

Political Science 382

[Understanding 9/11](#)

Fall 2021

[Professor Paul Rieckhoff](#), Class of '98

Office Hours: by appointment scheduled via email

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Course Description:

The events of September 11, 2001 shaped a generation. This course/seminar will explore how 9/11 has impacted every element of our politics, national defense, foreign policy, public health, economic division, pop culture and more, ever since that fateful day. We will examine the timeline of that day—and the policy debates and decisions that followed and have shaped American (and global) life since. Drawing from a range of sources and special guests with first-hand lived experience, this course will have a special focus on national defense, military and foreign policy elements—and span the early Congressional debates, the Authorization for the Use of Military Force, the invasion of Afghanistan, the debate around the use of torture, the invasion of Iraq, the health impacts domestically, and the many lessons learned—and not learned. We'll then turn to the future, and ask: "What is the next 9/11?" We'll shift to dissect and discuss rising threats including new pandemics, domestic terrorism, cyberwarfare and new frontiers for combat including the Arctic and space.

General Information:

-Requisite: At least one POSC course (200 level and above). Sophomores and above. Not open to first-year students.

-Limited to 20 students.

-All materials for the course are available on Moodle.

-Please note: this course contains reading, images, audio and personal stories that are extremely graphic. They include war, human loss, and injury. If you need to step away, or need additional time or support, please take it. Self care is a key element of successful leadership. As a part of this course, it is an expectation that you will learn to improve your self-care. I will share resources--but I also expect you to seek them out and find out what works best for you.

-The following films will be streamed and available on Moodle. Please be sure to view them before the class in which we will discuss them.

- [102 Minutes That Changed America](#)
- [Memory Box. Echoes of 9/11](#)
- [Worth](#)
- [Playing God](#)
- [In the Shadow of the Towers](#)

Course Requirements:

- Regular attendance; please inform me by email in advance if you need to miss a class. Since this seminar only meets once a week, unexplained absences will impact your final grade.
- Abide by the latest college COVID protection requirements.
- Please turn off your phones at the start of class.
- No use of laptops during class without instructor's permission.
- Review the required materials ahead of each class. This is a seminar, so we will not summarize the assigned readings each week.
- Active participation. This course is a small community--and everyone is expected to contribute. That means actively listening to guest presenters, your fellow students, taking intellectual risks, asking questions, and contributing to the collective task of deepening our understanding of the course material--and our world. Please learn the names of your classmates and refer to them by name during the discussion.
- As pursuant to the honor code, plagiarism, multiple submissions, or any other serious violations will result in failing the course.
- Submit a weekly comment on the assignment to the Moodle site in response to a question posted or come up with your own question. I will not assign a grade for each of your posts but will assess them when evaluating your class participation. Comments should be submitted the evening before we meet, by Sunday at 8 pm.
- A 5 to 7-page mid-term paper.
- A 5 to 7-page final paper.

Assignment due dates:

- Oct. 18th: mid-term paper; I will share the topic about a week earlier.
- Dec. 17th: final paper; I will share the topic in our final class meeting on December 6th.

*I don't believe in counting pages. I do believe in clarity and focus. Be as short or long as you need to be in order to answer the question and best communicate your ideas. I will ask you to keep both papers under 3000 words.

Grading:

33%: Class participation

33%: Mid-term paper

33%: Final paper

Course Outline:

1. **August 30. Welcome. Goals and Expectations. Before 9/11.**
 - a. **ABC CH7 NEWS 9-10-01 (VIDEO)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x88_b6vxl_Y
 - b. **The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 911. Lawrence Wright (BOOK):**
<https://www.amazon.com/Looming-Tower-Al-Qaeda-Road-11/dp/1400030846>

