

**Popcorn and Politics: American Foreign Policy  
at the Movies**

**Tuesday 2:00-3:20pm & 7:00-9:50pm; Thursday 2:00-3:20pm,  
Posner Hall 151**

**Course Number: 84-280**

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**Instructor Information**

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**Office Location / Hours** Posner Hall 370; Tuesday 3:30-5:00pm or By Appointment

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**What Is This Course About?**

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then how many words are moving pictures—that is, movies—worth? The stories captured in movies shape our ideas about the world, our sense of right and wrong, and our hopes and dreams. This course will trace the interlinked relationship between international affairs and film. We will analyze (a) how artists have been inspired by real-world foreign policy events and theories to create film; (b) how film has had actual, tangible effects on government policies and public opinion; (c) what films can teach us about the causes of war, role of morality in international politics, and foreign policy decision-making; and (d) consider how future foreign policy developments might impact film moving forward. We will watch a wide range of movies, from war dramas and science-fiction films to animated musicals and comedies. By the end of this course, students will have a greater understanding about how movies can be inspired by, reflect, and critique foreign policy events, theories, and debates.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Analyze the relationship between film and foreign policy events or theories.
2. Generate an argument about how film can reflect, support, or critique historical foreign policy actions or international relations theories.
3. Consider counter-arguments to your position and the limitations of your analysis.
4. Communicate your arguments and insights in both written and oral forms.
5. Identify a research topic of your choice that utilizes a film we did not study in class to analyze a foreign policy event or theory that we did study in class.

## Assignments/Grading

### In-Class Participation (20%)

I hope you will learn something from me over the course of the semester, but just as importantly I believe you will learn much from each other (and I will learn from you). However, this requires that you do the reading and attend/actively participate in class. Participation includes asking questions, answering questions I ask the class as a whole, and being active in small group work.

### Three Reaction Papers (10% Each, 30% Total)

Pick three different weeks of the semester. For those weeks you will write a short (4-5 pages double spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) reaction paper about that week's film and its relation to the historical foreign policy event and theory we discussed. For example, you might analyze how the film implicitly or explicitly embodies, supports, or critiques the foreign policy event and/or theory we discussed. Your paper should reference the course readings, which you can cite by putting the author's last name and the date of publication in parentheses (a separate bibliography section is not needed). No outside research is required. Your paper should touch on the relevance of the film's dialogue, but it should also discuss at least one other aspect of the film, such as its images, sounds, set design, costuming, blocking, or editing. Your paper should include a thesis statement in the introduction that summarizes your overall view on how and to what extent the film relates to the foreign policy event and/or theory. For example, for a paper on *Dr. Strangelove*, your thesis might be that the film illustrates the absurdity of the theory of mutually assured destruction. Be sure to consider one or two salient counter-arguments to your thesis. Your paper is due on Canvas by 1pm on the first Thursday class following the screening of the movie you're writing on. Also, be prepared to talk in class about your argument and insights (I will ask!).

How Do I Sign Up for a Topic? You can access the sign-up sheet on Google Sheets at [this link](#). **The deadline to sign up is September 10.** Only a certain number of people will be allowed to choose each class session and so act fast.

### Class Question of the Week (20%)

Each week there is one question I will pose to the entire class (see the class schedule below). Unless you are writing a reaction paper that week, you should post an answer to this question on Canvas before our Thursday class. Your answer should be no longer than 1 page double spaced. If you are writing a reaction paper, then you do *not* need to answer this question. This should be turned in on Canvas by 1pm on the first Thursday class following the screening of the movie you're writing on. This will be graded in 5-point increments (100%, 95%, 90%, etc.).

### Final Research Paper (30%)

Pick one of the American foreign policy events and/or theories we discussed in class. Then pick a movie we did *not* watch/discuss in class and write an essay on how that movie embodies, supports, or critiques the American foreign policy event and/or theory. Your essay should be between 10 and 12 pages double spaced (12-point font, 1-inch margins). Use the film analysis tools we have developed over the course of the semester in your analysis. A 1-page double spaced proposal/outline for your final paper is due on November 26. It should explain what movie you've chosen, which foreign policy event/theory it relates to, and (briefly) how you think the two relate. The final paper is due on December 11 by 11:59pm.

## Grading Scale

A (90-100%), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%) R (under 60%).

## Missing Class / Late Assignments Due to Extenuating Circumstances

Attending and participating in class discussions helps facilitate learning; not only for you, but also for your peers. Therefore, part of your grade is based on your attendance and active participation. Turning in assignments on time is also important for ensuring that no student(s) have an unfair advantage. It's also good practice for your future job. With that being said, your health, wellness, religious beliefs, professional advancement, etc. is important to me and I recognize you may occasionally need to miss class or turn in an assignment late due to extenuating circumstances. This includes (but isn't limited to) a physical or mental health crisis, family medical emergency, religious event, or job interview. If you need to miss class or cannot turn in an assignment on time due to one of these issues, then please try and let me know at least 24-48 hours in advance (except in the case of an emergency) and we can find an appropriate accommodation.

## Rules for the Tuesday Night Film Screenings

You are not allowed to use your laptop or phone to take notes during the film screenings because they may distract other students and yourself. Failure to abide by this policy will harm your participation grade. I *strongly* encourage you to take notes during the film screenings, especially as it relates to the question of the week. Attendance will also be noted during the film screenings and factor into your participation grade.

## How to Access (Most) of the Class's Films Online for Free

First, go to the CMU library home page (<https://www.library.cmu.edu/>). Second, click "advanced search". Third, enter the name of the movie. Fourth, under "material type" on the right, click "Video/Film" at the bottom. Fifth, search and then click the "available online" option (sometimes you have to click the X versions found button first). All the movies except Mulan and Star Trek should be accessible.

## Overview of the Class Schedule

Each Tuesday afternoon we will talk about—in chronological order—a crucial event in American foreign policy history, a theory that can explain the dynamics of the event, and the relevance of the history and theory to contemporary debates. Then on Tuesday evening you will watch a film that is related—either directly or metaphorically—to the historical event and/or theory. Our Thursday afternoon sessions will then be spent analyzing the film and discussing the interrelationships between art and world politics. All readings are available for free [here](#), or by going to the course Canvas page and navigating to the "Files" section.

