

Tom Gaskin (Everett Community College)
Fabian Hilfrich (University of Edinburgh)
Michaela Hoenicke Moore (University of Iowa)
Sandra Scanlon (University College Dublin)

The United States in Iraq

The main focus of this course is the current war in Iraq, which includes an examination of the US decision-making process and policy formation. This course examines how the war reflects and impacts American society and culture. The current war is contextualized in several respects:

- Iraq and the wider history of the Middle East
- global environment
- terrorism and the war in Afghanistan.

In addition, students will analyze the international dimensions and repercussions of the Iraq War.

- 1) Introduction to the Middle East
 - Collapse of Ottoman Empire: decolonization
 - US and the Middle East: oil; Arab-Israeli conflict; Cold War containment
 - Islam
- 2) History of Iraq
 - creation of Iraq as an “artificial state”
 - Iraqi nationalism
 - revolution and the rise of Saddam Hussein
- 3) Post-Cold War World
 - changing parameters of international relations
 - “New World Order”
 - uni-polar moment and neoconservative ideology/foreign policy
- 4) Desert Shield/Desert Storm
 - coalition building
 - kicking the Vietnam Syndrome?
 - on to Baghdad?
- 5) History of Terrorism & September 11th, 2001
- 6) Reaction to 9/11
 - International support

- Afghanistan
- 7) The rationale for war, part I
 - continuation of the war on terror
 - role of popular stereotypes/cultural factors
 - Wilsonian internationalism
 - (Not) nation-building?
- 8) The rationale for war, part II
 - fear-based or opportunity-based factors
- 9) Intelligence
 - US intelligence: inter-agency differences
 - International readings
 - Tool of diplomacy, rather than aspect of policy-making?
- 10) Diplomacy
 - international perspectives on war
 - coalition building
 - UN
- 11) Decision-making process
 - Inter-departmental disputes
 - Congress and war powers
- 12) Media and the public
- 13) Intervention
 - military's policies/strategies
 - Rumsfeld's war
- 14) The nature of the armed forces
 - reflections of society in armed forces
 - composition of armed forces: no draft etc., Reserves
- 15) "Mission Accomplished"
 - quick military defeat
 - insurgency
- 16) Coalition Provisional Authority
 - reconstruction
 - "nation-building"
- 17) Iraqi experience

- ethnic divisions
 - establishment of Iraqi government
- 18) Homefront, part I
 - debate on war; Congress, media
 - alternative strategies; Baker report
 - 19) Homefront, part II
 - anti-war movement
 - 20) Constitutional issues
 - Patriot Act
 - torture & rendition
 - *habeas corpus*
 - 21) Responses to the insurgency
 - the surge, 2007
 - 22) International repercussions
 - loss of credibility and moral authority
 - anti-Americanism
 - strengthening of Iran, Russia and China
 - 23) Representations of war
 - popular culture: music, literature, film
 - 24) Conclusion
 - the Iraq War and traditions of American foreign policy

Reading:

Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*

Freedman, Lawrence and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991*

Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco*

George Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*

Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*

Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*

Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III*

Iraq Study Group Report, 2007

Bedford edition of 9/11 Report