A New American President: A New American Foreign Policy (POL 184)
Professor Gerald Dorfman
Thursday 7-8:50 PM
8 class meetings, April 6 to May 25, 2017

This course will explore the new Trump Administration's foreign policy, both continuities and changes. Because this class meets during the very early months of the Trump administration, it is likely that the full picture of its foreign policy will only emerge over time. But the recently concluded election campaign, the transition to office and the early weeks of actually governing, will provide enough clues so that we should be able to discern what is actually happening even though unexpected challenges and problems will, of course, appear.

The new administration will be taking office in the context of the Obama years. New administrations take on the overhang and obligations of their predecessors, both immediate and historical. Thus the first lecture will explore the legacy of President Obama’s foreign policy as well as those of his predecessors. We will thus examine the most challenging problems that the new foreign policy team will need to address: an aggressive, Putin-driven, Russian foreign policy; a fast-rising and powerful China vying for dominance in Asia and internationally; the seemingly endless turmoil in the Middle East, especially the continuing and complex conflicts in Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan; the Palestine-Israel troubles; the problems of migration and international terror; and finally, the collaborative but sometimes troubled American relations with our allies in Europe and elsewhere.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: What are the legacies of President Obama’s stewardship of America’s foreign policy? How have they interacted with America’s historical traditions?

Week 2: The tumultuous 2016 American election year as it impacted the prospects for the future of American foreign policy during the Trump administration.

Week 3: What’s going on between Trump and Putin? Can Trump deliver on his promise of improved relations?

Week 4: The seemingly endless series of conflicts and tensions in the Middle East: Syria, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Iraq and Iran, etc. President Trump has especially targeted ISIS for destruction.

Week 5: Continued lecture on the Middle East.
**Week 6:** Will President Trump keep his promise to confront and negotiate with China in order to “level” the trade playing field and make “good deals” in Asia that work to the interests of the United States? Will Trump continue President Obama’s “pivot” to Asia?

**Week 7:** How will the Trump foreign policy relate to America’s traditional allies and traditional alliances? During the 2016 election, Trump suggested that the NATO alliance, for example, is outdated, and further complained that our allies do not pay their fair share of the cost of protecting the western alliance’s defense forces. Does he intend to forcefully press our allies on this and other complaints?

**Week 8:** In conclusion, can we now see the outlines of the Trump administration’s foreign policy? Are they as radical as Trump’s statements, or will they, in the end, imitate the pattern of what we have known ---and with what consequences?

**Books and recommended readings:**

Given that the Trump administration has just taken office there are no long-term studies that explore its purposes and experience. Contemporary and periodical publications are the most available resources available at present.

To keep informed on a continuous basis with international affairs read the weekly magazine *The Economist.* Also read the bimonthly academically-oriented *Foreign Affairs.* Please watch Fareed Zakaria’s *Global Public Square* program on CNN at 10am and 1 pm on Sundays. This program, in my view, is the very best regular program on TV that explores current international political affairs. Also read British newspapers including *The Times,* *The Guardian,* and *The Independent* (online only), plus *The New York Times.*

**Some recommended books:**

Steven Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since the Second World War,* 2016, 20th edition  (Good text)

Henry Kissinger, *World Order,* 2014