<b>The American Foreign Policy Event</b>	<b>The Broader Theoretical Question</b>	<b>The Relevance to Contemporary Politics</b>	<b>The Film</b>
Spanish-American War (1898)	Can beliefs about gender cause war?	Increasing female leadership around the world	Mulan (1998) Animated Musical
Philippine-American War (1899-1902)	Why do weak powers sometimes beat stronger ones? How does successful counter-insurgency work?	Afghanistan, Iraq, and Russia-Ukraine Wars	The Battle of Algiers (1966) Historical War Drama
Japanese Internment in World War II (1942-1946)	What is the relationship between the judicial branch and national security? How should protecting civil liberties be balanced against combatting security threats?	Security measures against Chinese nationals living in America; Presidential immunity; China's treatment of the Uyghurs	District 9 (2009) Science-Fiction
Cold War Nuclear Arms Race	Are nuclear weapons a net positive or negative for the world? Does having more than your opponent help?	Debates about nuclear disarmament; China's nuclear buildup; AI and automation	Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) Dark Comedy
Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)	What role does the bureaucracy play in determining foreign policy?	Obama's troop surge in Afghanistan; Trump's complaints about the "deep state"	12 Angry Men (1957) Courtroom Drama
Vietnam War (1955-1975)	What is the relationship between the government, media, public opinion, and foreign policy? To what extent can policymakers deceive the public?	Afghanistan, Iraq, and Russia-Ukraine Wars	The Truman Show (1998) Psychological Thriller

Chilean Coup D'état (September 1973)	How should America balance security interests with moral values and support for democracy?	US-China competition; Russian election interference	Missing (1982) Historical Drama
End of the Cold War/Collapse of the Soviet Union (1989-1991)	What is the best way to foster peace with former adversaries? Was NATO expansion a mistake and would an isolationist foreign policy be effective?	US-Russia and US-China relations	Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (1991) Science-Fiction
Rwandan Genocide (1994)	Do the US and other countries have a "responsibility to protect" foreign civilians from harm?	Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars; Humanitarian crises around the world	Hotel Rwanda (2004) Historical Drama
Iraq War (2003-2011)	To what extent is miscommunication and misperception a cause of war?	US-China relations	Arrival (2016) Science-Fiction
Drone Wars (2001-Present)	Do drones increase or decrease terrorism? Is their use ethical or immoral?	Counter-terrorism operations	Eye in the Sky (2015) Drama



## Class Schedule

### August 27: The Interlinked Relationship Between American Foreign Policy and Film

- Suggested Reading:
  - Kevin Bankston, “How Sci-Fi Like ‘WarGames’ Led to Real Policy During the Reagan Administration,” *New America* (2018), [Link](#).
  - Benjamin Svetkey, “40 Years Ago, a TV Movie Saved the World from Nuclear Annihilation,” *The Hollywood Reporter* (2023), [Link](#), [Read via the link](#).
  - Kevin L. Young and Charli Carpenter, “Does Science Fiction Affect Political Fact? Yes and No: A Survey Experiment on Killer Robots,” *International Studies Quarterly* (2018), [Link](#).
- Key Questions
  - What is the relationship between art (film, in this case) and politics?
  - Does politics inspire art?
  - Does art impact public policy by influencing the views of leaders and the mass public?
  - To what extent, if at all, can film provide “evidence” for a particular political argument or position?
- Tuesday Night Film: NONE.

### August 29: The Basics of Film Analysis

- Guest Speaker: [Jeff Hinkleman](#)
  - Senior Lecturer and Director of the CMU Film & Visual Media Program
  - Teaches Introduction to Film Studies
  - Author of the book *For No Reason at All: The Changing Narrative of the First World War in American Film*
- Required Reading: None

### September 3: Gender as a Cause of War and America’s Foreign Policy Traditions — The Spanish-American War (1898)

- Required Reading
  - Paul D. Millar, “Whither, America?” *Law & Liberty* (2022), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Kristin L. Hoganson, “Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars,” *Yale University Press* (1998), [Link](#), Only pages 1-18, 35-37, 43-first sentence of 47, 51, bottom of 55-57, 68-70, 78, 88-94, and 104-106.
  - Joshua Schwartz and Christopher Blair, “Why More Female Leaders Won’t Lead to More Peace,” *Lawfare*, [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Joslyn Barnhart et al., “Women’s Suffrage and the Democratic Peace: Female Voters Slow the March to War,” *Foreign Affairs* (2020), [Link](#), 6 pages.
- Key Questions
  - What are the four key American foreign policy traditions according to Walter Russel Mead? How do they map onto explanations for the Spanish-American War and current political debates?

- In what ways did gender norms and ideas cause the Spanish-American War? What types of evidence does Hoganson use to make her case? Was gender a necessary or sufficient condition to cause the war? Is Hoganson's argument falsifiable?
- How might ideas about gender (as well as race and religion) interact with the four foreign policy traditions proposed by Mead?
- Do factors related to gender impact American foreign policy today? In similar or different ways as it impacted America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- Would a hypothetical female US president have been under even greater or lesser pressure than McKinley was to act in Cuba?
- Why might the impact of more female leaders be different than more female voters? Did the lack of female suffrage in the US in 1898 impact the likelihood of war with Spain?
- Which foreign policy tradition do you personally identify with and why?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Mulan*, 1998, Animated Musical
  - Note: Because I will be out town on September 5, we will stay after the film is done to break it down until around 9:30-9:50pm.
- Class Question of the Week: Which song ("Honor to Us All," "Reflection," "I'll Make a Man Out of You," or "A Girl Worth Fighting For") do you think relates the most to Hoganson's argument? Explain with references to the lyrics and visuals of the song.

### September 5: NO Class (I'll be away for a conference)

- Recommended Reading
  - "The Ballad of Mulan," In Han H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry*, Yale University Press (1976), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Andrew Kaczynski, "Mike Pence Argued In an Op-Ed That Disney's 'Mulan' Was Liberal Propaganda," *BuzzFeed* (2016), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Brooks Barnes and Amy Qin, "Disney Wanted to Make a Splash in China with 'Mulan.' It Stumbled Instead," *New York Times* (2020), [Link](#), 9 pages.
  - Aynne Kokas, "How Beijing Runs the Show in Hollywood," *Journal of Democracy* (2022), [Link](#), Only pages 90-98.
- Key Questions
  - How is the original 6<sup>th</sup> century ballad of Mulan different from the movie? What major adaptation choices did the screenwriters make, and how do they relate to debates about the role of women in society?
  - How does Mulan in the original 6<sup>th</sup> century ballad relate to American views of female Cuban "heroines" or "Amazons" discussed by Hoganson? What about Mulan in the film? What are the similarities and differences?
  - How does the film use irony to make its points?
  - The film pushes back against certain stereotypes related to gender, but does it fall prey to other stereotypes in its character design and dialogue?
  - Can politics impact the content of movies? What does your answer suggest more broadly about the nature of art?
  - Can movies and film corporations impact politics? If so, then to what extent?
  - How much—if at all—should Hollywood companies change the content of their movies to gain access to the Chinese market? Would your answer change if you were a studio executive?



