

History 3361-01W

American Diplomacy

Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams
Office Hours: TLC 3225
MW, 3:30-6:00pm
Tues., 2-5pm
(and by appointment)

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Course website: www.westga.edu/~dkwillia

Class Location:

Pafford 208

MW, 2:00-3:15

Description:

This course will examine the changing place of the United States in the world and the way in which American politicians and diplomats have crafted foreign policies that reflect Americans' view of themselves vis-à-vis other nations. The course begins with a study of America's diplomatic ventures in the late eighteenth century, when Americans began crafting defensive policies for their new nation, and it concludes with an analysis of contemporary US foreign policy at a time when the United States is grappling with its self-perceived responsibilities as a global leader. During this semester, we will analyze the evolution of American foreign trade policies, competing views of America's international role, the development of American imperialism, America's role in the Cold War, and the emergence of the United States as an international leader.

This is a Writing-across-the-Curriculum (WAC / DSW) course, so writing assignments will be a central component of this class. Writing assignments in this course include a research paper, a book analysis, an in-class essay exam, a take-home final exam, and four email book summaries that will be distributed to other members of the class.

Classes will consist mainly of interactive lectures and class discussions. I encourage all students to participate by asking questions during lectures and making comments in discussion sessions. Four classes will be devoted entirely to discussions of the reading material, and the lecture-based classes will include some discussion time, as well.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will learn critical thinking skills and the ability to analyze diverse perspectives, and they will also gain the knowledge needed to evaluate American foreign policy in its historical context. This course will also help students to improve their writing, research, and communication skills.

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

Midterm Exam	15%
Book analysis	15%
Research paper	25%
Class participation / emails	25%
Final exam	20%

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range and D-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C. A grade average of 59.5, which converts to a D, is the lowest possible passing grade in the course.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and the ability to synthesize information from a wide variety of sources, as well as an accurate understanding of the material and good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written and tightly organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the assigned documents, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of the assigned documents, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

D-range and failing grades are assigned to work that fails to meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Exams: There will be one midterm exam and a take-home final. The midterm exam will consist of essay questions and I.D. terms based on concepts covered in the lectures, discussions, and readings. One week before the exam, I will post a study guide on the course website that will give you more information about the material covered on the test. I will give a make-up exam only in cases of a pre-arranged, excused absence for which documentation must be provided, or in cases of a legitimate health or family emergency that must be documented with a doctor's note, dean's note, or similar measure of proof. In all other cases, a make-up exam will not be an option.

The take-home final exam will consist of broadly-based essay questions relating to themes covered in the course readings and lectures throughout the semester. I will give you the exam questions on Wednesday, April 28, and you will have until 5pm on Wednesday, May 5 to write 7-10 pages in response to those essay questions.

Book analyses and research papers: You are required to write a 4-6 page book analysis of one of the books assigned for this course. You should turn in that analysis on the first class date following the date scheduled for the class discussion of the book (e.g., the book analysis of *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire* is due on January 27, because the class discussion of that book will take place on January 25). Please see the book analysis guidelines for more information about this assignment.

You will also be expected to write one 8-12 page research paper for this course. Consult the online guidelines for research papers for more information about this assignment.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

It should go without saying that all papers that you write must be your own work, and that any students who are caught plagiarizing another student's work, a paper from a web site, a textbook, or any other source will automatically fail this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will not be tolerated. Please look at the course website to find guidelines on proper footnoting procedures and avoiding inadvertent plagiarism.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

Class participation: Classes will consist of interactive lectures, which will give you a chance to ask questions and discuss the ideas presented in the readings. Throughout the semester, we will discuss selected essays from Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson's *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, which will give us a chance to analyze and debate the merits of particular American foreign policies. I would strongly encourage you to participate in the discussion of these readings. If you are shy about speaking up in class, you are welcome to email me your thoughts on these essays as a way of contributing to our class discussion.

In addition, there are four class periods reserved for discussion of the assigned books. It is very important for you to read these books prior to the class discussions so that you can come to class prepared to participate. Failure to attend these discussions will adversely affect your class participation grade. I do not have a formal attendance policy, but since students cannot participate in class discussions if they do not attend class, habitual absences, as well as habitual silence in class throughout the semester, could negatively affect a student's class participation grade.

