Remy: national security, free and open trade, world peace, democratic governments, and concern for humanity). Discuss the extent to which these "stated" objectives are a true reflection of policymakers motivations. Do you believe they are? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the two major foreign policy orientations of realism and idealism. Of the two, which do you believe should be the foundation for our foreign policy?
3. Supporters of a new American empire argue that the global power of the United States is benign and motivated by high moral ideals, in contrast to previous world empires. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this claim?
4. Review the four post-September 11 questions Chomsky raises in the second half of his essay. Throughout his response to these questions he makes a case for applying "elementary moral standards" or "the standard of universality" to international relations. From your reading of these questions and answers, why aren't consistent moral standards applied to all countries? The principal defense of adopting different standards is that the US is "good" and our enemies are "evil." Evaluate that good/evil dichotomy.
5. Consider Chernus's application of theology to the discussion of US foreign policy. To what extent is he correct when he notes that "American foreign policy is built on a deep foundation of Christian theology? How is this good or bad?

Readings:

Heineman. *American Government*, Chapter 15.
WEB – Chernus, Chomsky.

Video:

Lions for Lambs.