

Great Decisions 2026 Syllabus

Monday 10:45 Spring 2026

MAB2

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Course Description

The Great Decisions course is a discussion group where participants can discuss FPA selected topics in an environment that is conducive to inquiry as well as advocacy. The program model involves reading the Great Decisions Briefing Book, watching the video series and meeting to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today.

The Great Decisions briefing book features impartial, thought-provoking analyses on eight issues of concern to U.S. policymakers today. While it is not required to obtain the Briefing Book to join the class, it is recommended to enhance students understanding of the issues. It can be obtained online at WWW.FPA.ORG/GREAT_DECISIONS. Cost is \$35.00 plus shipping. The instructor will be able to obtain ~ 30 of the briefing Books for a cost of ~ \$27.

Week	Topic	Notes
Week 1 / 2 Feb	America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy	Trump's return has marked a break from 80 years of U.S. foreign policy leadership, embracing an "America First" approach. This chapter explores the risks of isolation and diminished influence in relation to Trump 2.0 foreign policy. <i>By G. John Ikenberry</i>
Week 2 / 9 Feb	Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy	Trump's aggressive trade and tariff policies have shaken global economic norms. What's the rationale behind this radical shift in economic policy, and what are the implications for multilateral trade and geopolitics? <i>By Michael Mastanduno</i>
Week 3 / 16 Feb	No Class	
Week 4 / 23 Feb	U.S.-China Relations	Relations with China remain tense, with tariffs, military modernization, and pressure on Taiwan. Does Trump have a coherent China policy, and will his tariffs on Rare Earth minerals be effective? What are America's strategic options? <i>By Oriana Mastro</i>

Week 5 / 2 Mar	Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation	U.S. alliance skepticism may drive countries like Japan and South Korea to reconsider nuclear options. What are the implications of the Trump administration's rethinking of the U.S. alliance system for regional and global security? Will this new uncertainty alter the way allies and rivals in various regions make decisions about security and nuclear weapons? <i>By Gideon Rose</i>
Week 6 / 9 Mar	Ukraine and the Future of European Security	With reduced U.S. support for NATO and Ukraine, Europe faces strategic uncertainty. The Trump administration has signaled an intention to reduce its security role in Europe. What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas, and how might Europe respond? <i>By Thomas Wright</i>
Week 7 / 16 Mar	No Class	
Week 8 / 23 Mar	Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order	Can multilateralism survive amid shifting global power and rising nationalism? This chapter examines the future of global cooperation across trade, health, and finance. <i>By Scott Bessent</i>
Week 9 / 30 Mar	U.S. Engagement of Africa	Africa's geopolitical role is growing. What lessons can the U.S. learn from China's presence there, and how might it strengthen ties, especially with leading nations like Nigeria? What tools of statecraft might the U.S. bring to its engagement with Africa? <i>By Jendayi E. Frazer</i>
Week 10 / 6 Apr	The Future of Human Rights and International Law	As democracy and human rights retreat globally—and the U.S. pulls back—how can civil society and legal norms remain effective in a divided world? What is the role and force of international law in this era of impunity? <i>By Jose Enrique Alvarez</i>
Week 11/ 13 Apr	Recap previous topics or War on Cartels	TBD

*Content/order/classes/speakers subject to change if necessary.