## September 10: Why Weak States Sometimes Beat Stronger Ones and Effective Counter-Insurgency Strategies — The Philippine-American War (1899-1902)

- Required Readings
  - Andrew Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict,” *World Politics*, [Link](#), Only pages 175-187.
  - Jens Ringsmose, “When Great Powers Lose Small Wars,” *Global Society*, [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Timothy K. Deady, “Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899-1902,” *Parameters* (2005), [Link](#), 15 pages.
  - Thomas R. Mockaitis, “Trends in American Counterinsurgency,” In Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, Routledge (2012), [Link](#), Only page 252-253.
  - Christina Twomey, “Reconcentration and the Camp System: The Legacy of the Philippine-American War,” In Robert Cribb et al., *Detention Camps in Asia*, Brill (2022), [Link](#), Only pages 25-27, 31-34, and 37.
  - William L. d’Ambruso, *American Torture from the Philippines to Iraq*, Oxford University Press (2022), [Link](#), Only pages 61-63, 72-74, and 76-81.
    - **Warning:** The n-word is used in some quotes from past American leaders in this reading because racism is one possible explanation for why torture was used by the US.
- Key Questions
  - What are the arguments by Mack, Arreguín-Toft, Merom, and Records for why more powerful countries lose wars against weaker powers?
  - How do these four explanations map onto the Philippine-American War? What about the war between the French and the FLN in Algeria and modern conflicts like Afghanistan and Iraq?
  - What lessons (if any) does the Philippine-American War provide for the US today?
  - Can an approach designed to win “hearts and minds” help powerful states defeat insurgencies?
  - Were the “reconcentration camps” used by the US in the Philippine-American War appropriate from an ethical perspective? Were they effective militarily?
  - Was the US employment of torture appropriate? Does the torture debate in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century foreshadow any more modern debates?
- Tuesday Night Film: The Battle of Algiers, 1966, Historical War Drama
- Class Question of the Week: How does the film use light and shadow to express its themes? How does this relate to arguments about guerilla warfare and why more powerful nations sometimes lose to weaker ones?

## September 12: The Battle of Algiers

- Required Reading
  - Sohail Daulatzai, *Fifty Years of the Battle of Algiers: Past as Prologue*, University of Minnesota Press (2016), Only pages 25-29.
  - David Forgacs, “Italians in Algiers,” *Interventions* (2007), [Link](#), Only pages 358-360.
  - Michael T. Kaufman, “What Does the Pentagon See in Battle of Algiers?” *New York Times* (2003), [Link](#), 4 pages.

- Edith Evans Asbury, “Battle of Algiers Is Presented at Black Panthers Trial,” *New York Times* (1970), [Link](#), 1 page.
- “Senate Report Finds CIA Interrogation Tactics Were Ineffective,” *NBC News* (2014), [Link](#), 6 pages.
- Jakana L. Thomas, “Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: Assessing the Effect of Gender Norms on the Lethality of Female Suicide Terrorism,” *International Organization*, [Link](#), Only pages 769-779.
- Vincent Bauer, Michael Reese, and Keven Ruby, “Does Insurgent Selective Punishment Deter Collaboration? Evidence from the Drone War in Pakistan,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2022), [Link](#), Only pages 298-305.
- Joshua Kilberg, “A Basic Model Explaining Terrorist Group Organizational Structure,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2012), [Link](#), Only pages 810-812.
- Key Questions
  - How has this film been used by real organizations? What does this say about how much control artists have over the impact of their work? Which uses are appropriate and which are inappropriate in your view?
  - Do you think this is a film that the US military can actually learn something from? What about rebel/insurgent/terrorist groups?
  - Does the film veer into pro-FLN propaganda (especially since it was made in close collaboration with the FLN-led Algerian government), does it portray the French too sympathetically, or does it reflect the nuances of the conflict well?
  - What effect does the documentary/news-reel aesthetic of the film have on the viewer? Is it an effective technique?
  - Does the lack of a strong central character harm or help the movie?
  - How does the visual appearance of the European Quarter and the Casbah (Muslim Quarter) reflect the broader themes of the film?
  - Does the use of the actual languages spoken during the conflict make the film more authentic? What are the tradeoffs of this artistic choice?
  - Does the film fairly depict torture? Is torture ever an acceptable method?
  - How does the film relate to our previous discussion about the role gender/sex play in war?

### **September 17: The Impact of the Judiciary on Foreign Policy and Balancing Security with Civil Rights — Japanese Internment During World War II (1942-1946)**

- Required Reading
  - “Japanese American Incarceration,” *The National WWII Museum*, [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Chief Justice Harlan Stone, “Majority Opinion: Hirabayashi v. United States,” *Supreme Court* (1943), [Link](#), Only pages 83 and 93-101.
  - Chief Justice Hugo Black, “Majority Opinion: Korematsu v. United States,” [Link](#), Only pages 215-218.
  - Associate Justice Felix Frankfurter, “Concurring Opinion: Korematsu v. United States,” [Link](#), Only pages 224-225.
  - Associate Justice Frank Murphy, “Dissenting Opinion: Korematsu v. United States,” [Link](#), Only pages 233-234.
  - Associate Justice Robert Jackson, “Dissenting Opinion: Korematsu v. United States,” [Link](#), Only bottom of page 242 to the very bottom of 243.
  - Charlie Savage, “Korematsu, Notorious Supreme Court Ruling on Japanese Internment, Is Finally Tossed Out,” *New York Times* (2018), [Link](#), 4 pages.

- Sarah Binder, James Goldgeier, and Elizabeth N. Saunders, “The Imperial Presidency Unleashed: How the Supreme Court Eliminated the Last Remaining Checks on Executive Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (2024), [Link](#), 10 pages.
- Amy Qin and Patricia Mazzei, “When Buying a Home is Treated as a National Security Threat,” *New York Times* (2024), [Link](#), 10 pages.
- Key Questions
  - Why did President Roosevelt order the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II? What legal reasoning did the Supreme Court use to approve the constitutionality of this measure? What does this reasoning suggest about how the court approaches legal analysis during times of war?
  - How much deference *should* the court give the commander-in-chief during times of war? Should legal analysis change during times of war compared to times of peace?
  - Is it ever appropriate to punish people based on a *theoretical* threat they might pose rather than a threat based on specific evidence?
  - How does this topic relate to the Philippine-American War?
  - To what extent is the US repeating the mistakes of the past today?
  - What are the foreign policy implications of the Supreme Court’s ruling on presidential immunity?
  - To what extent does Congress also defer to the president on matters of war and foreign policy? Is this more, equally, or less troubling than judicial deference?
- Tuesday Night Film: District 9, 2009, Science-Fiction
- Class Question of the Week: In what ways does District 9 subvert the normal tropes of science-fiction films and in what ways does it follow them?

