AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

A HASS Communications-Intensive Course

Course mission: to explain and evaluate past and present United States foreign policies. What caused the United States' past involvement in foreign wars and interventions? Were the results of U.S. policies good or bad? Would other policies have better served the U.S. and/or the wider world? Were the beliefs that guided U.S. policy true or false? If false, what explains these misperceptions? General theories that bear on the causes and consequences of American policy will be applied to explain and evaluate past and present policies.

The history of United States foreign policy in the 20th century is covered. Functional topics are also covered: U.S. military policy, U.S. foreign economic policy, and U.S. policy on human rights and democracy overseas. Finally, we will predict and prescribe for the future. What policies should the U.S. adopt toward current problems and crises? These problems include the war against Al Qaeda and the wider war on terror; continuing U.S. involvement in Iraq; the Taiwan Straits; the Central African conflicts; and more. What should be the U.S. stance on global environmental and human rights questions?

This is a HASS Communications Intensive course, and so helps fulfill the HASS CI requirement. Communications intensive subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences require at least 20 pages of writing divided among 3-5 assignments. Of these 3-5 assignments, at least one should be revised and resubmitted. HASS CI subjects further offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression, through presentations, student-led discussions, or class participation. In order to guarantee sufficient attention to student writing and substantial opportunity for oral expression, the maximum number of students per section in a HASS CI subject is 18.

17.40 meets all HASS-D communication-intensive course requirements. Specifically, it requires 20 pages of writing, requires early submission of at least one paper, and includes two public speaking exercises in section. Sections will normally include fewer than 10 students.

This is an undergraduate course but is open to graduate students.

Format and Requirements. Class format: two 1-hour general meetings and one 1-hour discussion section meeting per week. Class starts promptly at 11:05, ends at 11:55. Grades are based on section participation (15%), two 8-page papers (40%), final exam (30%), and two quizzes (15%). Students must also complete two ungraded two-page response papers that react to class readings or lectures.

* Discussion sections. Students are expected to complete required readings before section and to attend section regularly. Section attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absence from section will be penalized.

Sections will include a public speaking exercise in the format of "congressional hearings" where you are asked to frame and defend to the group a viewpoint on a foreign policy issue.

* Papers. Students will write two short ungraded response papers that react to course readings and lectures, and two longer papers on questions arising from the course material. The two response papers each will be two pages long, doublespaced. The longer papers will be 8 pages. One 8-page paper assignment asks you to explain a past case of American conduct--what accounts for American behavior? A second 8-page assignment asks you to evaluate a past American policy: was the policy appropriate, or would another policy have produced better results?

The first ungraded response paper is due the week of Sept. 22-26; the second is due the week of Oct.
13-17. The first 8-page paper is due at 11:00 a.m. (class time) on Thursday, November 6. The second is due at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 2.

We require that you submit a rough draft of at least one of your 8-page papers **a week before its due date** in order to get comments for rewrite from your TA. You are wise to submit both papers to your TA for comments. So please leave yourself time to get comments on drafts of the 8-page papers from your TAs before you submit final drafts.

Your two response papers should advance an argument about the reading or lectures. Your argument can dispute argument(s) advanced in the reading or lectures; can concur with argument(s) advanced in the reading or lecture; can assess or explain policies or historical events described in the reading and lectures; or can relate current events in the press today to ideas or events in the readings or lectures. We encourage evaluation of policies or ideas covered in the reading or lecture. Are they right or wrong? Good or bad? Somewhere in your paper—preferably at the beginning—please offer a 1-2 sentence summary of your argument. Both papers should be about two typed pages (double spaced—not 1.5 spaced please—with standard one-inch margins on left, right, top and bottom). They will not be graded but are mandatory and must be completed to receive full credit for class participation.

Late papers will be penalized unless extensions are granted well in advance of the paper deadline. Extensions will not be granted except in emergency situations.

Your papers may be improved by keeping up with current international affairs during the semester. Four publications offer especially excellent coverage: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist (a weekly), and The Far Eastern Economic Review (also a weekly).

Your papers and public speaking may also be improved by seeking help from MIT's writing and Communications Center (14N-317, 253-3090, http://web.mit.edu/writing). They give good writing advice and have useful practice facilities for public speaking.

* Quizzes: two short (15 minute) quizzes will be given. Quiz dates are October 2 (Thursday) and November 13 (Thursday). Three short (define-and-identify) questions will be asked on each quiz.