Your class participation grade will also be based on email book summaries that you are required to submit for each of the books assigned in this course. Each of these emails is due two days prior to the day on which we are scheduled to discuss the book in question. I will not assign these emails a letter grade, but I will instead treat them as I would comments that you make in class, and I will consider their content when I formulate class participation grades at the end of the semester. I will also distribute copies of these emails to all of the members of the class for their consideration in preparation for our class discussions. For more information on this assignment, please consult the guidelines for the email summaries that are posted on the course website.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly. The university administration has stipulated that all email communication between faculty and students should take place on UWG email accounts, so please use your UWG email account for all electronic communications that you send me.

University policy also prevents me from disclosing grades over email, so if you would like to discuss your grade on any assignment in the class, please set up an appointment to meet with me in my office. Please do not email me with a request for your grades, since I am not allowed to email that information to you.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers or exams to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators,

other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair), or athletic coaches who need to know the academic status of students on their team, but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office to introduce yourself and discuss any concerns that you may have about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Required readings:

The following required texts are available for sale in the college bookstore and are on reserve at the library for 24-hour checkout:

Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (University Press of Florida, 1971, 2002)

Thomas D. Schoonover, *Uncle Sam's War of 1898 and the Origins of Globalization* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003)

Nancy Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2007)

Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008)

The following book is also required, and is available for purchase at the college bookstore, but is not available at the university library:

Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, concise edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Course Schedule:

Please complete assigned readings before class.

- 1/6 American Foreign Policy: An Introduction
- 1/11 France, Britain, Spain, and the Early Republic
- 1/13 Manifest Destiny
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 90-115 (War of 1812)
- 1/18 No class (MLK Day)
- 1/20 The Mexican-American War and its Aftermath
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 136-162 (Manifest Destiny)
- 1/25 **Book discussion: *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire***
(Email summary due by 9pm on 1/24)
- 1/27 American Diplomacy from the Civil War to the 1890s
Research paper topic due
- 2/1 Debating Imperialism: Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 163-197 (Spanish-American War)
- 2/3 US Policy toward Latin America from TR to Wilson
- 2/8 **Book discussion: *Uncle Sam's War of 1898***
(Email summary due by 9pm on 2/7)
- 2/10 Wilsonian Internationalism
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 213-233 (Wilsonianism).
Source list for research paper due
- 2/15 The Business of Foreign Policy in the 1920s
- 2/17 Isolationism in the 1930s and early 1940s
- 2/22 FDR and the Shaping of the Postwar World
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 256-273 (WWII).
- 2/24 Truman and the Development of the Cold War: Europe
- 3/1 Truman and the Development of the Cold War: Asia
Conference meetings to discuss progress on research paper

- 3/3 Eisenhower's Strategy of Brinkmanship
Midterm exam study guide posted
- 3/8 Kennedy and the Crises in Cuba and Berlin
- 3/10 **Midterm Exam**
- 3/15 America and the Middle East from the 1940s through the 1960s
- 3/17 American Policy toward the "Third World"
- 3/22-24 – Spring break
- 3/29 The Vietnam War
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 444-450 (Vietnam War)
- 3/31 Détente, Vietnamization, and Kissinger's Realpolitik
First draft of research paper due
- 4/5 **Book discussion: *Nixon and Mao***
(Email summary due by 9pm on 4/4)
- 4/7 The Oil Crisis and the Middle East from Nixon to Carter
- 4/12 American Policy toward the Soviet Union: Ford, Carter, and Reagan
- 4/14 Reagan's Foreign Policies: An Evaluation
- 4/19 After the Cold War
- 4/21 **Book discussion: *America between the Wars***
(Email summary due by 9pm on 4/20)
- 4/26 America's Response to 9/11
Discussion: Merrill and Paterson, pp. 511-537 (War on Terror)
Final version of research paper due
- 4/28 America and the World in 2010
Take-home final exam essay questions distributed
- 5/5 **Take-home final exam essay due by 5pm**