## September 19: District 9

- Required Reading
  - A.O. Scott, “A Harsh Hello for Visitors from Space,” *New York Times* (2009), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Chris Lee, “Alien Bus-Stop Ads Create a Stir,” *Los Angeles Times* (2009), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Lev Grossman, “In Which I Have a Long Conversation with Neill Blomkamp, Director of District 9,” *TIME* (2009), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Tola Onanuga, “Why District 9 Isn’t Racist Against Nigerians,” *The Guardian* (2009), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Michael Valdex Moses and Lucy Valerie Graham, “District 9: A Roundtable,” *Safundi* (2010), [Link](#), Only pages 156-163.
  - Falih Hassan and Jane Arraf, “Blackwater’s Bullets Scarred Iraqis. Trump’s Pardon Renewed the Pain,” *New York Times* (2020), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - James Risen, “Before Shooting in Iraq, a Warning on Blackwater,” *New York Times* (2014), [Link](#), 7 pages.
- Key Questions
  - How did real-world politics influence the creation of this film?
  - Is the depiction of Nigerians in District 9 thematically appropriate, or does it fall into the same trap of discrimination the film warns against? What about the depiction of the aliens themselves?
  - How is the treatment of the aliens similar and different to the treatment of those with Japanese ancestry in America in the 1940s?

- What are the pros and cons of centering the story on the human Wilkus?
- What role does dark humor play in the film? Is it appropriate?
- Does the US Supreme Court's deference to the president on matters of national security have an analog in the film?

## September 24: The Pros and Cons of Nuclear Weapons and Whether Having More Than Your Opponent Matters — The Cold War Nuclear Arms Race

- Required Reading
  - Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, "Is Nuclear Zero the Best Option?," *The National Interest* (2010), [Link](#), 9 pages.
  - Dylan Matthews, "40 Years Ago Today, One Man Saved Us from World-Ending Nuclear War," *Vox* (2023), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb," *Foreign Affairs* (2012), [Link](#), 7 pages.
  - Matthew Kroenig, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy: Why Superiority Matters*, [Link](#), Only pages 1-7 of the pdf in the Introduction and Only pages 2-3 of the pdf in Chapter 1.
  - Antoine Bousquet and Jairus Victor Grove, "The Best of All Possible Nuclear Worlds (Or How Matthew Kroenig Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb)," *New Perspectives* (2020), [Link](#), Only pages 89-92.
  - Lauren Sukin, "When Nuclear Superiority Isn't Superior," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2023), [Link](#), 6 pages.
- Key Questions
  - What is the logic of nuclear deterrence and mutually assured destruction?
  - What's the argument for why nuclear weapons have made the world more peaceful? What's the case they have made the world more dangerous? Which argument do you find more convincing?
  - Should countries like the United States push for global nuclear disarmament?
  - How significant a threat is nuclear proliferation? Or is it a good thing?
  - What's the argument for nuclear superiority? Do you think the US should endeavor to have more nuclear weapons than Russia *and* China combined?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, 1964, Dark Comedy/Political Satire.
- Class Question of the Week: Is humor and satire an appropriate way to depict issues that have tangible, life-or-death stakes for hundreds of millions of real people? Do you think making people laugh about a political issue has a bigger, smaller, or similar effect on their views as making them cry?

## September 26: *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

- Required Reading
  - Nicholas Thompson, "Inside the Apocalyptic Soviet Doomsday Machine," *Wired* (2009), [Link](#), 10 pages.
  - Eric Schlosser, "Almost Everything in 'Dr. Strangelove' Was True," *The New Yorker* (2014), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Dan Lindley, "What I Learned Since I Stopped Worrying and Studied the Movie," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (2001), [Link](#), 4 pages.

- Ryan Lambie, “Dr Strangelove: In Praise of One of Cinema’s Great Film Sets,” *Den of Geek* (2016), [Link](#), 5 pages.
- Rodger A. Payne, “Grappling with Dr. Strangelove’s ‘Wargasm’ Fantasy,” *International Studies Review* (2020), [Link](#), Only pages 468-top of 477.
- Key Questions
  - What does the imagery in the opening scene depicting aerial refueling represent in your view? How does this set the stage for the rest of the film? How does this relate to our discussion of the Spanish-American War?
  - How does the film’s dialogue illustrate the paradox of the theory of mutually assured destruction?
  - To what extent are the characters motivated by ethics or rational strategy versus more primal desires? What does this suggest about how characters can be used to also represent ideas?
  - How do the names of characters subtly (or not so subtly) tip the viewer off about their nature?
  - What’s the relevance of the visual framing of the “war room”?
  - How was Kubrick inspired by real-world events and figures to make this film? Is it appropriate for art to represent real people as caricatures in film?
  - If nuclear weapons were actually used in the future (e.g., by Russia against Ukraine), then how might that affect art and film? Would the genre of comedy/satire still be an appropriate way to explore nuclear issues?

### **October 1: Bureaucratic Politics and the Role of the “Deep State” — The Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)**

- Recommended Background Viewing
  - CNN Cuban Missile Crisis Documentary, [Link](#), 45 minutes.
- Required Reading
  - Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review* (1969), [Link](#), 30 pages.
    - Note: This is a thick reading (but a classic and seminal piece). Keep in mind that Allison’s primary goal is to try and explain why the US adopted a naval blockade during the Cuban Missile Crisis. To do so, he offers three potential “models” or explanations for US policy.
  - Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)” *Foreign Policy* (1972), [Link](#), Only pages 159-161 and 167-178.
  - Bob Woodward, “Military Thwarted President Seeking Choice in Afghanistan,” *Washington Post* (2010), [Link](#), 6 pages.
  - Miles Taylor, “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration,” *New York Times* (2018), [Link](#), 4 pages.
    - Note: The article was initially published anonymously
- Suggested Viewing
  - *Thirteen Days* (2000): Film starring Kevin Costner about the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Key Questions
  - Was the Soviet deployment of nuclear weapons into Cuba justified due to American attempts to overthrow the Soviet-aligned Cuban government?
  - Was the naval blockade imposed by President Kennedy the right response, or was it too hawkish or too dovish? How would you have approached the crisis if you were president?