* Final exam: a list of study questions will be circulated before the final. The final exam questions will be drawn from this list. Students are encouraged to study together to prepare their answers. The final will also include short-answer questions that will not be distributed in advance.

* Films: the 17.40 film society. Two optional evening film-showings will be organized during the term, on topics to be chosen by acclamation of the class, with advice from 17.40 film maven emeritus Daniel Landau. Topics could include the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, or other subjects. Dates and places TBA.

Books to purchase, available at the MIT COOP bookstore:

*Foreign Affairs* is the ten reader for 17.40. A compilation of ten articles from Foreign Affairs assembled for this class. (I'm not sure what Foreign Affairs will put on the cover, but it will be in the COOP with the other 17.40 books.)

These books are also on reserve at Dewey library (building E-53, on Wadsworth Street). All other readings will be available as photocopied course notes, and can be purchased from the Technology Copy Center, in the basement of building E-52 (also on Wadsworth Street).

I also recommend—but don't require—that students buy a copy of the following book that will improve your papers:

Turabian has the basic rules for formatting footnotes and other style rules. You will want to follow these rules so your writing looks spiffy and professional.

Readings in books available in the COOP bookstore are denoted below with a "B"; coursenotes readings are denoted below with a "CN"; readings that are handed out in class are denoted below with an "H".

Some of the "further reading" (see p. 12, below) are on reserve at Dewey library, for your consultation should you want to do further reading for your paper assignments. These are denoted with a pound ("#") sign.

Assigned readings average 85 pages per week over 14 weeks. However, note that readings are heavier for some weeks. You should plan ahead and budget your time so you can complete the heavy readings.
CLASS TOPICS

I. THEORIES AND STRATEGIES

Sept. 4: Introduction.
No readings assigned.

Sept. 9: Overview of American Foreign Policy Since 1914.

H 1. Tables from Paul Kennedy, Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, and Kenneth Oye, ed., Eagle in a New World. Class discussion will focus on tables 6, 17, 18, 31, 35, 4-1, and chart 2 on pages 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, and 20 (handwritten numeration), so study these seven with more care; the rest can be skimmed.

Sept. 11, 16, 18: Theories of American Foreign Policy.

CN 1. Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense and the Causes of War," manuscript, pp. 1-36. Your instructor's summary of the argument, made famous by Robert Jervis, that war is more likely when conquest is easy. A key related argument: international conflict arises largely from the "security dilemma"--the tendency of states to threaten others' security by their efforts to secure themselves.

Can the U.S. prevent war by making conquest hard in world trouble-spots? Have America's past conflict with others arisen from the security dilemma?

CN 2. Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, chapter 2 ("Explaining Alliance Formation"), pp. 17-49. Walt presents competing hypotheses on how states choose their friends. Which hypotheses are valid? Do your answers matter for the kind of foreign policy you would recommend?

CN 3. Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1976), pp. 58-84. Some ("spiral model" advocates) say international conflict is best resolved by the carrot, while using the stick merely provokes; others ("deterrence" advocates) would use the stick, warning that offering carrots ("appeasement") leads others to make more demands. Who's right? Probably both—but under what circumstances? And how can you tell which circumstances you face?

CN 4. Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 171-173, 731-733. Does the American foreign policy elite share America's wider democratic values? We learn here that George Kennan thought women, blacks, and immigrants should be denied the vote; Kennan and Dean Acheson saw little wrong with the white minority governments in Rhodesia and South Africa; and John McCloy adopted the cause of Iran's Pahlevi family. Not your typical League of Women Voters views.

(Are such attitudes widespread among foreign policymakers? Do such attitudes matter?)


H 8. Nicholas Kristoff, "Save Our Spooks," New York Times, May 30, 2003. Governments misperceive the world if their intelligence agencies misreport foreign realities. This can happen if government leaders press their intelligence agencies to tell the leaders what they want to hear regardless of the facts.


Sept. 23, 25, 30: American interests and grand strategies.


B 5. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July/August 2002): 20-33. The authors argue that the U.S. now has such a vast preponderance of power that it can act heedlessly of others wishes without fearing that a counterbalancing coalition could arise to check it. (But they don't recommend such conduct.) Does their argument square with that of Stephen Walt on alliance formation (above)?
G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 5 (September/October 2002). The Bush Administration has embarked on a fateful imperial rampage. It will end badly. Others will eventually coalesce to check the U.S.


Chaim Kaufmann, "See No Evil," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July/August 2002): 142-149. The U.S. could have stopped genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and elsewhere but chose not to. Good choice? Should the U.S. intervene to prevent such horrors?