2. **September 6. That Day. 20 Years Ago This Week.**
 - a. **Guest Speaker: [Rob Serra, FDNY \(Ret.\)](#)**
 - b. **102 Minutes That Changed America (FILM)**
<https://m.imdb.com/title/tt1312203/>
 - c. **2001 LIVE COVERAGE (7:00 A.M E.T - 12:00 P.M E.T) (VIDEO)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89G749GrBQ>
 - d. **Memory Box: Echoes of 9/11. (FILM):**
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15102210/>
 - e. **First-person account of 9/11, written by FDNY Firefighter, [Rich Naviasky](#). (PDF ARTICLE)**
 - f. **Episode 1 of *The Firefighters Podcast with Rob Serra* (PODCAST)**
<https://thefirefighters.us/richard-naviasky-inside-9-11-the-deutsche-bank-fire-the-halloween-terrorist-attack-facing-the-flames-staying-positive/>
 - g. **9/11 Songs Playlist on Spotify (PLAYLIST)**
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3H2wfzH56Yet5OZZE6P1Kp?si=17e8affbfb404a89&nd=1>
 - h. **Chasing Ghosts: Failures and Facades in Iraq: A Soldier's Perspective, by Paul Rieckhoff (BOOK)**

<https://www.amazon.com/Chasing-Ghosts-Failures-Soldiers-Perspective/dp/0451221214>

- i. **The Ray Pfeifer Foundation.** (WEBSITE/RESOURCE):
<https://theraypfeiferfoundation.org>
3. **September 13. Untold Stories.**
- a. **Guest Speaker:** [Daisy Kahn](#)
 - b. **Born with Wings: The Spiritual Journey of a Modern Muslim Woman,** Daisy Kahn (BOOK)
<https://www.amazon.com/Born-Wings-Spiritual-Journey-Modern/dp/0812995260> (First and last chapter)
 - c. **WISE Up: Knowledge Ends Extremism,** Daisy Kahn (BOOK):
<https://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/programs/wise-up-knowledge-ends-extremism/>
 - d. **Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age,** Amani Al-Khatahtbeh (BOOK)
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01M1GWX51/ref=dp_bookdesc_audio
 - e. WISE (*Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality*). (WEBSITE/RESOURCE): <http://wisemuslimwomen.org>
4. **September 20. What is a Life Worth?**
- a. **Guest Speaker:** [Ken Feinberg](#)
 - b. **What is Life Worth?** Ken Feinberg (BOOK)
<https://www.publicaffairsbooks.com/titles/kenneth-r-feinberg/what-is-life-worth/9781549173325/>
 - c. **Worth.** (FILM) <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8009744/>
 - d. **Playing God** (film) <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6816210/>
 - e. **9/11 parade float in Indiana featuring smoking twin towers sparks outrage** (ARTICLE)
<https://www.nj.com/news/2021/09/911-parade-float-in-indiana-featuring-smoking-twin-towers-sparks-outrage.html>
 - f. **Remarks by President George W. Bush at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, 20th Anniversary of 9/11, 9/11/21** (VIDEO)
<https://www.bushcenter.org/about-the-center/newsroom/press-releases/2021/09/remarks-president-bush-shanksville-9-11.html>
5. **September 27. The 9/11 Commission.**
- a. **Guest Speaker:** [Senator Bob Kerrey](#)

- b. The 9/11 Commission Report (BOOK):
<https://9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>
- c. September 11 Commission News Conference (VIDEO):
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?182320-2/september-11-commission-news-conference&event=182320&playEvent&auto>
- d. “Stonewalled by the C.I.A.” The New York Times. By Thomas Kean, Lee Hamilton (ARTICLE)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/02/opinion/02kean.html>