- What are Allison's three models? How would each explain US decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis? What is the evidence for each model?
- What are the theoretical and empirical criticisms of Allison's Model 3?
- What is the evidence for Models 2 and 3 from the Obama and Trump administrations?
- Is there any evidence against Models 2 and 3 you can think of from recent administrations?
- How big a problem is it for American democracy if unelected bureaucrats have significant influence over policy?
- Tuesday Night Film: 12 Angry Men, 1957, Courtroom Drama
- Class Question of the Week: How is the saying "where you stand depends on where you sit" reflected or not in the jury deliberations in 12 Angry Men?

### October 3: 12 Angry Men

- Required Reading
  - Reginald Rose, "Creating the Original Story," in *Readings on Twelve Angry Men* (2000), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Joanna E. Rapf, "12 Angry Men," [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Boris Kaufman, "Filming Twelve Angry Men on a Single Set," in *Readings on Twelve Angry Men* (2000), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Leigh Singer, "How 12 Angry Men Works — in 25 Frames," *British Film Institute* (2020), [Link](#).
  - David Buchanan and Andrzej Huczynski, "Images of Influence: 12 Angry Men and Thirteen Days," *Journal of Management Inquiry* (2004), [Link](#), Only pages 317-321.
  - Austin Carson, Eric Min, and Maya Van Nuys, "Racial Tropes in the Foreign Policy Bureaucracy," *International Organization* (2024), [Link](#), Only pages 1-9.
- Key Questions
  - What function does the broken fan play in the movie?
  - What function does the small size of the set play in the movie?
  - In a one-set film such as 12 Angry Men, are there certain features of filmmaking that become more important compared to films with multiple exotic locations?
  - What does the film suggest about the old adage of "show don't tell"?
  - How are each of Allison's models reflected in the jury deliberations (if they are at all)?
  - How are jury deliberations in a criminal case similar and different to executive branch deliberations about foreign policy?
  - Does the film suggest anything about "group think"? What lessons does this hold for foreign policy?
  - How does the Carson et al. reading relate to the film? Did you observe any of the four racial tropes they discuss in the film?

## October 8: Government Deception and the Relationship Between Policymakers, the Media, and Public Opinion — The Vietnam War (1955-1975)

- Guest Speaker: [John Schuessler](#)
  - Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Albritton Center for Grand Strategy, Texas A&M University
  - Author of the book *Deceit on the Road to War: Presidents, Politics, and American Democracy*
- Recommended Background Viewing
  - CNN Vietnam War Documentary, [Link](#), 45 minutes
- Required Reading
  - Elizabeth Becker, “The Secrets and Lies of the Vietnam War, Exposed in One Epic Document,” *New York Times* (2021), [Link](#), 10 pages.
  - Matthew A. Baum and Philip B.K. Potter, “The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (2008), [Link](#), Only pages 40-57.
    - Note: There is a lot here and so try and focus on the big picture, which is Baum and Potter’s “market framework” model outlined in Figure 2. Pay attention to how each of the three principal actors (government, media, and the public) fit into this model.
  - Dan Reiter, “Democracy, Deception, and Entry into War,” *Security Studies* (2012), [Link](#), Only bottom of page 597 to 606.
  - John M. Schuessler, *Deceit on the Road to War: Presidents, Politics, and American Democracy*, Cornell University Press (2015), [Link](#), Only pages 14-17 and 90-92.
- Recommended Reading
  - John M. Schuessler, *Deceit on the Road to War: Presidents, Politics, and American Democracy*, “Chapter 3: Shifting Blame to the Communists — LBJ and the Vietnam War,” Cornell University Press (2015), [Link](#), Pages 59-90.
  - Craig Whitlock, “The Afghanistan Papers: At War with the Truth,” *Washington Post* (2019), [Link](#), 8 pages.
- Key Questions
  - How does the Vietnam War fit into (or not) Baum and Potter’s market framework? Is the framework missing any important factors?
  - Why does the media sometimes have to rely on the information provided by policymakers? How and why is the media sometimes impacted by public opinion? To what extent do these factors erode the media’s ability to be an independent, neutral “watchdog”?
  - Why is Reiter more optimistic about the constraints on leaders in democracies lying and why is Schuessler more pessimistic? How do their arguments accord with or contrast with Baum and Potter’s market framework? Who is more convincing?
  - When (if ever) is it acceptable to leak classified information? Were Daniel Ellsberg’s actions justified? What about Edward Snowden’s or Donald Trump’s actions related to classified documents?
  - Which of Mead’s four American foreign policy traditions most motivated this war?
  - How does this discussion about the Vietnam War relate to modern conflicts like the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- Tuesday Night Film: *The Truman Show*, 1998, Psychological Thriller/Comedy
- Class Question of the Week: Are Baum and Potter’s predictions about the relationship between information and time (Figure 2) borne out in the film? Explain.

## October 10: The Truman Show

- Required Reading
  - David Lay Williams, “Plato Predicted ‘Pizzagate’ (Or, Rather, Fake News More Generally),” *Washington Post* (2016), [Link](#), 3 pages.
  - Jeff Orlowski, “Social Media Put Us All in Our Own Truman Shows, Threatening Our Democracy,” *The Hollywood Reporter* (2021), [Link](#), [Read via the link](#).
  - Paul Mozur, Adam Satariano, and Aaron Krolik, “An Alternate Reality: How Russia’s State TV Spins the Ukraine War,” *New York Times* (2022), [Link](#), 9 pages.
  - James Charisma, “How The Truman Show Predicted the Future,” *Vulture* (2018), [Link](#), 7 pages.
  - Brian Davids, “The Truman Show Writer Andrew Niccol on the Original Script’s Darker Tone and Connection to Gattaca,” *The Hollywood Reporter* (2023), [Link](#), [Read via the link](#).
- Key Questions
  - If we were to make an analogy between the film and Baum and Potter’s market framework model, then who is the president/government, the media, and the public in The Truman Show? Who is Daniel Ellsberg?
  - How does the film relate to dynamics in autocracies and the risks of misinformation and disinformation with social media?
  - Do you think the darker tone that writer Andrew Niccol initially imagined would have worked better or worse than the lighter, more comedic tone ultimately adopted?
  - Was the ending shot effective, or would it have been a better ending to follow Truman after he goes through the door?
  - How does the camera work indicate to the audience that Truman’s world is a lie?
  - What role does the film’s music play in communicating theme and character?
  - Is the film an effective metaphor for growing up?
  - How close is The Truman Show to real-life reality TV shows like Keeping Up with the Kardashians, Survivor, or Bachelor? What about Undercover Boss or Jury Duty? Are these shows ethical?
  - Do you believe Christof is a villain? How does the film portray him?
  - If you were Truman, would you have decided to stay or leave?