Leslie H. Gelb and Justine A. Rosenthal, "The Rise of Ethics in Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 82, No. 3 (May/June 2003): 2-7. Ethical concerns once played little role in U.S. foreign policy; now they have an important place at the table.

II. AMERICA'S MAJOR WARS: WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, COLD WAR, & KOREA

Oct. 2, 7, 9: World War I and World War II.


Oct. 14, 16: Cold War Origins and Conduct; the Korean War.

A. Cold War origins and conduct:

Paterson, Clifford and Hagan, American Foreign Policy, pp. 222-249. A standard textbook account of the Cold Wars's origins, from a viewpoint somewhat critical of U.S. policy.

B. Korea:

Paterson, Clifford and Hagan, American Foreign Policy, pp. 266-275.

III. INTERLUDE: U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY; THE TERROR WAR; U.S. FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY


CN 3. Martin Rees, Our Final Hour: A Scientist's Warning: How Terror, Error, and Environmental Disaster Threaten Humankind's Future in this Century--On Earth and Beyond (NY: Basic Books, 2003): 41-60. The advance of science has a horrendous byproduct: we are discovering ever more powerful means of destruction. These destructive powers are being democratized: the mayhem that only major states can do today may lie within the capacity of millions of individuals in the future unless we somehow change course. Deterrence works against states but will fail against crazed non-state organizations or individuals. How can the spread of destructive powers be controlled?


B 7. William Perry, "Preparing for the Next Attack," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 6 (November/December 2001): 31-45. Perry, a former U.S. Defense Secretary, warns that al Qaeda will strike again, this time with weapons of mass destruction, unless we avert their attack. He's cool toward national missile defense--a favorite Bush administration project--because Al Qaeda won't use missiles to send us its horrors.


For more discussion of the latest U.S. strategy statement see the "Defense Strategy Review Page" of the Project on Defense Alternatives, at www.comw.org/qdr/.

Oct. 23, 28: The U.S. War on Terror.


6. David E. Sanger, "Bush to Formalize A Defense Policy of Hitting First," *New York Times*, June 17, 2002. The Bush Administration has embraced a general doctrine of preventive war against rogue states that aspire to develop weapons of mass destruction. Iraq is only the first rogue state that the administration would attack. Good idea?


2. "Pakistanis Fume as Clothing Sales to U.S. Tumble," *New York Times*, June 23, 2002. The U.S. could provide large benefit to the poor of Pakistan by dropping its barriers to the import of Pakistani textiles. This could also jolly up the Pakistanis to support the U.S terror war. But the U.S. textile lobby won't allow it. U.S. special interests override the U.S. national interest. Too bad for you and me.


IV. COLD WAR CRISES: BERLIN, TAIWAN STRAITS, AND CUBA 1962

Nov. 6, 13: The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis; other Cold War Crises.


CN 3. Fred Kaplan, "Kennedy and Cuba at 35," Boston Sunday Globe, October 12, 1997, pp. D1-D3. Later revelations about the Cuban Missile Crisis. JFK was the most dovish official in the government. He secretly traded the U.S. Jupiter missiles in Turkey for the Soviet missiles in Cuba. He was willing to give even further if needed. What if someone else had been president?

For more on the Cuban Missile Crisis you can visit an excellent website on the crisis put together by the National Security Archive at www.nsarchive.org/nsa/cuba_mis_cri. Documents can be seen, tapes can be listened to, and intelligence photos can be viewed at this site. And for more sources on the crisis see a website from Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, www.cubanmissilecrisis.org.

V. AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD


B 2. Herring, America's Longest War, chapters 4 and 7 (pp. 121-157, 242-283). A more detailed account, from a middle-of-the-road perspective, of the key decisions to escalate and de-escalate the war. Herring's book is the most prominent general history of the war.

CN 4.  Sol W. Sanders & William Henderson, "The Consequences of 'Vietnam'", *Orbis*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 61-76. The authors re-evaluate the propositions at issue in the debate over the war, concluding that postwar events show that the hawks were right and the doves wrong.


VI. THE ROAD AHEAD: CURRENT CRISES AND FUTURE POLICIES

December 4, 9: Current issues and crises; overviews of Bush Administration foreign policy; the future of American foreign policy.


and bring on a Sino-American clash. Let’s get tough on China.

Note: In 2003 the Bush Administration found itself cooperating with China against the grave threat posed by North Korea’s advancing nuclear weapons program. What light does this shed on Kagan’s argument?

