

Great Decisions 2018:
**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) is celebrating its Centenary year in 2018 and, in the introduction to this year’s collection of essays, FPA president and CEO Noel Lateef writes:

“FPA’s roots can be traced to an undergraduate at Princeton University, who went by the name of Tommy. He became a lawyer and, subsequently, returned to school to complete a doctorate in political science. Armed with this degree, he decided that the name Tommy lacked sufficient *gravitas*. So he assumed his middle name: Woodrow. In quick succession, he would become president of Princeton University, governor of New Jersey, the 28th president of the United States and an ardent advocate for the League of Nations... Seeing the need to rally public support for President Wilson’s vision for a new world order, a distinguished group of academics and journalists came together to found the Foreign Policy Association. Their legacy is intertwined with the arc of the narrative of U.S. foreign policy from Woodrow Wilson to the present.” (p. 3)

This course will meet nine times, beginning February 27th, to discuss a major foreign policy topic each week; a summary and wrap-up session will take place on April 24th. Our schedule is keyed to the substantive essays in the Great Decisions book, which we encourage each participant to purchase.

The topics in order are:

February 27: The Waning of *Pax Americana*?

March 6: Russia’s Foreign Policy

March 13: China and America—The New Geopolitical Equation

March 20: Media and Foreign Policy

March 27: Turkey—Partner or Opponent?

April 3: U.S. Global Engagement and the Military

April 10: South Africa’s Fragile Democracy

April 17: Global Health—Progress and Problems

April 24: Summary and Wrap-up

Each class will be two hours in length, with a short break in the middle. The leaders will make every effort to identify topic specialists to comment on the topic essay during the first hour, bringing their own expertise and insights to bear. The second hour will be devoted to Q&A with the speaker and wide-ranging discussion. There are discussion questions and suggestions for further reading at the end of every chapter. The leaders will often identify other materials—articles, editorials, podcasts, etc.—that might reflect in an interesting way on the topic. Class members will be encouraged to do the same. FPA puts out a leader’s guide that contains some interesting supplemental material, such as work-sheets or map exercises; those may be used from time to time.

Essentially, however, the leaders 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. They will learn to disagree—and agree—in constructive, respectful ways. All of us will emerge from Great Decisions as friends and better informed citizens. We hope you’ll join us!

Leaders: Karen Coates and David Redman will again be 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 27 through April 24

Location: PSRC