## October 15/October 17: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

## October 22: Balancing Strategic Interests with Moral Values and Support for Democracy — The 1973 Chilean Coup D’état

- Guest Speaker: [John Chin](#)
  - Assistant Teaching Professor, Carnegie Mellon Institute for Strategy & Technology
  - Author of the book *Historical Dictionary of Modern Coups D’état*, as well as numerous peer-reviewed articles on coups
- Required Reading
  - James Doubek, “The U.S. Set the Stage for a Coup in Chile: It Had Unintended Consequences at Home,” *NPR* (2023), [Link](#).
  - Henry A. Kissinger, “Memorandum for the President: Chile,” *National Security Archive* (November 5, 1970), [Link](#), [Only pages 1-2](#).



- Thomas Carothers, “Is the U.S. Hypocritical to Criticize Russian Election Meddling? What ‘Whataboutism’ Gets Wrong,” *Foreign Affairs* (2018), [Link](#), 7 pages.
- Hal Brands, “The Age of Amoralism: Can America Save the Liberal Order Through Illiberal Means?” *Foreign Affairs* (2024), [Link](#), 18 pages.
- Key Questions
  - Were US actions in Chile justified from a strategic and/or ethical perspective?
  - Is the US hypocritical to criticize Russian election interference when it also has a long history of interference?
  - Under what conditions (if ever) is it acceptable to engage in election interference, overthrow democratically-elected governments, and/or associate with morally dubious countries/leaders? Does the China “threat” qualify?
  - Is it patriotic or unpatriotic to criticize America for its past actions?
  - How does Jimmy Carter’s presidency illustrate what a more “ethical” US foreign policy would look like?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Missing*, 1982, Historical Drama/Thriller
- Class Question of the Week: For an American audience, what are the pros and cons of centering the story around a US citizen rather than a Chilean citizen?

## October 24: Missing

- Required Reading
  - “U.S. Takes Issue with Costa-Gavras Film on Chile,” *New York Times* (1982), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Pascale Bonnefoy, “Chilean Court Rules U.S. Had Role in Murders,” *New York Times* (2014), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - “How General Pinochet’s Detention Changed the Meaning of Justice,” *Amnesty International* (2013), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Daniel Krmaric and Alexander Downes, “Biden Called Putin a ‘War Criminal.’ That’s Risky. Here’s the Downside to Prosecuting Former Leaders,” *Washington Post: The Monkey Cage* (2022), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Pascale Bonnefoy, “Decades After Dictatorship, Chile Mounts Search for Hundreds Who Vanished,” *New York Times* (2023), [Link](#), 8 pages.
- Key Questions
  - How did the film generate sympathy for Charles Horman? How would a director/writer/cinematographer less sympathetic to Horman have portrayed him?
  - How does Edmund Horman’s characterization impact the viewer’s assessment of whether US support for the Chilean coup was wise?
  - The film highlights the human costs of the US-backed coup in Chile, but does the film fail to consider the potential strategic benefits? What could a director/writer/cinematographer more sympathetic to the US government’s Chile policy have done to convince the audience?
  - How did the film depict violence and was it effective?
  - How did the length of the film impact your assessment of its quality?
  - What does the US government’s reaction to the film suggest about the power of movies?
  - On balance, should prosecutions of war criminals be vigorously pursued, or do the costs outweigh the benefits?

## October 29: NATO Expansion, Grand Strategies of Primacy Versus Restraint, and How to Make Peace with Former Adversaries — The Collapse of the Soviet Union and End of the Cold War (1989-1991)

- Required Reading
  - Michael Mandelbaum, "Coup de Grace: The End of the Soviet Union," *Foreign Affairs* (1991), [Link](#), Only pages 164-169.
  - Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home, America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation," *International Security* (1997), [Link](#), Only pages 5-bottom of 10 and 15-19.
  - Joshua Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* (2016), [Link](#), Only pages 7-13, bottom of 16-19, 22-26, and 34-40.
  - Kimberly Marten, "NATO Enlargement: Evaluating Its Consequences in Russia," In James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* (2023), [Link](#), Only pages 237-239.
  - Alexander Lanoszka, "Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement," In James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* (2023), [Link](#), Only pages 314-317.
  - Rebecca R. Moore, "Ukraine's Bid to Join NATO: Re-Evaluating Enlargement in a New Strategic Context," In James Goldgeier and Joshua Shiffrin, *Evaluating NATO Enlargement* (2023), [Link](#), Only pages 391-397.
- Key Questions
  - What are the pros and cons of a strategy of "restraint"? Is the case for such a strategy stronger now than it was in the period between World War I and II?
  - If the US had adopted a strategy of restraint at the end of the Cold War, then would America's relationship with Russia be better, worse, or largely the same?
  - Did the US make and violate a promise to Russia not to expand NATO? If so, then was this the right or wrong decision from an ethical and/or strategic perspective?
  - Why did Russia invade Ukraine? Was NATO expansion the cause, a contributing factor, or not related?
  - Should great powers be permitted to have a "sphere of influence"? Or should countries be able to freely choose who they want to ally with?
  - How do past US foreign policies, such as the Monroe Doctrine and the Cuban Missile Crisis, relate to this debate?
  - Should Ukraine be admitted to NATO today? Should Russia have been invited to join NATO after the collapse of the USSR?
- Tuesday Night Film: Star Trek VI — The Undiscovered Country, 1991, Science-Fiction.
- Class Question of the Week: Is the use of allegory in the film effective? What are the pros and cons of this choice relative to something either more subtle (e.g., a story less clearly meant to be a 1-to-1 stand in for a particular historical event) or more direct (e.g., a straight historical drama)?

## October 31: Star Trek VI — The Undiscovered Country

- Required Reading
  - Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, “Cold War Pop Culture and the Image of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Perspective of the Original Star Trek Series,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* (2005), [Link](#), Only pages 74-87 and 99-102.
  - Stuart Anderson, “George Takei’s Family’s Japanese Internment Nightmare,” *Forbes* (2019), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *The National Interest* (1989), [Link](#), Only pages 3-4 (until Section I), 8-12, and 18.
  - Michaela Mattes and Jessica Weeks, “The U.S.-North Korea Summit Could Be Trump’s ‘Nixon-to-China’ Moment,” *Washington Post: The Monkey Cage* (2018), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Michaela Mattes and Jessica L.P. Weeks, “Reacting to the Olive Branch: Hawks, Doves, and Public Support for Cooperation,” *International Organization* (2022), [Link](#), Only pages 957-960.
- Key Questions
  - Do you agree with Sarantakes’ view that, ultimately, the film “had little commentary about the end of the Cold War”? In what ways does the film capture the difficulties of achieving peace and in what ways does it miss crucial dynamics?
  - Knowing what we know now about the state of US-Russian relations post collapse of the USSR, how do you view the ending of the film? Is it hopeful, tragic, or something else?
  - How is the coup depicted in the film similar and different to the 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev?
  - How do the film’s various characters represent different real-world ideas about how to approach the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union?
  - How does the militaristic culture of the Klingons relate to real-world debates about Russia?
  - How does the film use blocking to illustrate character dynamics?