CN 4. Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., “Preventing War in the Taiwan Strait,” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 77, No. 4 (July/August 1998), pp. 6-11. Taiwan could suck the U.S. into a Taiwan-PRC conflict unless the U.S. restrains Taiwan now.


dominates Bush foreign policy.

In your course notes but **not** assigned (sorry at the late change) is:

FURTHER READING

Readings denoted below with a "##" are on reserve at Dewey library.

**Historiographical surveys on American foreign policy:**


**Bibliographies on American foreign policy:**


For more bibliographies see also:

*Foreign Affairs*: this journal's "Recent Books on International Relations" section reviews most important books on U.S. foreign policy.

*American Historical Review*: more than half of this journal is devoted to useful book reviews, many of books on U.S. foreign relations.


Jerald A. Combs, *The History of American Foreign Policy*, 2 vols. (NY: Knopf, 1986); this text also has useful bibliographical notes at the ends of chapters.

**Websites to consult:**

www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/research-g/us-policy.html. This site is a research guide to internet resources on American foreign policy. See other websites referenced there.

**Textbooks and surveys:**


**Historical document & essay collections:**


**Journals:**

*Diplomatic History*. The main journal covering American diplomatic history.

*Journal of Cold War History*. A promising new history journal.

*American Historical Review*. A general historical journal that gives good coverage to American diplomatic history.

*Foreign Policy*. A prominent if irritatingly undocumented journal of current policy.

*Foreign Affairs*. The first and most famous journal of American foreign policy opinion. Published by the Council on Foreign Relations. For many decades it offered yawnsome pontifications by senior officials who repeated conventional wisdoms. In the 1970s, and also more recently, it has shown marked signs of life.


*Security Studies*. Another journal of military and foreign policy.

*The National Interest*. The leading conservative foreign policy journal.


**Press & radio on world affairs:**

The *Economist*. A British weekly newsmagazine. The best single printed news source on current world affairs.


*BBC World Service*. Good world news coverage, aired in Boston at 9:00-10:00 a.m., 1:00-2:00 p.m., and 12:00-2:00 a.m. daily on WBUR (90.9 FM radio). Less fun than KISS 108 but better for your brain.
Readers on current policy questions:


John T. Rourke, *Taking Sides*, 4th ed. (Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin, 1992)

Theories of International Politics & of American Foreign Policy:


Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979)


Peace Movements:


Foreign lobbies, propaganda, and the press as influences on American foreign policy:


Jeffrey Birnbaum, "The Influence Merchants," *Fortune*, December 7, 1998, pp. 134-152, especially the chart on p. 137. Washington insiders rank the Israel lobby the second most powerful lobby in Washington—behind only the AARP and ahead of the NRA, the AMA, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the VFW, and others.


Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Westport, CT:...
Lawrence Hill and Co., 1985)

American Grand Strategy:


The United States and Human Rights:

Lars Schoultz, Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America (Princeton: Princeton


The United States and conflict prevention/conflict termination:


The United States and democracy:


Foreign aid and NGOs:


The United States and World War I:


Thomas J. Knock, To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992)


The United States and World War II:


Selig Adler, *The Uncertain Giant, 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars* (NY: Collier, 1965)


Origins of the Cold War:


Press, 1972)

Soviet-American relations, the Cold War:
## John W. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II. 12th ed. (NY: Praeger, 1992)
James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, United States Foreign Policy and World Order (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1989)
George F. Kennan, Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin (NY: New American Library, 1960)

Chinese-American Relations:
John Stoessinger, Nations in Darkness--China, Russia, and America, 5th ed. (McGraw, 1990)
Hsiang-tse Chiang, The United States and China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988)
Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, The Coming Conflict with China (NY: A.A. Knopf, 1997)
The Korean War:


James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, *United States Foreign Policy and World Order*, pp. 142-190.


