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CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Decline of the Global Liberal Order: A European Perspective

PROF. STEFANO PROCACCI

Area of study:	International Relations
Area Code:	IR/PO327
Method of Instruction:	In-person

Description

The course provides an introduction to the study of American foreign policy in the current situation of instability and turbulence caused by the crisis of the global liberal order. It addresses the major issues of foreign policy analysis—who decides what, how, why—with the aim of illustrating the main characteristics and peculiarities of US administrations in the last decades. What are the priorities of the American foreign policy agenda facing a period of rising international challenges? What are its economic, political and cultural origins and its consequences for allies, order, and stability in the international system?

Course contents

In the first part, the course provides general references to the foundational concepts and key historical moments of American foreign policy, illustrating the recurring oscillations between isolationist tendencies, “democratic peace,” and missionary spirit. The fundamental components of foreign policy decision-making and culture will be presented and discussed, with a focus on the most important traditions and doctrines. The goal is to highlight the radical changes as well as the remarkable continuities between different US administrations in the course of American history.

The second part focuses on the choices and orientations characterizing the foreign policy behavior of US administrations in the last decades, from the end of the Cold War to the rise of Unipolarism and the Global Liberal Order (Clinton I and II; Bush jr. I and II; Obama I and II; Trump I; Biden; Trump II) . The analysis takes a closer look at the ideological foundations of every presidential doctrine, from multilateral liberalism to populism and anti-globalism, and tries to connect the sources of their domestic consensus to the rise and fall of the US-led global economic integration over the past thirty years. Specific attention will be paid to certain areas that are relevant from the point of view of European countries: trade wars, the crisis in transatlantic relations and multilateral organizations, and the war in Ukraine.

Prerequisites

A background in Political Science/International Relations may prove helpful, but it is not compulsory.

Method of instruction

Lectures and Seminars



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Course requirements

Students have to comply with the following requirements:

- a) Students are expected to regularly attend class sessions and actively contribute to in-class debate.
- b) Students are expected to study in advance the assigned course readings.
- c) Students will take two written exams: a mid-term test and a final test.
- d) On a voluntary basis, students can do a short presentation on a course-related topic (about 15 minutes).

Credits

6 ECTS

Grading

Midterm exam	45% of final grade
Final exam	45% of final grade
Attendance & participation	10% of final grade

Please note: both the midterm and final exam are based on open questions. Students' participation in class will be highly appreciated.

Students who miss examinations for non-medical reasons will not have the opportunity to rewrite. Medical exemptions will require documentation. Alternative forms of examination can be considered only in exceptional cases, and upon instructor's discretion.

Course readings and materials

All required readings will be available in a course pack. Both readings and lectures/class activities are crucial components of the course and are interrelated.

Instructor bio

Stefano Procacci has been Visiting Fellow at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) and Research Fellow at the Università del Piemonte Orientale "A. Avogadro". Currently he is senior lecture in FPA and International Relations at the Catholic University of Sacred Heart, Milan.

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