## November 5: NO CLASS (Democracy Day)

## November 7: NO CLASS (Recover from the Election)

## November 12: Humanitarian Intervention and Debates Over the Responsibility to Protect — The Rwandan Genocide (1994)

- Required Reading
  - Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” *The Atlantic* (2001), [Link](#), 25 pages.
  - Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, “The Responsibility to Protect,” *Foreign Affairs* (2002), [Link](#), 12 pages.
  - “The Lessons of Libya,” *The Economist* (2011), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Heather Ashby, “How the Kremlin Distorts the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ Principle,” *United States Institute of Peace* (2022), [Link](#), 2 pages.
  - Jonathan A. Chu and Carrie A. Lee, “Race, Religion, and American Support for Humanitarian Intervention,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2023), [Link](#), Only pages 2-4 and 9-13.

- Key Questions
  - Why didn't the US intervene to prevent the Rwandan genocide? Should they have?
  - Do you believe states have a "responsibility to protect"? If so, then under what conditions is the use of military force appropriate for humanitarian intervention and when is it inappropriate? How should the principle of state sovereignty be weighted relative to human rights?
  - How can states be prevented from abusing the R2P principle? Was NATO's military intervention in Libya in accordance with R2P or did it go too far?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Hotel Rwanda*, 2004, Historical Drama/Thriller.
- Class Question of the Week: Compare and contrast the depiction of violence in *Hotel Rwanda* and *Missing*. Which approach was more effective in your view?

### November 14: *Hotel Rwanda*

- Required Readings
  - Christopher Orr, "The Movie Review: *Hotel Rwanda*," *The Atlantic* (2005), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Nick Schager, "Hotel Rwanda: C," *Lessons of Darkness*, [Link](#), 1 page.
  - Abdi Latif Dahir, "No One Can Silence Me: Paul Rusesabagina on His Captivity in Rwanda," *New York Times* (2023), [Link](#), 10 pages.
  - Declan Walsh, Michael D. Shear, and Abdi Latif Dahir, "How the U.S., Family, and Hollywood Freed 'Hotel Rwanda' Hero," *New York Times* (2023), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Jonathan Beloff, "Hotel Rwanda: A Film That Proved to Be a Double-Edged Sword for Kigali," *The Conversation* (2022), [Link](#), 4 pages.
- Key Questions
  - Does the lack of gore and more horrific depictions of murder hurt the film or make the film better? Why do you think the writer/director made this choice?
  - Is it inappropriate to "commercialize" genocide, or do the benefits of increasing awareness make the film worth it?
  - Is it more effective to inspire or to shame people if the goal is to change their opinion? Which strategy does the film lean on more?
  - How do the radio broadcasts in this film relate to the aliens in *District 9*?
  - Would Paul Rusesabagina have been released from prison if *Hotel Rwanda* had not been made? Would he have been in prison in the first place if it hadn't been made? What does this indicate about the power of film?
  - Even if we accept as true the argument that Paul Rusesabagina was less heroic in real life than in the film, does that matter? How much leeway with the history should artists have, and is it more important to get the facts right or the message right?

## November 19: Miscommunication, Misperception, and Incomplete Information as a Cause of Conflict — The Iraq War (2003-2011)

- Required Reading
  - FBI Interview with Saddam Hussein, June 11, 2004, *National Security Archive*, [Link](#), Only pages 1-3.
  - Charles A. Duelfer and Stephen Benedict Dyson, “Chronic Misperception and International Conflict: The U.S.-Iraq Experience,” *International Security* (2011), [Link](#), 28 pages.
  - Max Fisher, “20 Years On, a Question Lingers About Iraq: Why Did the U.S. Invade?” *New York Times* (2023), [Link](#), 10 pages.
- Recommended Reading
  - Ahsan I. Butt, “Why Did the United States Invade Iraq in 2003?” *Security Studies* (2019), [Link](#), 35 pages.
- Key Questions
  - How can problems of misperception, miscommunication, and incomplete information cause wars?
  - Why didn’t Saddam Hussein try harder to convince the United States that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction? How does the answer relate to previous discussions about “masculinity”?
  - How did bureaucratic politics impact the United States’ decision to go to war with Iraq?
  - If the US government knew Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction, would that have made a difference? Or was the Bush administration hell-bent on war no matter what? What does your answer say about the power of misperception and miscommunication as an explanation for war?
  - How does this relate to our discussion of the Vietnam War?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Arrival*, 2016, Science-Fiction.
- Class Question of the Week: How does the visual design of the Heptapods’ (i.e., the aliens’) language relate to the film’s themes about time and communication?

## November 21: *Arrival*

- Required Reading
  - Alissa Wilkinson, “*Arrival* is a Stunning Science Fiction Movie with Deep Implications for Society Today,” *Vox* (2016), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Olivier Laurent, “Inside the Cinematography of the Oscar-Nominated Movie *Arrival*,” *TIME* (2017), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Michael Tucker, “*Arrival* — Examining an Adaptation,” *Lessons from the Screenplay* (2018), Video Essay, [Link](#), 13 minutes.
  - Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* (1992), [Link](#), Only pages 392-407.
    - Note: “Anarchy” refers to the absence of an effective world government that could enforce global peace. In other words, there is no international 911 that states can call when they’re in trouble and *rely* upon to come to their rescue. Neorealists argue that this condition forces states to engage in “self-help” behavior to guarantee their security in a dangerous world, which entails providing for their own security, prioritizing “relative gains” (I win if I gain more than someone else) over “absolute gains” (I win if I gain relative

to what I had before, even if someone else gains more than me), and in general adopting worst-case assumptions about the motives of other states. This leads to “security dilemmas,” where actions taken by one state to enhance their security (e.g., building weapons or making alliances) necessarily makes other states feel less secure, leading to action-reaction spirals that increase tensions. Wendt argues in this article that the arguments of neorealists are flawed.