6. October 4. In the Air.

- a. Guest Speaker: [Amy McGrath, USMC](#)
- b. The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11 (BOOK):
<https://www.amazon.com/Only-Plane-Sky-Oral-History/dp/150118220X>
- c. Flight 93 National Memorial Virtual Tour (NPS WEBSITE):
<https://www.nps.gov/flni/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualltour.htm>
- d. Preserving the Selfless Heroism of the Passengers of United Flight 93 *In Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the valor of the passengers and crew has become central to the history of 9/11.* (NEW YORKER ARTICLE):
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-selfless-heroism-of-the-passengers-of-united-flight-93>
- e. The final call from Flight 93. Cynthia Bowers talks to operator Lisa Jefferson, who took the final call from United Flight 93. She recalls her conversation with passenger Todd Beamer. (CBS NEWS VIDEO):<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-viMzr2nac>
- f. Fighter pilots recall mission to take down Flight 93 on 9/11 (CBS NEWS VIDEO):
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/september-11-flight-93-fighter-pilots-mission/>
- g. EXTRA: America's military needs to confront the enemy within, by Amy McGrath and Paul Rieckhoff (ARTICLE, CNN.COM):
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/11/opinions/military-extremist-mcgrath-rieckhoff/index.html>
- h. HONOR BOUND, AN AMERICAN STORY OF DREAMS AND SERVICE. By AMY MCGRATH (BOOK):
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/634635/honor-bound-by-amy-mcgrath-with-chris-peterson/>

- i. **AUDIO SAMPLE (AUDIO):**
<https://soundcloud.com/penguin-audio/honor-bound-by-amy-mcgrath>
7. **October 11. NO CLASS. MID SEMESTER BREAK.**
 - a. **Work on your paper!**
8. **October 18. The Children of 9/11.**
 - a. **Guest Speaker: [Lila Nordstrom](#)**
 - b. **In the Shadow of the Towers (FILM):**
<https://www.hbo.com/documentaries/in-the-shadow-of-the-towers-stuyvesant-high-on-911>
 - c. **Some Kids Left Behind. Lila Nordstrom. (BOOK):**
<https://www.amazon.com/Some-Kids-Left-Behind-Survivors/dp/1948062623>
 - d. **“My father was killed on 9/11. I still struggle to understand how he just disappeared. (ARTICLE, Washington Post)**
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/03/my-father-was-killed-911-i-still-struggle-understand-how-he-just-disappeared/>
 - e. **An infant girl and her older sister were in the Pentagon day care center on 9/11. Today they're in the U.S. military (ARTICLE, CBS News):**
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/911-pentagon-daycare-center-sisters/>
 - f. **[Tuesday's Children](#). (WEBSITE/RESOURCE)**
9. **October 25. 9/11 From Amherst to Air Force intelligence.**
 - a. **Guest Speaker: [Colonel Michael S Anderson \('98\)](#)**
10. **November 1. 9/11's Place in History.**
 - a. **Guest Speaker: [Michael Beschloss](#)**
 - b. **Presidents of War: The Epic Story, from 1807 to Modern Times (BOOK)**
<https://www.amazon.com/Presidents-War-Michael-Beschloss/dp/0307409600>
 - c. **President Kennedy's remarks at Amherst College, October 26, 1963. (AUDIO)**

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/remarks-at-amherst-college-on-the-arts>

- d. JFK arrives Amherst College (best known to some as institution splintered from Williams College) today 1963, where he exalted an America commanding respect not only for its strength "but for its civilization" (PHOTO/TWEET)
<https://twitter.com/BeschlossDC/status/1452664470484963329>
- e. The invitation and other key historic documents from that day: The President and the Poet: John F. Kennedy at Amherst, October 26, 1963 (AMHERST ARCHIVES WEBSITE):
<https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/exhibitions/kennedy>
- f. There was also a book and documentary made about the visit by two men who were Amherst seniors that year:
<https://www.jfkthelastspeech.org>

11. November 8. 9/11's Blank Check: The AUMF and 2 Million Veterans.

- a. Guest Speaker: [Allison Jaslow](#) (ONLINE BIO).
- b. The first resolution (ONLINE ARCHIVE):
<https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ40/PLAW-107publ40.pdf>
- c. The second resolution (ONLINE ARCHIVE):
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-joint-resolution/114/text>
- d. What the AUMF Is and Why You Should Care. By Jessica Michek (ARTICLE):
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/what-the-aumf-is-and-why-you-should-care-2018/>
- e. Have We Forgotten Our Troops Still Fighting Abroad? By Allison Jaslow. (ARTICLE):
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/have-we-forgotten-our-troops-still-fighting-abroad/>
- f. Ending the Post-9/11 Forever Wars. Rep. Barbara Lee. (ARTICLE):
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/ending-post-911-forever-wars>
- g. In Historic, Bipartisan Move, House Votes To Repeal 2002 Iraq War Powers Resolution. By Claudia Grisales. (ARTICLE):