U.S. National Security Policy:


McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988)


**U.S. Foreign Economic Policy:**


**Cold War Crises: Berlin, Offshore Islands, and Cuba 1962:**

Berlin, 1948 & 1958-1962:


Offshore Islands:


Cuban Missile Crisis:


Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968)
Graham Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971)

The Indochina War:

## Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds. The Viet-Nam Reader (NY: Vintage, 1967)
## David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Crest, 1973)
Brian VanDeMark, Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995)
Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, The Indochina Story (NY: Bantam, 1970)
Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn Young and H. Bruce Franklin, eds. Vietnam and America, A Documentary History (NY: Grove Press, 1985)


Peter A. Poole, Eight Presidents and Indochina (Huntington, NY: Krieger, 1978)


Daniel Ellsberg, Papers on the War (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1972)


A bibliography is:


The Spanish-American-Filipino War, 1898-1902:
Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (NY: Crowell, 1975)  
Thomas G. Paterson and Stephen G. Rabe, eds., *Imperial Surge: The United States Abroad, the 1890s-Early 1900s* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1992)  
Elinor Fuchs & Joyce Antler, *Year One of the Empire: A Play of American Politics, War and Protest Taken from the Historical Record* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973)  

Histories of other American interventions in the Third World:  
The interventions of 1900-1934:  

Overviews of Cold War interventions:  
Peter J. Schraeder, ed., Intervention Into the 1990s, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1992)

Overviews of covert operations:


Iran 1953:


Guatemala 1954:


Indonesia 1957:

Audrey Kahin and George McT. Kahin, Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia (Seattle WA: University of Washington, 1995)

Bay of Pigs 1961:

Dominican Republic 1965:


Chile 1973:


Nathaniel Davis, The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Arturo Valenzuela, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)

U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, First Session, Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Vol. 7: Covert Action, pp. 144-203 ("Covert Action in Chile, 1963-73") (This is the Chile study of the "Church Committee Hearings."

African interventions since the 1970s:


Angola 1975:


Central Americas in the 1980s:


Eldon Kenworthy, America/Américas: Myth in the Making of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America (University Park: Penn State Press, 1995)

Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions (Norton, 1984)


Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, "Iran-Contra's Untold Story," Foreign Policy, No. 72 (Fall 1988), pp. 3-30.


Reagan Doctrine, 1985-1991:


Persian Gulf War, 1991:


Analytical assessments of Third World intervention:


The end of the Cold War and the future, 1990s perspectives:

Michael H. Shuman and Hal Harvey, *Security Without War: A Post-Cold War Foreign Policy* (Boulder:
Westview Press, 1993)
Michael Klare, Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy (NY: Hill & Wang, 1995)

The terror war:

James F. Hoge and Gideon Rose, ed., How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War (NY: Public Affairs Press, 2001)
Kurt M. Campbell and Michèle A. Flournoy, principal authors, To Prevail: An American Strategy for the Campaign Against Terrorism (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001)
Malise Ruthven, A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America (Granta: 2002)
Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetman, Usama bin Laden's al-Qaida: Profile of a Terrorist Network (Transnational, 2001)

George W. Bush's Foreign Policy, 2001-

SCHEDULE FOR 17.40

Sept.

Th 4: First day of class.
T-F 9-12: First section meetings.
M-F 23-26: First response paper due in sections (2 pages)

Oct.

Th 2: Quiz in class
M-F 14-17: Second response paper due in sections (2 pages)
  Paper topics handed out.
Th 30: Outlines/rough drafts of first paper due in class

Nov.

Th 6: First paper due in class (8 pages)
Th 13: Quiz in class
Tues. 25: Outlines/rough drafts of second paper due in class

Dec.

Tues. 2: Second paper due in class (8 pages)
Tues. 9: Last day of class
Section Presentations: What They Are

The U.S. Congress often asks experts to present their views on important public policy matters to hearing conducted in Congressional committees. In our sections you will also be asked to testify. As in a real hearing, you will give a short presentation and then you will be questioned by an opinionated and perhaps skeptical panel.

Your presentation will last five (5) minutes. If you run over you may be cut off. Your presentation should include (1) an argument, and (2) supporting evidence or reasoning. Your TA and your fellow students will then pose questions and ask you to address counter-arguments. Be prepared to defend your argument with deductive or historical evidence.

You choose the topic of your presentation. You can make an argument that reacts to an issue raised in class or in the course readings, or you can address a subject of special concern to you. Your presentation can overlap with your paper topic.

We suggest that you bring an outline of your presentation and either hand it out or put it up on the blackboard, to help your audience follow your argument.

We also suggest that you summarize your argument in a couple of sentences before marching through it. Again, this makes you easier to follow.

We recommend that you practice your speech a couple of times--to the mirror or, better still, to a friend--before giving it. You can also practice using the facilities of MIT’s writing and Communications Center (14N-317, 253-3090, http://web.mit.edu/writing), and can get helpful advice from their staff.

Congressional committees often hear differing views in hearings. Accordingly we will try to organize presentations as debates between two members of the section who frame different views of an issue.