- David I. Crabtree, “Arrival: A Case for Constructivism,” [Link](#), 3 pages.
- Brian Spegele, “China Balks at U.S. Push for Better Communications During Crises,” *Wall Street Journal* (2023), [Link](#), 7 pages.
- Key Questions
  - How does the film’s editing—in particular, the order in which events are shown—impact the viewer’s perception of time? How does this decision by the director and writer help communicate the film’s main themes?
  - Does the pictographic rather than phonetic nature of the aliens’ language help communicate the film’s themes? Does this suggest anything about the US-China relationship?
  - How is lighting used to communicate the film’s themes? Especially the lighting of the alien ship?
  - What are some of the things that “work” well in a novel, but not as well in a film? How was this reflected (or not...) in Arrival’s adaptation from the short story by Ted Chiang?
  - If you knew what Louise came to know by the end of the film, would you have made the same decision she did? Similarly, knowing what you know now, was invading Iraq the right decision?
  - How do the different approaches taken by Louise and Colonel Weber help represent different fundamental approaches leaders could pursue in international politics? What does this suggest about how characters can be used to also represent ideas?
  - Does the film’s argument about how language affects how we think suggest anything about how art might affect how we think?
  - What lessons does the film hold for modern political relationships between countries? How is interstate communication made more difficult by bureaucratic politics?

**November 26: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Travel)**

- Assignment DUE on Canvas: Final essay proposal

**November 28: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)**

### December 3: Debates about the Strategic Efficacy and Morality of Drones — The Drone Wars (2001-Present)

- Recommended Reading
  - Quinta Jurecic, “Moral Theory and Drone Warfare,” *Lawfare* (2015), [Link](#), 6 pages.
  - Josh Gerstein, “Judge Nixes ‘Kill List’ Suit,” *Politico* (2010), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - Anouk S. Rigterink, “Drone Dilemma: The Risks of Washington’s Favorite Counterterrorism Tool Often Outweigh the Rewards,” *Foreign Affairs* (2021), [Link](#), 4 pages.
  - Zach Beauchamp, “The Entire Basis for Obama’s Drone Strategy May Be Wrong,” *Vox* (2014), [Link](#), 5 pages.
  - “Living Under Drones: Death, Injury, and Trauma to Civilians from US Drone Practices in Pakistan,” *Stanford Law School International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic / NYU School of Law Global Justice Clinic* (2012), [Link](#), [Only pages v-viii, 55-62, 74-76, and 80-88.](#)
  - Joshua Schwartz, Matthew Fuhrmann, and Michael Horowitz, “Do Armed Drones Counter Terrorism, Or Are They Counterproductive? Evidence from Eighteen Countries,” *International Studies Quarterly*, [Link](#), [Only pages 2-4.](#)
  - Aqil Shah, “Drone Blowback: Much Ado about Nothing?” *Lawfare*, [Link](#), 4 pages.
- Key Questions
  - What are the principles of discrimination, proportionality, and necessity? Do drones make it easier or harder to abide by these principles?
  - What are the arguments for why killing by remote control is inherently unethical? What are the arguments for why killing by remote control is actually a moral imperative?
  - How does this topic relate to our discussion of Japanese internment during World War II?
  - What are the mechanisms explaining why drones may increase terrorism? What are the mechanisms explaining why drones may reduce terrorism? Which perspective do you find more compelling?
  - From a policy perspective, to what extent should the United States employ drones to counter terrorism? Are drones a sufficient substitute for large-scale ground operations to counter terrorism? Do they provide a strong or weak rationale for withdrawing from Afghanistan?
- Tuesday Night Film: *Eye in the Sky*, 2015, Drama.
- Class Question of the Week: What choices does the director/writer/cinematographer make to influence the viewer’s opinion about whether the drones strike was appropriate? Do you think the film ultimately takes a side or not?

### December 5: *Eye in the Sky* and Concluding Thoughts

- Recommended Reading
  - Mark Kermode, “*Eye in the Sky* Review — A Morality Tale of Modern Warfare,” *The Guardian* (2015), [Link](#), 3 pages.
  - Dror Ladin, “Pulling the Trigger: An Interview with the ‘*Eye in the Sky*’ Filmmaker Gavin Hood,” *ACLU* (2016), [Link](#), 8 pages.
  - Michael J. Boyle, “Drone Warfare in the Cinematic Crosshairs,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2016), [Link](#), 4 pages.

- Key Questions
  - How does the film relate to the famous “trolley problem”? How does it relate to philosophical debates between consequentialist and deontological ethics?
  - How does the film illustrate the arguments of both drone skeptics and optimists?
  - What role does the opening scene in the film play? How does it impact the viewer’s sympathies? If the director/writer wanted the audience to sympathize more with the arguments of drone optimists, then what might have been depicted in the opening scene?
  - Are there any Dr. Strangelove-esque elements of the film? Are they effective?
  - What choices does the film make to convey the trauma experienced by the drone pilots?
  - How does this film relate to our previous discussions about bureaucratic politics and government deception?
  - What does the film suggest about the promise and peril of lethal autonomous weapons systems (“killer robots”) moving forward?

### News Resources to Follow International Security Current Events

- [Foreign Affairs](#)
- [War on the Rocks](#)
- [Foreign Policy](#)
- [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#)
- [Lawfare](#)
- [Good Authority](#)

### Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion

I am committed to ensuring that my classroom is a friendly and inclusive learning environment that will serve students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Although I encourage rigorous debate, you should always treat each other with respect, and I commit to doing so as well. The diverse perspectives, areas of expertise, and lived experiences we bring to the classroom is something I view as a great strength that will help facilitate learning. I do not permit bullying or harassment under any circumstances. Do not hesitate to reach out to me with any concerns you may have, and there will never be any backlash of retaliation permitted for raising concerns. CMU also offers resources through the [Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion](#).

### Learning Resources Offered by CMU

CMU offers various programs via the [Student Academic Success Center](#) to support student learning outside the traditional course structure.

### Mental Health Resources Offered by CMU

Taking care of your mental health, in addition to your physical health, is critically important. If you’re struggling with anxiety, depression, or anything else, then I’d urge you to seek support. CMU offers [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CaPS). Visit their website or call them at 412-268-2922 for 24/7 support. You can also call the Re:solve Crisis Network at 888-796-8226 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.



## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the [Office of Disability Resources](#), I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

## Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated because it is antithetical to learning. See CMU's [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) for more information.

## Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence for Assignments

Just as the internet revolutionized how students completed their assignments, generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools—such as ChatGPT—are likely to do the same. For that reason, I don't believe a blanket ban on the use of GAI in this class is appropriate. In my view, we need to learn how to most effectively use these tools to enhance learning rather than ban them. Therefore, you may feel free to use ChatGPT to generate ideas for assignments or conduct research, *but you must cite your use of it, or it will be considered academic misconduct*. I would also strongly caution you against relying too much on ChatGPT, as it is quite prone to misstating academic arguments and historical events, as well as making up sources. While you may use ChatGPT to generate ideas or conduct research (as long as you cite it), *your writing must be your own*. Do not use ChatGPT to write your essays or reaction papers, or that will be considered academic misconduct.