<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/17/1007363054/congress-is-poised-to-take-back-some-of-its-war-powers-from-the-president>

h. Will Congress Ever Repeal Its Post-9/11 War Authorizations?

By Jacqueline Feldscher. (ARTICLE):

<https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2021/09/will-aumfs-20th-anniversary-prompt-congress-act/185313/>

i. *Veterans Day reading:

1. Profile of Post-9/11 Veterans (Department of Veterans Affairs WEBSITE):

https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Post_911_Veterans_Profile_2016.pdf

2. The American Veteran Experience and the Post-9/11 Generation (RESEARCH STUDY-ONLINE):

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/09/10/the-american-veteran-experience-and-the-post-9-11-generation/>

3. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Policy Agenda for the 117th Congress. (WEBSITE):

https://iava.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/IAVA_117thCongress_FINAL_Spreads.pdf

4. VA has a woman problem. It starts with its motto. By Allison Jaslow. (ARTICLE):

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/29/va-motto/>

5. The History of Veterans Day (Dept of Veterans Affairs WEBSITE):

<https://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>

12. November 15. 9/11's Impact on the World Beyond America.

a. Guest Speaker: [Zainab Salbi](#)

A few follow up extra items to share with you per our discussion. These are not required--but you may find them useful and/or enjoyable:

b. A link to Zainab Salbi's podcast. Including the newest episode she mentioned with Hugh Jackman .

- c. The episode of my podcast (*Independent Americans*) from a few years ago that features our extended conversation--and her incredible origin story.
- d. The Veterans Day special episode of my podcast that focuses on the incredible life and legacy of Senator Max Cleland.
- e. The idea we elevated back in 2019 during the Presidential debates that Veterans Day be combined with Election Day.
- f. And see more here about how the change would work--and why it could be impactful.

13. November 22. NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK.

- a. REJOICE, RELAX, RECOVER, REST!

14. November 29. 9/11 At The Pentagon. 9/11 Now. 9/11 In The Future.

- a. Guest Speaker: [Malcolm Nance](#).
- b. Defeating ISIS. Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe.
By Malcolm Nance. (BOOK)

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Defeating-ISIS/Malcolm-Nance/9781510729735>

15. December 6. What Is The Next 9/11?

- a. Guest Speaker: [Admiral James Starvridis](#)
- b. 2034: A Novel of the Next World War. Elliot Ackerman, Admiral James Starvridis. (BOOK): <https://admiralstav.com/2034-2>
- c. The National Defense Strategy, 2018. (PUBLIC PAPER):
<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/Story/Article/1656414/what-is-the-national-defense-strategy/>
 - i. [\(Summary\)](#)

16. FINAL PAPER DUE. WE DID IT! CONGRATS!

Optional extra content for your review that I mentioned at some point over the course of the semester:

Freedom, by Sebastian Junger:

<http://www.sebastianjunger.com/freedom-by-sebastian-junger>

One of my favorite recent reads and good insight into the post-9/11 world—and into life.

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading, by Ronald A Heifetz and Marty Linsky:

<https://www.amazon.com/Leadership-Line-Staying-through-Dangers/dp/1578514371>

A fantastic book on the difficulties of leadership that I recommend to all young leaders—especially when times are hard.

Fifty Things To Do Before You Leave Amherst. By me:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFMsztUbPEc>

This is a talk that I gave to the incoming first-year class in 2009. Most of the advice still holds. You'll recognize the venue. I wanted to wait until the end of our semester together to share it. Whether you just graduated, or have many years ahead, I hope it gives you some useful food for thought.