

GREAT DECISIONS 2021:

A Discussion Forum for Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy and International Affairs

“Great Decisions” is a national curriculum in selected issues in American foreign policy, prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, which is headquartered in New York City. The Foreign Policy Association (FPA) was founded in 1918 by noted journalists and academics to rally public support for then-President Woodrow Wilson’s vision for peace after WWI. This course will meet nine times, beginning Tuesday, February 23, to discuss a major foreign policy topic each week; a summary and wrap-up session will take place on April 20. Our schedule is keyed to the substantive essays in the Great Decisions essays book, which we encourage each participant to purchase.

The topics in order are:

February 23: The Role of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic

March 2: Global Supply Chains and National Security

March 9: China and Africa

March 16: The Korean Peninsula

March 23: Persian Gulf Security

March 30: Brexit and the European Union

April 6: The Fight Over the Melting Arctic

April 13: The End of Globalization?

April 20: Summary Reflections and Wrap-up

As has been the case in past years, the moderators reserve the right to re-order these topics to suit local conditions, such as, e.g., the availability of guest presenters, breaking news, or serendipitous juxtaposition!

Each class will be two hours in length, with a short break in the middle. The facilitators may begin the sessions with the class viewing a short video introduction to the week’s topic, or by introducing a guest speaker/expert on the topic, or by having an interested member of the class introduce the topic. There are discussion questions and suggestions for further reading at the end of every chapter in the Great Decisions book (see note below). With the help of class members, the facilitators will often identify other materials—articles, editorials, podcasts, books or book chapters, etc.—that might bear on the topic in an interesting way. We also count on the contributions by class members from their unique life experiences and perspectives. FPA puts out a Leader’s Guide that contains interesting supplemental material, such as work-sheets or map exercises, and those may be assigned from time to time.

Fundamentally, however, the facilitators want to foster an atmosphere in which interested, informed, and concerned adults can discuss some of the knottiest foreign policy questions of the day—or the decade! Participants will learn from one another, and will learn to agree—and disagree—in constructive, respectful ways. All of us will emerge from Great Decisions as friends and better-informed citizens.

Important Note about the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decision Booklets. Due to the pandemic, PSRC will not be distributing the booklets and recommends that participants order them directly from the FPA: https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/?act=gd_materials.

Leaders: Karen Coates and David Redman are the co-facilitators. Karen is a retired chemical engineer, and David is a retired Princeton University administrator.

Tuesdays: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 9 weeks, February 23 through April 20.

Maximum: 30